

AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
OF
THE BIBLE.

BY W. J. BIRCH, M.A.,

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‘And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.’—ISAIAH, chap. xxxix., 11, 12.

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Emmett F. Fields

PREFACE.

THIS book does not profess to be more than an inquiry into the contents and spirit of the Bible. On a subject where there is so much difference of opinion; where so much theological hatred is engendered; where alone war is carried on in literature; where all the passions are let loose directly the question is entertained, and personal abuse, when no other personal injury can be done, quickly supplies the place of argument—a writer on every account ought not to be dogmatic, whilst asserting his full right to free inquiry and individual opinion.

Granting that the Bible was of divine authorship, we cannot conceive a book written except for the purpose of being read, and subjected to the criticism of everybody. The book has no declaration or preface that it is only to be read by a few. Those who have assumed to themselves the sole right of interpreting it, have only the more publicly made known their differences of opinion. Everybody therefore has no other alternative but to inquire for himself; and can come to no other conclusion but that the book was intended for universal circulation and perusal. We read in the Bible that the object of the writers was, that the contents of the book, that certain truths, that certain things for the good of mankind should be known. The book was only one of many means to the end. We must infer that the Bible, or a book, was considered to be an imperfect mode of communication, when it is not mentioned, but other means are used, and a Messianic state ever imagined when the gospel, or the good tidings, or the spirit of the book, should proceed direct to everybody. God is represented as willing to

inspire everybody, if it were humanly possible. That is the Messianic idea. Prophets, preachers, epistles, books have been employed. Other and better means have ever been looked for, whether ascribed to God or man, from the writing on stone to the printing press; and have been realised from the one writer of the past to the hundreds, from the one reader to the thousands of the present. There are some who would place themselves between this inspiration and the people, and prevent what was hoped for—the universal diffusion of knowledge. That the essence of inspiration is its universality of application but not its infallibility of circumstances, may be seen in Isaiah, xxviii., 23 to 29. (Hab., ii., 2.)

It is obvious that the truth in the Bible is the result of all inquiry into its pages. It is clear, therefore, that the truth ascertained will do away with all the evidences, inspiration, prophecy, miracles, martyrdoms. Because the question is, of what are they?—the evidences. They have been the evidences of every dogma before and after Christianity, for more than two thousand years. They are the evidences at one time of what they are not at another time. They were, as Professor Jowett says, the evidences of a hope in the New Testament, which is not now the hope of Christianity. (Isaiah, xxxviii., 18.)

God himself is depicted everywhere in the Bible as an inquirer. Job says, 'He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection. Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.' (xxviii., 3, 27.) The Bible teaches us to inquire as well as set limits to the results of inquiry. The whole of the Bible is an inquiry and an argument, as to the being and attributes of God, and his relations to man. The question never has been closed, and probably will be always open. Inquiry therefore is only a continuation of the Bible. It is the purpose of our inquiry to show what may be the conclusion of the Bible—whether morality is not the right, and religion the wrong.

Nowhere is human reason set higher than in the Bible. Hence it is that human reason has come to be thought divine. The Bible and pagan philosophy have both said, 'God is our reason.' The inquirer, to convince himself, may read the first chapters of Proverbs, and of Wisdom in the Apocrypha, on the subject. Inquiry therefore is strongly recommended to man in the Bible, 'These are also *proverbs* of Solomon. It is the *glory* of God to *conceal* a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.' (xxv., 1, 2.) 'A wise man will hear and increase learning: and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. To understand a proverb and the *interpretation*, the words of the wise and their *dark sayings*.' 1, 5, 6.

'The preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: *this* sore travail hath God given to the *sons of man* to be exercised therewith, or to *afflict* them.' (Ecclesiastes, i., 12.) This is their cross which they are to take up. Therefore it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

'I have seen the travail (or the trouble) which God hath given to the sons of man, to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time:' (the Douay Bible says, 'He hath made all things *good* in their time') 'also he hath set the world in their heart:' (the Douay Bible says, 'and hath delivered the world to their *consideration*') so that *no man* can find out the work that God *maketh* from *beginning to end*:' (the Douay Bible says, 'the works which God *hath* made.') iii., 10, 11. The reader would do well to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest this as an introduction to the first chapters of Genesis, and as a preface to what is in this book. Solomon says there is only our good or morality to be sought out of the works of God; and he denies a future state. He compares our works to the works of God. We should rejoice in them both.

'Say not thou, What is the *cause* that the former days were better than

these? for thou dost not *inquire* wisely concerning this. All this have I proved by wisdom. I said I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which was far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom and *the reason of things*. So this only have I found, that God hath made man *upright*; but they have sought out many inventions.' (vii., 10, 24, 25, 29.) We should recommend the reader to bear this in mind when he comes to the story of the fall of man. It appears Solomon did not go for wisdom to his Bible. He appears never to have read it. If Solomon knew the Pentateuch, or the writings of Moses, he appears to condemn the present literal interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis, and the Pauline view of the fall.

'The Lord hath made all for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.' (Proverbs, xvi., 4.) That is, punishment will naturally fall upon them.

All those of old were inquirers, the angels even were inquirers according to St. Peter; and from whatever view we look at it, the Bible bears upon itself the nature of an inquiry. (1 Peter, i., x., xi., xii. Ephesians, iii., 3, 4, 6, 9.)

Every one will allow there are some errors in the Bible. At least, Bishop Tomline admits there are, but says they are not material. The whole question, therefore, would be, What is material? What is the object? What is the essence? What is the truth of the Bible? There can be but one answer to all these, but we are presented with innumerable dogmas in their places. We take the answer to be both in the Old and New Testament. The Bible is against all idolatry, all religion, all Gods, and against any one separate God, except in the sense of one and all, which is our idea of God, and which we should call nature or matter, what is external to man, but not anything external to what is

external to us. All other parts of the Bible that may be quoted as contrary to this idea, are in favour of superstition, and are the opposition of our worse nature to this idea. We will allow the inquiry has often and long ended in nothing, and religion has got the better of the Bible, but we see progress. For certainly there are but two ideas, Atheism and Polytheism; all religions are but degrees towards one or the other. We have, therefore, one choice between Atheism, and every other sort of ism. Religion, and the professors of the Bible, have hitherto made these subjects elude the human apprehension, by saying they teach so many truths—so many, more or less dogmas, necessary to salvation or incurring damnation. When a book is said to mean such a variety of things, men are not determined what it means, which we should think the first necessity towards teaching the truth of anything.

We take religion, therefore, to mean, in the popular and practical sense, a collection of dogmas. The etymology of religion may be binding together, which is a farce to say signifies union, when from its nature and practice it only breeds disunion. It seems equally absurd to say religion is morality, when it sets itself above morality, and says it cannot be judged by the common rules of morality. When religion will not allow any other morality to be, it puts itself in the place of all morality. Materialism and morality are in the Bible, and have always been, and are essentially opposed to religion. Religion will only have as much of morality as it cannot do without, and as subordinate to religion. Morality ought to be the supreme judge of religion. Morality is, we believe, the spirit of the Bible, and by morality we should judge religion and the Bible. When Christ lived with sinners beyond measure, according to Barnabas, he could not have been for exterminating the Canaanites, and other cruelties of the Jews. When he said works done in this world alone saved at the day of judgment, and not faith, we accept morality as the knowledge of the doctrine.

However, Bishop Tomline says by errors not material, he means errors which do not interfere with the means of salvation, in which we should agree, but not with him. We should differ about what are the means, and what is salvation. But the indulgence which he claims for the Bible, we would have extended to our book. Our object is the same as in all inquiries, the same as in the Bible, to ascertain in all things the truth, and the truth of the Bible. All must acknowledge the Bible has been the occasion of many errors and falsehoods. Sir Isaac Newton said, in a preface to some of the scientific truths which he first laid before the world, that no doubt errors might be found in his writings on the subject, but that it was the business of the reader not to detect errors, or the faultiness of the process, to arrive at truth, but to find out truth itself. We may say the same of the Bible, and of our inquiry, and recommend the same to our readers, and to those engaged in an investigation, which they will think of much higher importance than astronomy or natural philosophy, as involving not only the human, but the eternal interests of mankind. We have heard of great discoveries being made, the proofs of which were erroneous, and the reliable conclusions incorrectly worked out. We say this, because in theological inquiries, it is usual to find out alleged errors of detail as destructive of the results, which is very easy when the subject of inquiry is the whole of the Bible, contradictory passages of which are appealed to as having the same weight, or being equally infallible, or only acknowledged to be reconcileable by being made to agree with the opinion of the reconciler.

Errors, therefore, may be found in the present work. But the errors in the proof do not alter the truth of the result. The refuge of the religious against infidelity has been to find out errors in the arguments and statements of the infidel. The religious are actually indebted to the Bible for its uncertainty, its want of infallibility, and all evidence of inspiration,

always having at hand thereby a show of errors to set up against their adversaries.

The Bible does not say it was inspired. Some of the prophets said they were inspired to write. If authority is to be given to them on that account, authority must be taken away from those who do not claim inspiration—for instance, from Moses in Genesis. God said he inspired evil as well as good. Christ said the same of God. He said particularly that the Old Testament, and the writings attributed to Moses, even the laws of Moses, were not infallible. Christ seems to have come particularly to do away with the idea of inspiration and infallibility, as with the idea of all religion. The Jews at the time interpreted the Scriptures literally, and not only interpreted the sense literally, but considered every letter, every word, and number in it, or formed out of it, to be sacred, which Christ condemned. Even Paul speaks of the Bible generally as good for instruction, in contradiction to its being inspired or infallible. When he says all Scripture, divinely inspired, is useful, it has not the signification that all Scripture is divinely inspired, as in our translation. Besides, divinely inspired means good and evil, the right and the wrong; and how they can be each morally infallible, we are at a loss to conceive. Infallibility is as impossible as no change; and divine inspiration means no more than that all things come from God, or nature, in which sense anybody may believe in divine inspiration. The orthodox may say inspiration is contrary to nature, is out of nature, is impossible, in which we agree with them; and therefore we say is not, and they say is.

Though giving pretensions to infallibility, the Bible is probably a book the least infallible; though producing so many dogmas it is a book the least dogmatic in the world. It is the want of infallibility and dogmatism which has given rise to such a variety of dogmas. Instead of speaking of itself as infallible and inspired, and pronouncing dogmatically on things, it

speaks as if delivering an idea, and those who mention it, speak of it as liable to error, and to be judged by the ideas of others. So the Jews, so Christ, so the Apostles spoke of it. The only dogmatic part of the Bible may be said to have been against all dogma. It laid down the moral law dogmatically, and spoke against idolatry, other Gods, and the common idea of God, against all religion.

Inspiration would prove there is a failure in design. The theory of inspiration may be said to prove there is no God, because if there was one, and he used the means of inspiration, if he inspired revelation, he could not have so entirely failed in his purpose.

The religious of the world, who uphold the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, at the same time in their dogmas deny such qualities to the Bible by their not being able to prove those dogmas to be in the Bible, or else by so many proving different and contradictory dogmas from the Bible.

The Bible, it is very well known, means a book—all the literature of the Jews in one volume. Even if it can strictly be said to be that, when there are two languages or more in it. We should think it rather extraordinary to say that Bossuet, the French divines, Voltaire, and the Encyclopedists in their language—Jeremy Taylor and the English divines, Bolingbroke, Pope, Byron, Shelley, in their language, with history, statutes, erotic poetry, ballads, legend and fairy tales, natural and moral philosophy, were equally divinely inspired and infallible. It would be still more extraordinary to try and make them think all the same as the produce of one person. We should suppose that no other could be the result than that which has happened, that such a variety of thinkers would produce as great a variety of thinkers. Only we might think it extraordinary, on the other hand, that what was said to be made out of the Bible, was totally different from what was in it. The conclusion come to would be, that as effects resemble their

causes, that which occasioned the contrary of divine inspiration and infallibility could not be divinely inspired or infallible more than any other body of literature, but rather less so from its antecedents of antiquity, language, and other causes, and the experience which it had given. When a thing has been said to be divine and not human, and therefore it would be supposed superior, it has always produced the effect of being less than human, inferior to humanity. For instance, differences divine have never arisen from purely human productions. The English do not fight over their literature. We need not recapitulate what religion has really done in its own proper nature. Many have come in its name with all sorts of good things. Religion means dogmas that must be believed. When it is anything else it is not religion, but the thing which it pretends to be, whether morality or science.

The principal inquiries in this book are the sum of what is taught in the Bible about a God, a Providence, and a future state, the Messianic idea, religion and morality, the nature of things and of men. We shall inquire whether God and Christ are ideas or facts, or in other words, whether they personally existed. We shall inquire whether the Bible is a revelation of a God or a revelation that we know nothing about him; whether the Bible is not written against the revelation of a God, and whether the revelation of a God and of religion is not quite external to the Bible. (Froude's 'Job.')

The religious say, as the Rev. Mr. Conybeare, that they have a complete revelation of a God, and then that God is not to be found out by searching—his ways are past finding out. We should agree in the latter result, which is taken from the Bible. We should agree with the Athanasian creed, that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are all equally incomprehensible. But that there is a complete revelation of God, of the one and of the three from beginning to end, in the past and in the future, contained in the contradictory creeds of antagonistic Christian churches,

said to be drawn from the Bible, and must be believed, and at the same time that God is not to be found out by searching, his ways are past finding out—we must think are untenable ideas, when endeavoured to be held in conjunction, and as great a contradiction in the conclusion as in the beginning, in the effects as in the causes.

Infidels are taunted with not knowing, misquoting, and misinterpreting the Bible. The same accusation may be made against Jesus Christ, Paul, and the New Testament writers. We find in Paul to the Romans, xi. 33-36., 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, *and his ways past finding out!* For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been *his counsellor?* or who hath first given to him and it shall *be recompensed unto him* again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' According to the marginal reference, the reader will find that Paul's observations are made up from Job. xi. 7. and xxxv. 6, 7, 8, and Isaiah. The reference is not to the dogmas of Christianity, but to the ignorance of people about God, and the making of the world. The Rev. Mr. Conybeare also answers Professor Jowett by quoting the first passage from Job, 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' The question is put in the mouth of Zophar the Naamathite, who wrongfully accuses Job, and is one of those against whom the wrath of the Lord is said to be kindled, for not having spoken the thing that was right as his servant Job had done.

Zophar, Paul, and Conybeare, are religious characters, and profess to have found out God and his ways to men. When, however, difficulties to their views of God are suggested, then their God is not to be found out. Job and Jowett agreed that God could not be made consistent with any scheme of religion. Paul is obliged to come to the conclusion he does in Romans xi., when he cannot explain how God, as he says, chooses some and condemns others. Equally Atheistic and negative of God's moral in-

terference in the world is the justification by Paul of God taken from Elisha, who is not reprov'd by God, and whose sentiments therefore may be supposed to be orthodox. 'If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.' He says, as we say, that morality is only between men, that God has nothing to do with it. We, therefore, charge both Paul and Conybeare with using Scripture as if for them when it is against them. Conybeare does not give his authority, and Paul never does. Both Paul and Conybeare really are driven to Atheism, and Jowett is the Theist; he endeavours to make the nature of things consistent, and do away with the anomalies of religion.

Paul, however, as well as Jowett, reconciles the contradictions by coming to Pantheism or Materialism, 'for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' Good and evil are equally from God, through God, and to God, the principle for which Professor Jowett contends, and against which the Rev. Mr. Conybeare, who cannot see so many sides of a question, as Jowett says Paul can, resolutely and blindly protests in favour of another and a disturbing power. The religious cannot account for things without a God, and when they have him, they cannot account for him without another God—the Devil. They are opposed to all unity.

As to God being personal, which is said by the Reverends Kingsley and Conybeare. We have some regard to our subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the first of which says, 'There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.' A person must be an effect; the creature, not the Creator; and Whately, on Bacon's essay on Atheism, says, quoting Paul, that all those who worship the creature and not the Creator, and false Gods, are Atheists.

Kingsley, in 'Glaucus,' says they are all Atheists or Materialists who believe in a spirit as God. Whately says they are all Atheists who do not believe God is a spirit. The Bible says 'God is a spirit.'

These gentlemen believe what they like of the Bible. The Thirty-Nine articles, instead of restricting them, was to give them, which we claim, as much liberty or latitudinarianism as possible. Inquiry into the Scriptures and texts out of them are alone made necessary by the articles. You may doubt, you may believe what you like. We are only required to draw our inferences from the Scriptures; we are given no standard; no light but our own by which to judge them. Nor is there infallibility or inspiration declared by any article to be in the Bible. In the sixth article, the Scriptures are stated to be alone sufficient for salvation. The article is entitled, 'Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.' It cannot be the merely having them, but the doing what is right in them, following the moral law, which is meant as sufficient for salvation, and which is said in the next, the seventh article, on the Old Testament. Therefore those who possess the Bible, and follow its rules of morality, or those who do not possess it, but follow its rules and unconsciously fulfil it, are Christians, and are saved without any belief in dogmas, except the belief implied by the practice of morality. The sixth article says, 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be required as an *article of faith*, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' You are not to believe any article individually, unless it can be proved; and whatever the articles assert, they reserve the proofs to be judged of afterwards, and the amount of subscription to be given to them. That it is the business of everybody to inquire, and not receive dogmas or belief from anybody else, church or council, is mentioned in the twentieth and twenty-first articles on 'the authority of the church and of

general councils.' 'It is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.' And speaking of councils, 'Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it be declared that they be taken out of the Holy Scriptures.' The ultimate appeal is to Scripture and ourselves: inquiry is not to be done for us by church or council, nor by ministers or priests who are not mentioned in the articles. Inquiry is to be made into the Scriptures by everybody who has them; and if he has them not, or cannot read, inquiry is to be made without them. Moses, Christ, and Paul appealed to the man: they said the judge is within you, all heaven and God is within you.

The seventh article is as follows:—

'The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof, ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments *which are called moral.*'

THE PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION OF THE BIBLE.

'We may speak much and yet come short: wherefore in sum He is all'
ECCLESIASTICUS, xliii., 27.

GENESIS.

THE Book of Genesis in Hebrew has no other title than the first word translated 'In the beginning.' Genesis, a Greek word, has the same meaning, signifying how things were caused or began, taken from the particular manner of causation or commencement, called generation. The names Beginning and Generation would declare, therefore, that they treated about the origin of all things—of the world, humanity, and the Jewish nation. It is the book of beginnings and endings, and of successions of time, called generations. According to the Douay translation of the Bible, the word beginning is not confined to the first verse, but is used in the eighth verse of the second chapter, after the conclusion of the first creation, to mark a later proceeding in the creation of all things, when man was made. In Ezekiel xxxvi. 2, we find the beginning used for restoration of the Jews, and compared in terms with the generation or creation of the first chapter, and with other beginnings in the Bible.

'I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings.' See also Ephes. iii. 9; Colos. i. 18.

Genesis, the Greek word, and the present title of the book, means generation. The Bible speaks of itself in the beginning as the account of generations. The word Genesis or generation is derived from giving birth or begetting. In idea, therefore, the Mosaic, Greek, and other mythologies assimilate, however they may be separated in other ways. Genii, or the supposed acting powers of the universe, Volney says, are derived from the same word expressing generation; and, therefore, from the same idea. There are very strong expressions of mere physical generation and creation ascribed to God in the Bible; much more so in the original than in the translation, says Dr. Donaldson. He refers to Jeremiah xxxi. 27; and there are other verses in the prophets to the same effect. Ezekiel xxxvi., Hosea ii. 23, Zech. x. 9. In chapter ii. 4, the style alters from beginning to genera-

tion. We are not told that 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' but 'These are the generations of the heaven and the earth.' Writing history by generations probably arose from the idea of impersonating God in everything, and everything in God; the universe is made to come from God, and everything is generated. There is God the Father, and God the Son. When the Gods are said to have created man after their image, it is also said, male and female created he them, as if these were the principal points of resemblance. Dr. Donaldson says the language in the original is much more significant of the same conclusion. As if in generation only man resembled the Gods, they are told to increase and multiply and replenish the earth. Centuries of events are depicted in a few generations of men. The generation of man is reckoned to be about twenty-five years. Life was then lengthened to near a thousand years. God is made material in his nature and man divine. The mixed character of God and man, the generations of Gods and men are avowed in the first four verses of the fourth chapter. Jupiter was the father of Gods and men. Nevertheless, in Greek mythology, there was an after creation of mankind in opposition to Jupiter, by means of Prometheus. The second estate of man was alike marked in mythology and the Scriptures by the progress and civilisation of men. In both relations we see the same object, whatever the variations may be. Man would be as the Gods—have a knowledge of the good and evil, and live for ever, and he continually falls from it. This is represented by God telling him, 'My spirit shall not always strive with man.' The spirit means that state of Deity to which man aspires 'for that he also is flesh.' He is man, not God; and, as to being immortal and living for a thousand years, 'his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.' Prometheus, which means providence, prudence, foresight, or wisdom, is punished as the serpent, the emblem of wisdom.

'In the beginning' has not, in the first verse of the Bible, the meaning of eternal or everlasting, sometimes attempted to be attached to it. 'In the beginning' is finite, and not infinite. Professor Bauer, the elder, says the Jews in the Old Testament had not the idea of everlasting or eternal in the sense we use it.

It is not our province to argue there is no beginning. That there can be no beginning is a conclusion arrived at in every metaphysical work. There is rather a lively ridicule of a beginning by Schopenhauer to be found in the *Westminster Review*. There is good argument against it in the Hindoo philosophy, to be found in Hardy's 'Budhism.' Baden Powell, in his book upon physics rather than metaphysics—viz., his 'Unity of Worlds,' shows there is no beginning. Even in the Rev. Mr. Thompson's 'Burnett Prize Essay,' we think we read to the same effect—there is no beginning. We copy from the Rev. Mr. Mozley, of Oxford, on Predestination:—'I move in the direction of a substance and a cause in nature, which I cannot

find; my thought reaches after infinity, but the effort is abortive, and the idea remains for ever only beginning. Physics, metaphysics, infidelity, and religion, alike renounce a beginning. Though not in the first verse, it is said elsewhere in the Bible, that there is no beginning and no end; and our Prayer-book comes to the same conclusion. But beginning and First Cause, beginning and God are so mixed up together, it may be said, if there be no beginning, there is no God. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. If there is no end, there was no beginning. Time is a circle; the centre everywhere, the circumference nowhere.

In the beginning, therefore, meant no more than that which went before, and gave precedence to, causes; the first causes which created the heavens and the earth. Causes and effects are best represented by Genesis, male and female, active and passive. The active, and, as it were, masculine, powers which acted on the passive, and, as it were, feminine matter. Therefore, matter or earth is feminine, and is called the common mother of us all.

The primitive action of God upon the earth was Messianic—that is, he brought it from evil to good, from a worse to a better condition. There was chaos, and he introduced order. There was darkness, and he gave light. He declared it all to be good; therefore, it was bad before, or else, if good, he made it better. Every term employed has been used for the Messiah, and every act of creation has been a figure of the Messiah. The Messiah was good. He is said to have made the world. He was the spirit of God. He was the light of the world, and the world was buried in darkness. He was the word which spoke and called things by their names. He made man after his own likeness, and he became man. ‘In the *beginning* was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was *life*, and life was the *light* of men, and the light shineth in *darkness*, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.’

The Messianic idea has its origin in (‘the beginning’) the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis. The creation comes as an improvement of a former creation, and the creation is always compared to another creation which will be so much better. Succeeding writers do not revert to the fall of man and the corruption of things, but speak of the earth as made good and evil in the beginning. They receive the evil and the good as equally God’s making or the state of things. God does not in the beginning only, but on other occasions, appears as a Messiah to the world. An improved state of mankind, and of the heavens, and of the earth, was to succeed the deluge. On all occasions God appears alternately as good and evil, the punisher and redeemer of the universe and of mankind. He is

always beginning and always ending. Language and description was exhausted by the prophets to paint a better state of things that was ever coming. God was perpetually renewing covenants and pointing to a better world than the present as the abode of future generations. The thirty-sixth of Ezekiel may be read as an example of how the face of nature and the heart of man were to be changed. There the reference is more particularly to the Jews and the Holy Land, but the changes as still more wonderful when extended to the whole world. The Jews are the first fruits, but the Gentile world is to reap the benefit of their crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

The Lord was to be *known* by this change in the state of things, by visible signs and facts. The evidence was in the facts, and they were to prove the Lord. There was no faith or belief required as necessary to salvation, or before the event. The event and the object were to be attained at once, and they were to know the Lord. There was to be no barren faith in God without works on his part. There was no extraordinary evidence to issue in a hope; 'the evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for.' A creation was related of the Lord; men were not required to believe it. He promised them a creation after they were made, of which they were to be witnesses, and then they were not required to believe in the Lord, but were to know the Lord.

If God made men in his likeness, and afterwards appeared as man, man and God must have been the same corporeally. It is difficult to understand how, if he were the maker of the world, and came into the world, the world should not know him; or, if he were the light, that there should not be light, but still incomprehensible darkness.

But the Christian improvement of the world was very different to what God had declared through the prophets. Christ is said to have made the world, and, therefore, one would think, did not require such a revolution in himself and it to change nature. If nature was to be changed, so, in the Christian scheme, was the maker of it. He was crucified as the world had been enduring a long crucifixion. The heavens and the earth were to pass away, and a new heaven and a new earth were to supply their place.

Inquiry may be made whether the Messianic kingdom in the Bible is the same throughout, and whether in the end it was like what had been pictured of it in the beginning; and whether what was conceived of Christ's coming after his death, and preached by Paul, was ever fulfilled; and whether the future state, the present phasis of Christianity, is better for man than the goodness of the earth and the progress of mankind desired and predicted by the prophets.

When, therefore, it is said God shall be known by this improvement of the world, what we should call progress, it amounts to no more than that God is this progress. God is in man. God is reflected in the mirror of man; God is seen in human likeness. External objects and men are united

after human fashion. God is material motion infinite, and human and moral progress finite. All these revelations are the ideas of men, figures of their ideas. The word is called God, and human is named divine inspiration.

As the verses from the first to the fifth of Genesis i., are physically and literally impossible, they must have been figurative. Light and darkness, day and night, creation and destruction, are the broad distinctions of existence. God called the light good, but he did not the darkness. The succeeding verses explain what was in the first, the beginning. The beginning was when the world was darkness and chaos. The universe or matter was the beginning, was in existence, and God was the power which fashioned it into form and life. The spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters was motion. Motion was the cause that put the heavens and earth into their places, and the effects became in turn the causes, and the heavens and the earth made light and darkness, day and night.

God, in creating light and darkness, day and night, created good and evil before man was made. It is impossible to say, therefore, there was not evil: and if there was a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there must have been evil. But man has never seen anything but chaos and evil in the world; the more religions there have been the more he has had a knowledge of good and evil; and St. Paul did not allow that God had made anything good in heaven or earth, but all was chaos in matter and groaning in spirit. Nature was a woman travailling with child to give birth to a better world. The Messianic idea or state was, therefore, formed upon the creation of the world. But the creation of the world was really discovered, and the operation of things acknowledged—motion and progress—‘as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.’ As good and evil have its origin in the creation, so also the Messianic idea from evil to good, from bad to a better state.

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,’ expresses the physical relations in which we see outward things of this world; the always beginning and always ending, the apparent causes and effects without pretending to know them. ‘God,’ in our translation, is in the Hebrew Gods, and means the causes or powers, not one but many, which are seen. Created does not mean made out of nothing, but matter fashioned into the existing forms of the heavens and the earth. Drs. Bucklands and Pusey are of this opinion. Created is also said to be creates, not the perfect, or the past, but the present in the original Hebrew, a singular verb to a plural noun. Christian theologians have drawn from it evidence of their Trinity. Words cannot be admitted without meaning, the letter without the spirit. The Gods create would have a philosophical and material meaning; plurality in unity, expressed by the many working in the one. Creates is present and always at work.

Beginning is the same as God; I am the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, meaning infinity. There is no beginning and no end. It may be said, as we have observed, if there was no beginning there was no God, and if there was a beginning there was no God infinite. In beginning or by beginning, as by ending, the idea of God would be cancelled; he would not be always without beginning and without end; omnipresent and infinite. The words 'beginning,' God or Gods, created or creates, successively limit and make material the causation of the world. The Gods are parts, and not the one or the whole. The effects are produced by the causes, and not any one cause. In theology, Polytheism is more natural than Theism. Only in materialism is there one God, the whole. Theology cannot by one abstraction represent a Deity. Theology is obliged to have recourse to several abstractions. There is a God and there is a devil; there is good and there is evil. Religion, in its history, is the revelation of Polytheism. All arises from having a God, or a person distinct from the universe. There is plurality in unity, and theology has made an imperfect effort to reconcile contradictions by a Trinity in Unity. The triangle is the theological figure instead of the circle; the finite instead of the infinite. As a science separate from the whole, theology is an endless Athanasian creed. Taken in the spirit, and not in the letter, it is a figure of nature—the union of contradictions; there are not two; there is one in all things; there are not two Gods; there is one God.

If time was before God, there was no God. If God began and then ended, there was no God. In a succession of causes and effects there can be no God. If there was time, there must have been matter and motion before God. Beginning could not be out of nothing. Man's understanding cannot arrive at a beginning before all things; therefore, there is no conceivable beginning. Man cannot conceive anything without a cause; or conceive God making itself. If we cannot conceive an effect without a cause, we must believe in the priority of matter. To believe in God is, therefore, to believe in nothing. That a something out of nothing came, and that a nothing plays the part of something; that nothing created something out of nothing, are words put in the place of things, when we had much better let the things remain as more comprehensible, than unexplained after this fashion. 'In the beginning,' therefore, means always.

To make God a person might be said to be blank Atheism, though the Rev. Mr. Kingsley says the contrary—that the immaterialisation of the Deity or God, an all pervading Spirit, is blank Materialism. If there is a person there is no God; and as it is allowed that there is no person, therefore, there is no God. When the Scripture proceeds in every respect to identify God with man, it is an entire negation of Deity. There is no place in the universe for a limited Deity. A Deity above ourselves, an infinite and invisible Deity, may be better asserted than one on a level with ourselves.

We cannot imagine when the interference of such an effect could be required. When God is introduced, or the Gods personally, it is to enumerate the causes or the course of time, which were assigned as probabilities in the creation of the world and the progress of events. God is an introduction of man to explain the causes of things past, and as man would wish him to be in the present and the future; God is all that man thinks, as Bossuet says; and one man has as much right to his idea of God as another. God takes all the human forms of thought, mythological, moral, and historical. God, therefore, in the Bible narrative, is only the representative of man in the presence of time and nature. We continue in the same idea, though not in the use of the same words, at the present day; when God, under the name of Providence, is made to do everything, however contradictory. God did not only, in the beginning, make man after his own image; man has been always making God after his own image. God is the mode of thought.

The simple and general expression of facts, as far as they were known to man, in the first verse of Genesis, neither acknowledging the unknown in the infinite, but confining itself to the positive philosophy of present phenomena, excludes all the details which follow from being received for facts.

As the first verse was the abstract philosophy of the subject, so afterwards begins the mythology or science of ideas; philosophy conveyed in fables. We have to discover the idea in the alleged facts, which are not actual, but imagined to convey the idea. To take the story for the truth and not the moral, is the same as taking fables for facts, and neglecting the moral appended to them. Such, however, is the present case of all *religions* derived from the Bible. Theologians have never seen further than the alleged facts, which they have reduced to the level of the most literal signification, and made the most minute circumstances the most important and the most momentous articles of belief.

That there was no person or persons intended is evident from the whole tenor of the Old Testament, which is to prevent our supposing there was one, either like ourselves or any other living being. The ancients could only conceive things were begotten or made. Under the former, the Greek mythologists imagined the succession of all things, which meant no more than the succession of events. Under the latter, the Mosaic cosmogony was conceived, which, having less of fancy, more approached materialism. Both became necessarily impersonations. The people shaped their ideas into the only forms in which they were capable of inventing it on receiving them. Philosophers would, therefore, convey their knowledge by the same means. Both the Greek and the Mosaic mythology would represent the same ideas—that causes or powers created all things.

If the moral in Genesis is not seen in the story and expressed, it is in

other parts of the Bible which are didactic. We must read the Bible by its concordance; one part by another, one idea with another, and not by extraordinary transitions from one set of facts to another, from one set of opinions to another. It is acknowledged from the beginning to the end of the Bible, by Jesus himself, that what was taught in the Old Testament was accommodated to the sense of the people. It was not absolute, but relative truth. Origen said that God taught untruths; and there was no more accredited belief in the Christian Church than the esoteric character of the stories in the Bible.

There is the outward world, and there are ourselves; the objective and the subjective. The first verse is the objective, and the rest is the subjective. When we come to the end of the creation, and are told that we are made in the image of the Gods, the moral is, the idea is, the subjective and human nature of the cosmogony framed.

It will be said of the ordinary fable, the moral is given at the end, showing its purpose, so as to prevent people believing in the story. There is no moral appended to the story in the Bible, or in mythology; and, therefore, their narrative must be literally believed. But the fact of having a moral appended to fables shows that there is that want to all of them, and that if not written or given it must be added by the reader or others. The fable and the moral only show a later style of composition, when more was done by man for man; man then had less to think for himself, and the ancient fable or mythology was going out. The tendency of every age is to simplify mental communication, and to leave less to the understanding and imagination of the public.

We think the moral is appended to the history of creation, and very constantly repeated in all its works—viz., that everything was good, and all was very good. All its parts were good, and conducive to the whole which was very good. Nature knows but one thing; we may call it good, but it is order or existence. Man afterwards invents good and evil, endless divisions and Polytheisms.

After man had made God, or the Gods in his image, it was necessary that he should be reminded of the fact; and, therefore, it is said, 'Let us make man after our image.' An equality reigns among the works of creation, the animals are spoken to and blessed; and not man alone, but all are found to be very good. When the Gods are introduced in another and the next place, speaking of man among themselves, and ridiculing his pretensions, it is said by Pascal to be irony. We think there is the same irony when man is represented as having attributed to himself all the works of creation—that is, the Gods making them as he himself would make them. The narrative brings in the Gods, saying that they were male and female, as man and woman, and that in their likeness they made us. We can see nothing, except in our own likeness, which was

just shown by the work of days and rest on the seventh. That irony is largely used in the Bible, we have instances in three places by the Deity himself, and we have the authority of Horne and German writers for it. Besides drama is the first form of composition, and irony was an essential part of it. Plays were satires. Our word satire is taken from Satyr, who was the personage of the drama in its origin. Therefore, irony or satire may be expected in the composition of the Bible, if coeval with all other ancient compositions. A fable is itself a satire. Besides, *ex uno disce omnes*, if at the end of the very next tale the moral is conveyed in irony, we may safely look for its element before. It is also natural that dialogue should be the earliest form of composition. It is taking down in writing what men say. God is made to speak to the universe, and receive the fact for answer. At last he speaks to others or himself, the constituent parts of himself, to suit the exigencies of composition, or convey the moral of the fable.

Which have we reason to believe was the intention of the Bible to turn the Gods into one or into none? The Christian dogmatists say the moral of Genesis in the creation was to turn the Gods into one, so they translate it, and make of the facts against them a support of their dogma, the Trinity in Unity. May not the moral of Genesis be extended with much more truth, and be said to be against all Gods, one God or many, as the whole of the Bible professes to be directed against every species of idolatry, and God to be all and not part?

No one will contend that God and his relations to the works described in the first chapter of Genesis can be all taken literally. It cannot be thought that God saw or spoke, that he required light to see, that he used all the senses as we do. He could not, as the Douay Bible says, have spoken to the fishes and the birds, 'who were incapable of receiving a precept.'

If these receptive faculties were not in the fishes or birds, there were no such relative qualities in a God or man. We need not then trouble ourselves about the work of days being inconsistent with geology and the sciences, if the lesser part were fable, the greater was all fable. All without was fable, and within must be found the truth of the idea.

It is acknowledged that a fact has the principal feature of fable, animals in converse with a God or man. If fable, then, we need not trouble ourselves about the contradictions, such as making the light before the sun, or the beauty of the expression and the fact, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' The beauty of a myth is that it is open to a variety of meanings. In that it has the advantage over a fable pointed with a moral. Muller says of Greek myths, they may not only have meanings different, but contradictory. The Fathers thought the myths of the Old Testament were given to us to exercise our understanding.

The Fathers said God told untruths that we might discern the truth. The untruths were the stories or the facts, the truth was the idea. The Fathers understood the Bible in a totally different sense to what we do. The unlimited licence of ideas and of interpretation probably gave rise to the dogmas, which were ideas or opinions as well as those from whence they were derived. What once were all ideas are now hardened into facts. The Fathers called the stories of the Old Testament lies, as Paul claimed the licence to make them. But to lie is said etymologically to mean to cover a thing; and the word 'mentir' (to lie, in French), signifies to have in your mind what you do not express. When Chrysostom said a good lie is a good thing, he probably referred to the fabulous nature of theology. We do not confine the first chapter of Genesis to the moral, that everything was good, and all was good. We imagine there are a quantity of philosophical, physical, metaphysical, and moral meanings in the first chapter of Genesis. That light was born of darkness was personally represented in the mythology of the Greeks. That light proceeds out of darkness is the phenomenon of our own eyes. Order comes out of chaos, morning is born of night. Light has ever conveyed the idea of life, also of intelligence, or spirit—darkness, of death and evil. That God spoke may mean fate, as the word fate is taken from the word to speak. There is also contained in it the logos or word, the idea, the wisdom of the Old Testament, the word of the New, which is spoken of in John, and which was dwelt upon by Plato, Philo, and the Alexander school of Christians. The word was alternately a mysterious nothing, the unknown cause of all things, or was represented in an idea or person. We have the Gods, the causes, the spirit, and a person alternately in the first chapter of Genesis. We have Greek mythology and Polytheism, Theism and Materialism, philosophy and fable. All this together would be contradictory read literally and by modern strictness of interpretation, but in a collection of myths or ideas, it is perfectly allowable. As light represents life, so darkness represents death, and out of death proceeds life. Light also represents good; and darkness, evil.

Out of evil, therefore, came good in our estimation. To say it was good, is to say it had been evil. It was unnecessary to say we return to that which we came from. The creation is ever going on in us and other things. We go back in death as it were to chaos and to darkness, and we come out of it again into fresh light and life. As light is life, and life is good, so also, by a poetical and moral abstraction, we make out of them love. The spirit of God moved on the face of the waters: we are born of water and of the spirit. Physically and psychologically, material creation, life or soul, are in union, and alternately seem to proceed out of each other.

We know that heat and water animate all creation; life issues out of the two. Water and fire, therefore, have each been considered the principle of

all things with philosophers. They have been introduced in mythology, and sometimes set in the order of generation as successive causes. Such an attempt seems to have been made in Genesis. After having made all the causes in the one produce at once the heavens and the earth, all the different causes in the long elaboration of time are set forth. We think there was more philosophy in producing all these causes than in assigning all effects to one, separate from the many, at once, instead of all time, and out of nothing in the Christian scheme, instead of the 'something' of Materialism. By the division of time and things, all separate unity of being is done away with; the eternal and immutable are joined in the mutable and transitory. By giving these two processes the immediate and the gradual, the Genesis would make the one do away with the other, if they were not intended as philosophical, but considered as philosophical. There can be no God creating out of nothing, or division of divinity into days and nights, labour and refreshment. By the evolution of eternal matter, or eternal reason, as Mr. Jowett and the Hegelians say, under whatever aspects you may put it, is only meant there is no God, but man as a person, and matter as the whole.

Every one has heard of Venus, or love, rising out of the sea, Cupid and Psyche, the animal and the mental life, the body and the soul.

God is love, says the Christian, the animating and continual love of the universe. All express the same ideas, however personally they may represent them, and idolise them, instead of confining themselves to the primitive idea. The idea, therefore, is that God is good, that God is love, is light, is life, which can be the only foundation of religion or morality. We desire good, however, in nature; it may not be to us good, but evil; and the evil to us is equally good to nature. Our origin is good, for it is life. We have worshipped the life in the individual self instead of the whole; thought of ourselves more than of one another, and the rest of the creation.

The idea of the Bible is that good is in accordance with our human nature; that it would do away with God as a person, and leave him one among other principles, the moral principle of good. When the Bible would rise to unity, the authors considered God collectively as one without regard to man.

In morality there is a variety of principles; in matter there is but one and all. In the former, man is the subject and the object; in the latter, materialism, there is but the whole.

It would appear from the Bible that matter first was when God or the Gods were made to fashion it into form; that darkness first was when God created light. But if the matter were the cause before the effect, the effect would be without God; he would be always between cause and effect; that is, nowhere. We are recalled to the more philosophical idea in the Bible,

when we are told that God made the darkness and the light, the evil and the good, death and life. The material idea is there expressed, that they all came from the same source and unite in the same stream; that they are all one in the whole, and only divided to us. In reality, that there is no good and evil except to us; it is only how we choose to classify the order of things. But we are guided against supposing that there is a moral governor of the universe who created evil. If we are to have an idea in a person, as the First Cause of all things, it must be that he is good and his effects are good; else we should think there was an evil creation, as some did of this world, and that the effects were evil; or that there were two persons good and evil, antagonistic and finite, instead of one infinite in the whole of the universe. In order to account for it, we should invent the origin of evil, when it only existed in our own imagination. If God did good, if God is good, and man is God and God is man, it naturally follows that we should do good to each other and all things, and love light rather than darkness, good than evil, life than death. As the Bible says, each has been set before us and we are to choose. Good has begun the world, has been the vivifying power, the cause of the world, the final cause, the beginning and end, the cause and effect. We are to do to each other as we would be done unto. Man has imagined that the world was made good for him, and that it depends on his conduct towards others, to make the best of it.

There are other truths to be extracted from the fable of the creation. We suppose that all Christians would repudiate the idea that a God literally did labour on six days and rest on the seventh; but it may convey a truth that man being made after God, or the active causes of the universe, he should labour rather than live idly the great majority of his time; and assist the creation not only in multiplying his own species, but in making the earth put forth her productive powers, in subduing and having dominion over the earth. Nature is always at work. Man has to work. At the end of the six days God is made to say, it was all very good, not only what he had made, but what he had commanded. Labour was good—multiplication of the species was good. When it says that 'they were finished,' and God is made to rest on the seventh day, it does not say that it was good. The day or the occasion was made sacred; it was religion, but it had nothing to do with man, and was not declared good. Man only works. God does not work, or there is no God, and man is made in the image of the worker, not of the restler; of the Creator, not of the destroyer; of life, not of death. Therefore God, in that he is good, is made after man, not after God, as not man and having nothing to do with matter. We have the moral expressed in the philosophical idea that all is alternate motion and rest, creation and destruction; one is lost in the other, and the contradictions make union. We live and are no more. We have day, which is life; and night, which is death; winter and summer corresponding; the lesser

divisions become the greater whole; days and nights, times, seasons, and years become life, and death rest. Again the lesser circles are made into larger, eternal living and dying, destruction and creation.

Divines and philosophers have alike acknowledged that the narrative of the creation was directed against the prevailing superstitions of the times. There was Sabaism, or the worship of the sun, stars, and host of heaven; there was the worship of animals by the Egyptians existing at the time. It is, therefore, allowed that it was not the form but the idea that was intended to be conveyed; and, while the truth was given, it was in a form that was not true.

If the infinity of God was wished to be displayed by making him the Creator of the sun and of the stars, the object would not be answered, but would be defeated by supposing him the maker in detail of everything, day by day, as man makes things. God must not be limited in existence or time, or he is finite. The division of the works of creation was intended, therefore, it is said, to show the less was included in the greater, the part in the whole; that part would not make a part, or more than the part, or the less the greater. The Theists would stop at God; but the legitimate conclusion would be with the Pantheist and Atheist, that all was in God, and God was all.

It is certain that we cannot contemplate the universe in existence, except as it is altogether, the parts acting upon each other. As there could not be light without the other planets, so we cannot suppose one day's works without the works of the other days, nor how they could have existed without the assistance of each other. It is not, however, to be supposed that all those who are said to have worshipped the sun and the stars, worshipped them as Gods, but rather as causes, or the Elohim. Therefore, the powers of the host of heaven may be said to have made themselves, and to rule the universe by day and by night. The Polytheism of time would be as bad, if not worse, than the Polytheism of the many in the one. But divisions of times and of causes would be the same. Men would make physical facts and ideas, the objective and subjective into persons. Religion would not be able to understand ideas without impersonating them, and would cry 'Atheism' against those who would keep to the ideas, because not able to understand them. We see, however much the Jews or the Bible tried to confine the people to ideas, they would perpetually impersonate them, and commit the idolatry of the second commandment. The idea, God, become a person, good and evil became persons, finally, the idea of a Messiah, or Christ, and a kingdom of heaven became impersonated.

While the savage impersonated, the philosopher would idealise from the impossibility of allowing causes to be persons. Other ideas, besides the physical conception of thunder and lightning, would be impersonated as they arose; ideas of the past and the future besides the present. The

à posteriori, or design argument for a Deity, is still the impersonation of the savage, while Atheists, Infidels, Hegel, Jowitt, however called, would materialise or idealise the Deity as the whole, or abstraction of the whole, as the representative of the all and the one.

The heavens and the constellations were thought to be the dwelling-places of the Divinity, and worship was directed towards them. They were thought to be ministers of the Deity; and when the material influence of the heavens upon the earth was considered, and could not be denied, it appeared towards man a moral power, and became impersonated. Idolatry, Theism, Atheism, must be judged by the idea and the effects upon the people. It cannot be said that worshipping an idol does any more harm than an imagined person. The good is in the abstraction of the idea, and the evil is in the false basis of things. The Deity should be all matter, or no matter; but not matter and man. Our ideas of evil are transferred to the Deity when he is personal. We transfer ourselves into the Divinity, but not all of us. As many divisions of nations, societies, families, and individuals into which we are separated, become the Deity. The upper and the lower classes, the rich and poor, all the institutions of society, whatever they are, and in turn, become the Deity. We may contemplate nature as the common mother of us all, but we cannot think of God as the father of us all.

The Gods were thought to be rivals directly they were impersonated; and as they were, their worshippers became rivals and persecutors. The religions were in the eyes of the respective worshippers reciprocally absurd, and their hatred of each other was only surpassed by their hatred of those who passed sentence upon all religions as absurd, themselves believing in none. While on the one hand the promises of each religion were very great to their followers, so the punishments held out were severe; and men discharged the same measure of truth and falsehood to their fellows as the Deity was supposed to do to them. Because it was difficult to be saved, the desire to save became the greater; as great were the rewards, so was the desire to extend them. But above all, when the priesthood, as in the East and in modern times, became a business, there was not only the rivalry of interest between different faiths, but the necessary hatred by those who would make religion a profession against those who would deprive them of the means of living. Where there was no apparent moral personal power of the heavens upon earth, disbelievers would deny the use of having men interpreters of it to men.

Men considered the appearance of the constellations in the heavens, and their effect upon the earth most symbolical of the forces or powers of the universe. These forces or powers constituted the Divinities, and not the sun and stars themselves. The same may be said of the Egyptians, who either thought they acknowledged benefits conveyed by some animals to mankind, and therefore worshipped them, or conceived in the mysterious

properties of other beings a semblance of their own production and the unknown genesis of all things. They are known also to have acknowledged a purer Theism, or the so-called Atheism of their ignorance.

If the Sabean worshippers—the Egyptians—took the symbols for the things themselves, and paid them divine honour, must it not be said that we do the same when the symbol, or the words in which an idea is conveyed, is taken for the truth itself, and made an object of worship, or an article of belief—an idolatry? There are proofs in Genesis, and in the parts of the Bible, that the Sabean worship prevailed amongst the supposed ancestors of the Jews. It appears to us that the division of days into weeks proceeded from some myth of the powers which prevailed over the universe—the powers of time, and who reside in those parts of the universe which preside over the division of time, and are said to rule the world. It should be always borne in mind that it is not God, but Elohim, or the Gods who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Now it is said that Elohim werethe names of Gods in Egypt who presided over the divisions of time. They were the months or the year, and the less being comprised in the greater, they may be said to have been the days, and the days the labourers of creation. The Jews gave no names to the days of the weeks, but numbers, except to the seventh, which was called the Sabbath, or day of rest. The highest God, or the unknown, was unmentionable by the Jews. The Elohim, or the Gods, were, we see, mentioned as presiding over the creation and Sabbath as the great of days. The Jews were not permitted to mention the names of strange Gods, and therefore the mention of Elohim and of the Sabbath was probably a sign of honour. Now Sabbath, some writers think, is derived from a word which has 'hosts' for its foundation—the hosts of heaven, or assembly of the powers of heaven. We find in the Bible the Lord God Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, Jehovah Elohim, or the Lord God of the Elohim. Plutarch says that the Jews worshipped Sab, or Bacchus. Tacitus says the Jews are reported to have worshipped Saturn; and all that Horace and Juvenal seemed to have known of the Jews was, that they held in great awe the Sabbath day. It is a question, therefore, on the day, whether the Jews did not worship the God of the days himself. Saturn presides over the seventh day in the Saturday of the Greeks, Romans, and northern nations, thereby his priority is acknowledged over all other Gods. Saturn himself is time. He is represented as devouring his children, from all being swallowed up in time. His children—the works of the six days end on the seventh—are swallowed and then vomited forth, as Jupiter was said to have been. This Saturn of the Greeks was the Deity of all the nations who offered human sacrifices to God, because he devoured, or time devoured, all things. Moloch was the Saturn of the Syrians, and the ancestors of the Jews appear in the Bible to have offered human sacrifices to him. Time, or

Saturn, represented death, the rest on the seventh day to the works of creation. Perhaps, therefore, it was thought a reform to subject to a moral death a lifeless inactivity that day, instead of the human sacrifices which were formerly given to the Deity. It is acknowledged that the sacrifice of animals was instituted instead of human sacrifices; that the ceremony of circumcision was instead of them, which some think in imitation of Saturn's ring. We have therefore very likely analogies to support us in the conclusion that the Sabbath was for the same purpose. Particular sacrifices and particular portions of the temple were dedicated to the Sabbath. Days of sacrifices must have been feasts, as they must necessarily have eat them. Some have said that on that day the richer gave to the poor, which would probably be the consequence of all sacrifices. The priests, however, must have been at work, receiving, killing, roasting, and boiling. Jesus was entertained at dinner on the Sabbath.

We cannot enter further into the question how much Sabaism has prevailed in Christianity, besides acknowledging Saturday. Dupuis, and other writers whom we have not read on the subject, would derive all Christianity from the same source. We would not derive any religion from one, but from many sources. The ideas of everybody are in the Bible—the motives of all human actions; they account for everything, but do not mutually destroy each other. It is enough to know for certainty that the advent of the birth of Christ have their dates in the approach and the birth of the new year. There is a great probability, therefore, that the worship of Christ, into which the whole year is divided, has the same origin as other worships—the division of time. There is also that curious moral coincidence that the human sacrifices which were offered to Saturn or Moloch, the firstborn sons of men, were consummated in the idea of the only begotten son of God being put to death upon a cross, which by some is said to have been a symbol of the sun, or life.

If Saturn or Saturday is death, Christ died on the eve of the Sabbath, and rose again on the first day of the week, the day of the sun, having strictly observed the seventh, or the Sabbath, being forfeited to death, to his father or to Saturn. Rising on the first day of the week, it was called the day of the sun, or the Lord's-day, the sun being the idea of life, as Saturn is of death, his day being abrogated by the day of the sun, or resurrection to life everlasting.

There would be the similarity in Jupiter and Jesus of the life of the son being forfeited to the father; death and time, God and Saturn, and both again being delivered from death. In both instances, Saturn, or God, would represent time, nature, the universe or the Infinite, which receives all its children in death, and returns them in life.

The figure of going down into hell, ascending into heaven, and sitting on the right hand of God, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and

the dead, may be illustrative of man's return to earth, his ascent, as it were, to heaven, and descent to earth, in the vivifying effects of the sun, which makes alive and immortal, everything, quickening the living and the dead.

The letter of Genesis, the creation of the six days, and the rest therefore to be observed on the seventh, would convey a very meagre meaning, unworthy even of a God, or any interpretation of nature. But the letter is elevated into natural and moral philosophy, described in the style of the age, when considered as a development of ideas. Labour is the lowest idea we have of man, intellect the highest; and certainly to ascribe the former to God would be a very inferior conception of him, if it did not veil the operations of nature.

We consider the Christians have done away with the creation of six days, and the rest on the seventh, as an historical fact, and made it to be looked upon as a figure, by no longer observing the original Sabbath or day of rest.* When the reason is given, and the day is commanded to be kept, and another day is substituted, no command for it, said to be given by God, or in the Bible at all, we cannot but think one idea is put in the place of another, and the facts, as forms, are totally disregarded. Some divines, therefore, have come to the conclusion, that the creation of days must be taken in a purely spiritual sense, which is in the sense of an idea. When the six days are proved to be physically impossible, derogatory to the Divinity, and the idea has been changed for another, the facts become lifeless. However, if all of old must fall before the reality and probability, it remains to be considered if the facts of the New Testament in place of the Old are any more than symbols of ideas. As to the observance of the day on the one hand, it may be said Jesus kept the Sabbath strictly in his grave; on the other hand, by those opposed to its strict observance, the day he rose from the grave should not be kept as the day he was in it. One was the day of death, the other of birth and of life; the one of mourning and of fasting, the other of feasting and of rejoicing.

Others have thought that in the work of six days, and rest on the seventh the narration had only in view the political institution of the Sabbath. We think it one among the many reasons for it; but we should think it an insignificant end to be produced by such magnificent means—the creation of the universe to turn upon a holy day to be given to mankind. Such a design attributed to the Deity would be the discredit of a failure, as the same day could not be kept everywhere, and has been acknowledged and observed only by a small portion of mankind.

The honour, however, given to labour by the six days' work of the Deity, and the holy day given to mankind on the occasion, stands in disparagement of our boasted intellect, which is not mentioned as the divine thought and will, which did everything in infinite time on the instant and for ever.

God worked, and he gave the command to man to work before ever he

rested, and when he rested, he did not command man to rest. God did not will rest, which would have been the annihilation of his work.

Labour, therefore, is divine, as Thomas Carlyle says; and that man should have rest as well as work, are certainly lessons to be taught worthy of philosophy and legislation. We see continual contradiction and contest between these principles in the Bible. Labour is considered evil, rest good. The evil principle, therefore, in the sense of the world, may have been said to have made the world, and the good principle to have rested from it. The next and second creation in the Bible is, therefore, constructed on totally opposite moral principles as physical. As land is made out of water in the first creation, and dry land is, and water has to come to it in the second creation, so are the moral positions reversed in the first and second creations. In the first, evil is, and good comes physically. In the second, moral good is, and evil comes. Physically and morally, good and evil contradict each other, and yet are intimately united and make one. God worked, and told man to work; man conceives he was put into the world not to work, which he calls Paradise; and his fall from it, entrance of sin into the world, and the curse entailed upon some fault of his, was to live by the sweat of his brow. As God had worked to give life to the universe, so work was the punishment of man. The worth of labour, the curse of universal slavery, material and moral, may be the ideas inculcated by the works of days, and rest on the seventh, by the paradise of leisure, which is its consequence, and the part of man, moral as well as physical, to be alternate labour and rest, rest and labour. The good turns into evil, and the evil into good; neither man's body nor his mind will allow the whole of either; the paradise of pleasure would have excitement in the vain endeavour after an imaginary better, and the evil of the worst, is made the condition of the better, in this life. The religious may talk of the comfort and consolations of a better world; such a thought pursued mankind when he was in Paradise. The celebration, therefore, of our Sabbath as a day of death, instead of a day of renewed life and activity, seems founded upon a series of mistakes.

The Jews must have certainly made the day a feast from their sacrifices; the idea of the day, therefore, is as much kept by devoting it to amusement and recreation, freedom from toil, if we like and require it, as it is by doing nothing and religious observances, which are as nothing, compared with sacrifices and feasts of antiquity. In God resting on the seventh day, after his six days of labour, there was as much a future state to him as man promises himself in this life, as a reward of his industry, and after the labour of this life, in heaven. On certain days called Saturnalia, devoted to Saturn, the slaves at Rome were allowed to please themselves, and be independent of their masters.

The Jews did not only make the creation of the six days, and the rest on

the seventh, a motive for observing the Sabbath. In other places the Bible says it was established to celebrate their escape from Egyptian slavery, and kept as the slaves of Rome observed the Saturnalia. On another occasion, it simply says that it was kept that the Jews might refresh themselves from their labours, all being slaves on the six days of the week, and free on the seventh. Such instances show that it was the idea, and not the form, that was considered, as thus the original myth is done away with and another given, or the simple idea is left. Labour and rest certainly are in the creation day and night, activity and sleep; they are laws of nature, and therefore it was good to inculcate living in conformity with them. Divested of the slavery to form, in which it has ended, there cannot be a better idea than that we should consider other men, and the rest of creation, in absolving them from their stated toil, and giving them without it what they might have earned, and even the advantages which we possess and can confer upon them. Such is the case where the greater part of the world is in slavery to the few, or all to each other, or to the world. If we adhered to the idea instead of the form, we should be much more moral, and the happiness of mankind would be increased. Now the morality of the institution derived from the law of nature is totally neglected. Do as you would be done unto was constantly kept in view by these myths, expressed in commands to do, though Christianity may claim the honour of having preached it in words. It may be as well, however, to say that it is verbally in the Apocrypha, the Book of Tobit, the admonition of the father to the son. We think we have seen it in words in other places of the Bible, as well as frequently in effect. Love your neighbour as yourself, and love your enemies, is to do as you would be done unto, and both are taken from the Old Testament. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, is to do as we would be done unto; and the precept of the prayer is taken almost word for word from the Apocrypha. Elsewhere we believe it is stated that not even in heart or intention should we wish the evil to our neighbour which we would not like to have done to ourselves.

The myth states that God did good; good being the object and desire of mankind, we are therefore to do the good that we would have done unto us, and is done unto us. The Jews followed it out in the institution of the Sabbath, and declared that no work was to be done by the slave or the animal. They were reminded that they were slaves and strangers in Egypt, and therefore they were to be good to them, as they were treated or wished to be treated. The reality of the idea was lost in the form by the Jews; and the prophets, from Isaiah to Jesus, endeavoured to bring them back to the idea. As Christ said that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man, so the world was not made for the Sabbath.

The way in which Jesus Christ is made totally to disregard the Mosaic cosmogony, and on this occasion sets it aside, as the duty to man was

superior to the duty to God, and that man was the object of religion, is proof against the letter of the first of Genesis, and against all the facts of the Bible, and proof of the spirit in which we conceive it should be taken.

The prophets inculcated that all sorts of services were to be rendered to mankind, and not observance of days; such duties the fathers said made every day a Sabbath, and day of the Lord. Christ is represented as not only saying, but doing the same; and when he plucked the ears of corn, and said if it were allowed to a king it was to a man, he probably meant that those who could not live by themselves were to live at the expense of others; had a right to the fruits of the earth as well as those who owned it, when their labours had given them a title equally to enjoy them.

Sabbath, therefore, is one of those social and salutary regulations, for which we are indebted to the Bible of the Jews, but which, as usual, has been converted from a blessing into a curse. There is, however, the idea of the fact, and it may be turned to good effect by a reform, and more correct view of religion, or morality and union among mankind.

There was another great truth, we think, endeavoured to be inculcated by the Sabbath on the seventh day, on which the Creator is said to have rested after his six days work. Now, we know that as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, the work of creation, or, as we would call it, creation and destruction, was always going on. There was no rest for a God; there was no rest for nature, but shadowed forth by day and night, by life and motion in the one, sleep and immobility in the other; there is an apparent succession of work and rest, of life and death, creation and destruction, annihilation of individual life, though not of matter, but a resolving of both into other forms and other individualities. The whole remains, but the parts are perpetually shifting.

The Jews never said that death was not, from the beginning, the accompaniment of life. There is no authority in the Bible for supposing it; and the Jews never, as the Christians, dated it from the fall of man. Engaged on the work of creation, there was no necessity to say there was death. The Genesis, or beginning, in its first chapter, is an account of the animating powers of the universe, which found it in a sort of death. Elsewhere, it is said, God created light and darkness, good and evil; and death and evil, are united in Deuteronomy as dispensed by God; and death and evil have always been associated by mankind, as the former includes all evil. We avoid all evil as producing death. There is abundant evidence that death was supposed, if not stated in the creation of the world, besides the physical impossibility of there not being death. The seasons were established, and there was winter when one half of creation is in death—the greatest of all similitudes of it. All around them, as well as in them, must have told of death to our first parents. We know that the Jews taught the mortality of soul or of life, with all the evidence to the affirmative of it; there is no

mention to the contrary until Daniel. We believe it was the aim of Mosaism or Judaism to limit the expectations of the Jews to this world. The theory of Judaism was, that by all means man's views were to be confined to this world. The theory of Christianity, that they were to be totally given to another. The seventh day was not pronounced good for man. Nature is never at rest, always at work, never weary. God himself, or nature, returns to life. Had there been any future state of individual life and identity, it would have been mentioned when all things were said to be made good without a future state, except in progress, and the multiplication of the species.

There is even in the Bible the contending principles; the expectation of good in this world, the state of the world not fulfilled, the expectation of good in another life, and another state of the world, arising from the disappointment of it in this world; but not another and a future life. The grand Sabbath, therefore, the great rest from labour, is death. Death is the only rest of God, the only rest of nature, the only rest of man from work we know of. Whether we divide it into six days and a seventh or not, however we divide time, time is ever engaged in the alternation of destruction and creation. 'The days do light the way to dusty death.' If labour is evil; if the work of us all is vanity and vexation of spirit; if every good is evil, and evil is good; that which is considered the great evil of all—death—is really a good. Not a curse, but the seal of blessing is upon it. The nature of things existing by checks, balances, and contraries, death being the opposite of life, life being the end of creation, the love of life is the fear of death, and the love and the fear of God are the same, though death equally serves the purposes of life in the general economy of the world. Out of death comes life, a perpetual resurrection of the forms of matter into fresh life. All nature proceeds on the seventh day as it does on the eighth, or the first of the week; but the individual represented by God or the person for ever rests. The sun sets, and the sun rises, and vivifies the world; life is buried and returns to nature, the right hand of God, from whence it again comes to renovate the quick and the dead. Man is always taking his ideas from nature and himself. Death gives rest, freedom from pain and labour, freedom from the fear of death, freedom from a living death into a real life; as our great poet says, freedom from death itself. Death is swallowed up in victory. To be as the Gods was, to dwell in eternal rest. The Epicureans represented the Gods as enjoying perpetual leisure, and as having nothing to do with the world. The Indians, in their sacred books, look forward to annihilation as an absorption into Divinity. They think that man is given life as a penance, as long as he does ill, he returns to life in another form; but as a reward for virtue, he is absolved from further animation, and recompensed with eternal annihilation. This was the original Jewish state of mind, and the Bible was as

much opposed to the idea of a future state, as it was to the other Gods of the heathens. Now, ideas are changed from antiquity. We believe that it was not good we should die; that death came into the world by sin; that death is the greatest of all evils; and that our only hope from despair, our only salvation, our only comfort and consolation, is in the expectation of a return to identity, which we cannot imagine without the same surrounding circumstances. We cannot imagine life without the life which makes life precious, the evil which enhances the good, or we imagine a worse existence than any here in everlasting happiness, the nothing to do, and the nothing to look forward to, perhaps worse than the everlasting suffering, the hell giving rise to activity and hope, which man, in his unbridled license of imagination, has conceived to be the fate hereafter of the larger portion of humanity. If the above be the philosophy and religion of the Bible, if taken from the consideration of stubborn facts, death be represented as capable of being made a blessing instead of a curse, a comfort and consolation, instead of a sorrow and a fear, is it not more moral, more conducive to the happiness of mankind, than a rejection of nature, and an uncertain hope of misery in a future and everlasting state? If a man had eternal life on his own conditions, would he like it? Whereas man made the future not very hopeful on the one, and desperate on the other side; he has sat in judgment on the world, on nature, and the creation of it he believed in. He has declared the whole nature of the universe to be bad in his eyes, and the only hope in another; though, logically, the only hope would be in being nothing, and therefore for God, annihilation for ourselves. The best is, as Shakspeare says, in being nothing.

Savages, as we call them, have been named in Herodotus, and we believe have been found by travellers, who considered death was to be celebrated as a joyous release from life, and birth as a subject for mourning. Indian philosophers have made death the desire and the hope, and life the dread and the punishment. Even in the unprejudiced ordinary thoughts of mankind, death comes to the majority, welcomed as a release rather than with the expectation of a renewal of any life. Probably this is the common sense of the matter, as well as the truth, the medium between those who hold in such opposite estimation life and death. We have sufficient love of life not to make futile the purposes of our creation, and sufficient disregard of life not to think death an evil, but a good, when it comes in its season. In the full flow of life death is disliked; hope of life and fear of death preponderates. As we come to the conclusion, and life gradually fails us, death is upon us with its gradual and slow approaches, and habituates us to its consummation, if we were left to the laws of nature. However, between these two ideas, in which man is divided by education and by nature, there is no doubt on which side the Bible and the beginning was divided—against another rather than in favour of another life

of the same individuals. The punishment was to the children in the commandment, not to the individual, which is true in nature, and condemnatory of a future state. If there had been a future life, moral, in place of material, justice would have said that the individual should have been punished for his own crimes, and not for those of others.

Savages, we are told, killed their parents and ate them. They had an idea in it; so forcible were ideas in antiquity. We should probably find among other savages some of the same ideas and symbols. Civilisation obliterates them, and even the understanding of them. Eating parents was probably an allusion to time which swallows up all things—the past in the future; the Creator in the created, God in us, and we in God; the Father a sacrifice to the Son, the cause in the effect, and the effect in the cause, were all probably typified as they are in the sacrifice of the mass, God ate by man, transubstantiation, or more properly, consubstantiation.

The universality of such ideas shows that they were common to all, and not confined to a few by revelation. That the statement of circumstances developed ideas, and did not afford a presage of a single historical fact in Christianity. The idea of antiquity was contrary to the idea of Christianity. But if ever there was a really universal and correct idea of what necessity was a revelation. As transubstantiation is Pantheism, or Materialism, we making God, and God making us; nature in us, and we in nature; so in this living and dying perpetually recurring, there is a denial of a future state as well as of a personal God.

We have heard Ullathorne, a Roman Catholic Bishop of Birmingham, explain transubstantiation to his hearers, by saying that when bread and wine were taken into the stomach they became body and blood. But in making transubstantiation reasonable and natural, he did away with the miracle; he made it enter among the laws of nature. The miracle was to make bread and wine flesh and blood without the means, as it would be to make bread and wine without the corn and the vine, or to declare it was without its having become changed. Yet, as symbolic of the relation between man and nature, or God, all things in us, and we in all things, nothing is truer than transubstantiation. It is said the symbol has been preserved to greater extremes by the worshippers of the Lama, of Thibet. The symbols of religion are an explanation of nature; and Ullathorne, and the Roman Catholics, and the rest of the religions would make nature an explanation of the symbol. There was a Roman Catholic priest, Morris, who composed a poem to the effect; the title of which was, that Nature was a symbol of the dogmas of religion. Hume said the making God, and eating him, was the height of absurdity in religion, going beyond the Egyptian who only ate, but did not make his God. But can there be anything truer, when it is considered the whole of religion is to make a God—that is, the religious or mental evolution; and the eating him is to show

the physical and material evolution of life and death, and incorporation of all things in man; their eternal separation, and coalition; their destruction, creation, and resurrection.

When the first chapter of Genesis was upon creation, there was to be a reticence upon death. Where everything was pronounced good, there was to be a silence as to that which was considered evil. But though not pronounced good more than the days of creation, it was consecrated and made holy to God and man. It was religion when man becomes the object or end of creation; the law given to him is that he should multiply and increase, which he could not do without death; life is the object, and, therefore, no mention of death. There is a unity in the drama when all is good; creation and life is made the subject, and given as the example and command to man without any drawback of the darker picture, the reverse side of life. God or death were made secret or sacred, equally a mystery. Evil was not mentioned; it was the unutterable name, I am that I am; it was existence. Non-existence, or not life or death, seems the superior to life or existence. The greater, power—death—may be the whole, and life the part. Death is the secret of universal existence. The inorganic is more than the organic, matter than life.

In fact, the inventors of the myth, and the Jews themselves, had long the conviction resulting from it, that there was no greater obedience to the laws of nature, or the commands of God, than the propagation of life, not only of their own species, but of every animal. Spite of the Malthusian fear of over population which, perhaps, exists, from a wrong state of things, there was, and is, an equally well-grounded fear, particularly in early times, of depopulation of the world from the various means which mankind have ever employed to fulfill the other law of nature—destruction and death. When we consider death by war directly invented by mankind, pestilence and famine indirectly produced by him, and often from war, we shall not be astonished that the diminution of population, rather than the increase, formerly required to be checked. Religion made, served the destruction of the human species; "all taken in war were devoted to the Gods; and we know how the Jews carried out the idea towards the Canaanites, which they would not have done if they had known, and followed, the first chapter of Genesis. When we think of this drain on the population, it will not surprise us if it were equal to the extraordinary account of human beings, prisoners of war, said to have been sacrificed in Mexico, and now devoted to death, it is said, in Africa.

But if, as is now established by commentators on the Scriptures, the Jews themselves originally, in conformity with all other nations, sacrificed the eldest born son, there was another demand on population. If, also, as Jephtha, they devoted to God any other of their children, whom was most dear to them, and it was a practice encouraged, the only thing extra-

ordinary was, how there was any life left; and how there could have been so great a population in countries now deserted. Though polygamy was not commanded as an institution, yet it was received as a matter of course. When said to be regulated by God, in giving all the female captives to be shared by the Jews as their concubines, we see the necessity of it; when, from war, pestilence, famine, and religion, there was such a consumption of the male population. It was the same as in agricultural economy, where the females are preserved, and the males destroyed; and the many given to the few, in order to afford the largest amount of life to death. There would not be the same quantity if animals were regulated by monogamy. However, now there are not the same drains upon the males, and, therefore, not the same occasion for the practice of polygamy. The sexes are equally preserved, population is not required, and, under the present circumstances, polygamy does not seem to give it, but rather to hinder an increase of population. The purpose of the Bible must be considered as reformatory; and the earliest parts of it, often written the latest, after an experience of evils, and for occasions which required prevention.

Revelation was rather, therefore, a revelation against, than in favour, of any religion. The Bible, from first to last, the Old and New Testament, was against religion. Jesus Christ did not establish any; the sole belief was that he would come again, and do away with all religion, which he did not.

If anything was wanted, it would have been a revelation against religion, because religion was a natural and general evil. But it is supposed that God has created religion a natural and universal idea, and then has sent ever so many revelations to correct it, which, we think, all prove natural and revealed religion to be the laws of nature.

The tendency of the idea of a future life has been to make men regardless of the present, and to a diminution of the species. Christianity had that effect in the beginning. Even the Jews are represented by Josephus as more than the Christians rushing upon death in anticipation of a future life. Even now, where Christianity most flourishes, and where it arose on the shores of the Mediterranean, the diminution of the population, as well as indifference to the circumstances which promote population, may be accounted for from the idea of a future, and not this life, preponderating. Possessed with this idea of a future state, the Mahomedans effected their conquests; and, probably, this idea has contributed to the desolation of the provinces they possessed. When they were populous, enlightened, and civilised above others, and by so much probably the less religious, they were conquered by the Spaniards. The Mahomedans also possess strongly that other religious idea which, together with a future life, must destroy the energy of mankind. They believe that everything is governed by God; and, therefore, give way to their predispositions, not thinking that their God

is in themselves. By so much the ideas are more immediate as they were with the Jews and the Christians when they thought the end of the world was imminent; and, as the Roman Catholics still continue to think the world was made for another, and not for this life; and, as the Mahomedans think the world ruled immediately by Providence, so are they more regardless of this life, and of the world, in comparison with those who, however they may profess the ideas, are much further, and generally removed, from them. Man must be occupied with this world to do his duty in it.

The constant idea of a Providence governing would destroy all freedom of action, all prudence in mankind, which was probably the reason the Jews fell; they looked to God, and God did not befriend them; and they had better have loved their enemies than their God.

Mankind hates nothing so much as religion in another; it is this which has produced the persecution of the Jews. They have not the same hatred to reason, if not against religion. In proportion as they hate religion in another, are they obstinate in their own.

Since all physical, metaphysical, arguments are against the letter of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis—and a descent must be made to the lowest anthropomorphism to continue in the interpretation of the letter—since all the great Jewish writers, the fathers and the most modern divines, have conceived it to be an allegory or myth, to have a spiritual sense—since it is opposed to all notions of a Divinity and his attributes, that he laboured and he rested, what is the meaning of the works, and the cessation from them, with regard to the universe and to God?

Divines have allowed that days may have meant periods of years—any extent of time. This is giving up the letter and conceding that there was another meaning—that the words conveyed an idea totally different from their expression and the limits of the context. But if the effects are to be totally changed from what we understood them, so must the cause or causes also be changed. The controversy between the letter and the idea would resolve itself into a question of time. If creation was not out of nothing—if the works of days were not immediate, quick as thought, as was always supposed, but were the result of an indefinite period of time, slow succession of causes and effect, what are these works but the operations of the laws of nature? and the personal character of the Divinity is entirely lost. We therefore entirely agree with these divines, that days meant any length of time, and nothing more was meant than a description of nature. But divines have also allowed that it was a manifestation of the one God, and a declaration against all other Gods, though this was against the letter, as the letter says the Elohim, or the Gods, made the world and all things therein. When this departure from the letter is coupled with the admission that there were no days intended, and that the cosmogony was directed

against the impersonation of all other parts of the universe individually as God, what remains of the single cause apart from the many—of the one God apart from the whole? Why if a declaration of one God against all other Gods, why not of none against one, and an assertion of the omnipotence of nature?

When we come to indefinite periods of time instead of six days, we travel the other way to no beginning and no end; we only know nature always going on, and the idea of rest is utterly incompatible with the cause as with the effect. But the rest on the seventh day is utterly untenable if there were no six days. If, therefore, the works of the six days only meant nature and no other God, was it not utterly to take away the impersonation of any cause, when it said there was no longer any cause, God rested and was no more?

We cannot imagine nature resting except as ceasing to be, therefore the world imagined a God resting—ceasing to be cause and effect. We cannot imagine the effect without the cause, as the six days are suspended on the seventh, as the cause in operation.

There being no days excludes a God; there being a rest excludes a God; there being a beginning and an end excludes a God; and as it was before, so it was afterwards: and as one does not go without the other, God and nature cannot be separated; so as there was no God so there was to be no God; and there is no intimation in the first chapter of Genesis of the continuance of a God in the government of the universe. If there was to be no God afterwards, there was no God before.

In the construction of such a myth, so direct an impersonation, was it not saying that we were making God in the likeness of ourselves, which is told us again when it is said that the gods made us after their image? Causes could only be represented by impersonations, and when they had done their duty they were dismissed, and man was told he knew nothing of God, and was to know nothing of Gods except in himself. Nothing was required of him towards the Gods as if they existed, and no commands were given except the laws of nature. The doing nothing on the Sabbath was therefore a commemoration that God did nothing, and there was no God who had done anything. He was only holy in his absolute release from all mundane and personal occupation. In infinity there is no motion. In the finite there is change. We cannot conceive one directed to the whole, or the whole directed to one. On the subject of creation, the infinite and the finite, motion and rest, we are involved in metaphysical subtleties and contradictions which teach us our ignorance, and there is nothing we know of we can call God. The same story is told by impersonation, contradictions there are irreconcilable that will not combine, and result in nothing. The step which brings us from Polytheism to Theism makes the next step to Atheism easy. Polytheism represents many Gods, or the parts of nature,

and Theism one God, or the whole. Thus they may alternate in the Bible; but an impersonation is a simple absurdity. The God is not more defensible than the many Gods. Polytheism represents the powers of nature—the parts, and Theism the whole of nature; but both are equally material and atheistic, only susceptible of impersonation in our finite views—and are utterly untenable as facts. God, Gods, and creation, can only represent materialism and man. If one God was personified, according to the letter in the Bible, he was more an idiot than any of the Gods of the heathens. By metaphysics and the attributes, Deity becomes a negation, and equally by his impersonation he becomes impossible directly he is made subject to inquiry. The negation which is arrived at by metaphysics, that God ceases altogether to be, is arrived at by the same process when he is made to have nothing to do. After man being told that he is made after his image—and we know that man knows no rest on one day more than another—that all the functions of nature continue the same—we cannot suppose that God, who is like him, could for ever cease from work and for ever rest. Man is made like God on the sixth day, and takes the place of God, and on the seventh day God ceases to be. Nor is the Scripture the only philosophy which has nullified Deity, by consigning him to rest for ever. The Gods were impersonated by Epicurus, but they were consigned by him and his followers to eternal rest—that is, eternal nothingness. This rest, which is only compatible with infinity, is called Atheism; and the question is whether the philosophy of Mosaic cosmogony is not equally entitled to the name. The no work after six days work, is being without God in this world, and there is no mention of his ceasing from rest, the negation of his working, which, if ever, must be always. The working of nature is always; therefore we must suppose that nothing but nature is represented by the six days, and the impersonality, or negation, of the God of the six days on the seventh. We cannot suppose a God coming out of his rest and returning to it. It is explained by the moral of the fable that the work and the rest, as far as a God was introduced, was the invention of man—as we made, so should he be represented to make. Christ is made to give a denial to the letter of Genesis, and that God ever did cease from work. He said my father worketh hitherto, and now I work. All nature was at work before man was made, and when man came he worked. So in the impersonation of Genesis God, in the place of nature, works until man comes, and then he ceases to work. Christ followed in the same interpretation—‘My father hitherto worked’—that is, nature, ‘until I came’—that is, man. There would be no God if there was no man. Man is God, said Christ.

The seventh day is the beginning of a fresh chapter. In the six days the world is made, and there ends the subject of the creation. What follows stands between the first creation and a second account of the creation. It

might just as well be out—might be an interpolation, an after idea, or a *resumé* of the previous story, and a dismissal of the Deity, that he returned to the rest whence he emerged, and where he would continue never to return. Certain it is that no institution is established upon it; nothing is said therefore that man should rest upon the seventh day; and it would be ridiculous to suppose an institution founded upon an occurrence that never happened, as God could not make worlds every six days to rest upon the seventh. If God sanctified it, he did not tell man to sanctify it. There is also a double meaning to sanctify, or make sacred; this is the first time it occurs. Before he made good, now he sanctifies. To sanctify, or make sacred, also meant to devote to death, and therefore to accurse. To sanctify it, therefore, would mean that it was a day of sacrifices, and that it was only a day of cessation from work as a day of death. But what was the use of sanctifying it before any men were required to do either one or the other—have sacrifices or abstain from work? It must therefore either stand as a metaphysical declaration that God rested, or as an after declaration, inserted when the Sabbath day was instituted by Moses, who instituted other Sabbaths besides the seventh day. All Sabbaths were denounced by the prophets, and especially the pollution of them, which seemed to mean that on those days they put to death human victims. No other creation has a Sabbath, and it is so particularly Jewish, and we see its use afterwards, that we may suppose that the Jews wished to give an origin for it in the creation. However then it might be, it was not any authority for doing no work on the seventh day, and it was not general to sanctify any day by such a process, but rather by sacrifices and feastings. When they had human sacrifices, whether they celebrated them with feasting and rejoicing we cannot say, but these Deities exacted that offerings should be made cheerfully. In Isaiah, mention is made of God being at rest, as if he was concealed there from any demonstration of himself by doing nothing. He is also spoken of by the same prophet as never weary and always at work. This prophet is also particularly against the Sabbath.

If we have arrived at a negation of Deity by the idea; if all the attributes amount to nothing by their very extent; if all God is no God, if one attribute includes all attributes, and unity and infinity cannot be divided; if omniscience and omnipotence cannot be different things in Deity; probably such limits to man were equally perceived by Greek mythology and expressed by personification. If time be a Deity, it is probably the greatest abstraction and negation of a God. Yet it is an abstraction which swallows up the past and the future, and seems to be without being and without intellect. No being is in the past, none in the future; only the present is to him. Time, without being anything, seems alone to have dominion over all things. Even a God, or Gods, seem subject to him. Yet if he is, or they are, time, there is nothing. Therefore the Grecian mythologists seem to

have represented Saturn, or Time, before, as Gods and men. Time is dethroned by man and mundane periods of its course, yet Jupiter himself was only to have his day, and was to yield to time.

If God is good, if he made everything good, there is the idea. If he did not make everything good, he is not good. Therefore the theology of Genesis, in the first chapter of Genesis, is against everything which would represent him and the world different; any subsequent revolution would subtract from his omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence. It would fulfil another idea, and would do away with God; and though the ideas might be reconcileable, the facts would not be. As the first was an idea, so the second would be. The ideal of Divinity is therefore, in the first chapter of Genesis, being good and doing good, whether we represent him as love, or the good, the beautiful, and the true, or order, light, and life, seen in the effect, rather than in the cause.

It is the same idea which Christians see in Christ—an impersonation abounding in works of love and goodness. Only they should see in him nothing but good—not a contrast of worldly passions in this world, and a hell more than a heaven in another. Thus there is an idea, but no historical fact, in the first chapter of Genesis, and it is carried out in Christ—the whole is an idea. The first tidings are peace and goodwill towards mankind, glory to God in the highest, however different, through man's passions, the catastrophe may turn out. But the idea may be as well read in nature: on the one hand nature is apparently good—sufficient for ourselves. With that nature all men might be happy, or much happier. Human nature is capable of improvement or progress, and it may be seen in the individual; but hitherto evils of his own raising have prevented him from making the best of this earth. Do we regard life? We destroy it in every way, and apparently for no end. There is abundance of food if we would earn it, and we turn to every other occupation in preference, though the one seems pleasant and life-giving; the other, disagreeable and destructive. Compare the state of the agriculturist in the country, and the tradesmen and citizens in town, the miners underground. All seem to go the wrong way—the means of subsistence, not to those who have produced it, but to those who do nothing for it, whose employments are unnecessary. The idea can be had of a God in nature, of nature as God, better than by impersonating a God or Christ. Impersonate him and you fill him with contradictions, your own passions, prejudices, and finiteness. Nature is only good when not made relative to man. Nature is good; nature is absolute; nature is perfect, because it cannot be otherwise than it is. As Christ said, there is no one good but God. 'Be ye perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect.' He spoke of nature; but if of man, in accordance with the first chapter of Genesis, that God was good, and that he made everything good. Christ knew of no revolution to the contrary which happened at the begin-

ning of the world: he never mentioned the origin of evil, the fall of man, Adam and Eve. God, or good, devil, or evil, was contemporaneous with mankind. What he called evil he went to; what he called good he left: they were his own ideas, and facts of his own making. Supposing that nature is evil, as we call it, and could not be remedied, whatever the system of things amongst ourselves; better have it in nature than in one or more persons: better have her laws immutable than perpetually liable to change. It is better for us to know the worst, and the best we are, in order to improve our condition. As for any impersonation of ourselves, as for our intelligence making or governing the world, the experience of it would condemn it. Such power has always proved faulty in the individual. However much we have looked to such a Messiah we have never found or accepted one, and the aggregate of humanity has remained where it is, in its collective wisdom, not yet having saved itself.

What is declared to be evil in the Bible, is evidently thought also to be good. Out of evil comes good, or as good and evil were the same in the first creation, so evil is good in the second. Evil naturally flows out of good, and good out of evil. Out of these opposites come one, the higher conception of Mr. Jowett. It is impossible to place limits to the good or bad, and perhaps this is expressed by our degrees of comparison, good, better, best; bad, worse, and worst. Work is divine in the first creation, said to be good and blessed, the labour of God or of nature. What, therefore, is a law of nature, and by all analogy the best, is said, physically and morally, to be a curse in the second creation. As God worked in the first creation, so there is nothing to which more honour is given in the rest of the Bible than to labour. If it were only good, creation would not have been complete, but they were men's ideas of good and evil, not facts. Good and evil combine, and check each other; but what limits would there be if, as Christians say, there were two powers at war with each other, a composing and disturbing power. There would be no laws of nature, or they would come within the laws of nature, and would not be. Instead of labour being an evil, the only suggestion Hume says he could make for the improvement of mankind would be, that they had been given more industry, more love of labour.

The real curse seems to have been the aversion of our first parents to labour. They were given a garden to till, and they would be as the Gods, and not work it. Morally and physically, it is impossible to separate the evil before the fall, from the evil after the fall.

There is no belief in a God inculcated in the first chapter of Genesis; rather a belief in man. No book ever gave such a high idea of man as the end of the Bible cosmogony; and as much as it was elevating to man, so it was lowering to God, and therefore amounted to his non-entity and absorption in man. Our condition was made too high to be true, and was not

made seriously. God is said to have made the world from the *à posteriori* argument. We make him make all things, but we do not make anything in the same sense; we do not make the wood which makes the chair. We only see intellect in the lesser things we make, none in the greater, or in the world. Intellect there is in making a watch, but none in making a child, or in any of the operations of nature, whether we are concerned in them or not.

As we transfer to God ourselves, he becomes finite; and when we make him infinite, he is totally removed from us, and is nothing. God is in us; we are in God. 'I and my Father are one.' But man has taken the letter for the fact, and conceived that he was made in the image of God; has taken the irony or resemblance of himself for the reality; has detached himself from nature; and equally as he has conceived God to be, he has conceived himself to be a separate being. Instead of which, the moral is, that man has made a God, and, therefore, no such God ever made the world, and man, in common with his God, is a part of nature. Nor is man represented essentially higher than the animals; there is the same nature to all life; God is represented as speaking to the animals, as if they could equally understand, and he gives them the same command as he gives to man—that they should propagate their species.

Irony is said to mean resemblance; man has taken the analogy for the fact, and the analogy of a greater power, nature working, he has conveyed to himself, or the analogy of the lesser power, himself, he has given to nature, the greater power. Man does not compare himself with the rest of nature, or the facts of nature; he imagines he is above what is above him, as he has nothing in common with the creation, the life, which is the same as his own. Man takes the higher idea of himself, instead of putting himself on an equality with nature. He regards himself as the whole of nature, as the maker of nature, as infinity, and conceives himself to be as the Gods. He actually did that in the first chapter of Genesis, which he is represented doing in the second; he would be as the Gods, and suffered the fall.

If God made man in his image, he made something worse than himself, and therefore evil. The order of things is from good to better, not from better to worse, from chaos to creation, and its degrees. But it would not have been, if God, after making nature, made man a bad copy of himself. Man was not made till the last, yet, according to his own showing, he presided at the making of, and made the whole of nature from the beginning. God could not make a part like himself, a part equal to the whole; a part could not make the whole; he could only make the whole, or the whole the whole; the whole could make a part like the rest, not different to the rest. But this God is nature. Man, a part, would make himself the whole, and more than the whole, when he made God in his image.

That we have dominion over some of them is a fact of nature; but then

where that is announced, and the same life to all, and being like the Gods, there is no difference made in that life.

There is no declaration as to his divinity to save him from the anthropomorphism of his works, and his making man in his image, unless the seventh day's rest be considered as an abnegation of work. Being made in his image—i.e., that we make God, that we see nature in our own shadow, and as human we can only see it human. The works of days, and God being as man, the man who made the world, was to teach men there was no other than man, as God; man could understand no other. Nature had nothing to do with man in its formation. There were no men; there was no man who made the universe. The whole philosophy and religion of the Bible was directed against the thought, and God being anything like us, therefore that we are not like him, except as matter and part of the whole. Nature is alone intended; nature is left as God. There is no creed or belief in an abstract God given. There is everything against it. Nature is all joined together as a whole. We make God in the image of what we seek after. We all seek after good; therefore we represent God as good and doing good. The rest of the moral is purely material; we are to multiply and replenish the earth—that is increase life; and by subduing it our attention seems turned to the means of life, agriculture, to afford food for ourselves and others; and in accordance with that idea, and, probably, with the idea of the habits of man originally, the good and the life, the fruits of the earth, and not animal life—were supposed to be given us for food. It is probable that man in a state of nature could live upon a vegetable diet, as the peasants of most countries do principally, if not altogether.

There is no religion given in belief or practice; there is no acknowledgment of a God made, no worship of him required, no prayers, no praise, no sacrifice; that was all due to man according to God; our services were for ourselves and this earth. If we were created to supply the place of angels, of the fallen Gods, or if there were to be more Elohim, now was the time to have declared it. If there was to be an end of the world, as appalling as the beginning, and duration was magnificent, now was the time to have said it. But here was the idea in its commencement, when man had not filled up the picture in the reality of his own image. Whatever we are, that our God will be, and the Gods of the Bible answer to the thousand ideas of man. We have God after our own heart, as we think or say that a man is after God's own heart. Whatever we think is good is our God. There is nothing told us beyond what we know; the simplest ideas are fulfilled. Man in a savage state, we should call it, works out an ideal of God himself and this earth. God, man, and the animal are nearly all equal. None of the questions are answered that interest mankind, whether mankind was from one pair or many; here it seems to be given in favour of many. He created them male and female. The origin from one pair was,

therefore, an after thought, to fulfil some other idea. There is nothing in the first chapter of Genesis as the foundation of anything which we have since elevated into an arbitrary belief. There is no exemption from our present condition. After God is made to labour, he tells us that labour is our life, we have to subdue the earth in order to make provision for it; to subdue it, it must resist, and not spontaneously bring forth everything. As there is nothing laid down as necessary to belief, so there is no practice required as necessary to salvation, except food and life. There is no Athenasion creed of belief given on account of the impossibility of belief, salvation attached to its acceptance, and damnation to its rejection. All the commands are affirmative, and there are none negative. We are to enjoy all the fruits of the earth, and there are none forbidden that are not of this earth. We had to raise them, and we had to forbid them to ourselves. We had to forbid to ourselves those things which do harm to ourselves in life.

There are but two original commandments, and both affirmative—multiplication of the species and labour on the earth. These may be said to be the laws of nature. The commandments which followed were negative and repressive, and may be said to be abuses of the affirmative—of the laws of nature. As God is made to say at other times, these commandments are life and death; life if you fulfil them, death if you disobey them. As the New Testament says, your duty towards God is your duty to man, the love of God the love of yourself and your neighbour. In loving your neighbour you would love yourself. If every man fulfilled all his duties towards his neighbours, there would be no evil between man, immorality, and its consequences.

There is no, what we call, morality taught by God; only two commandments—the laws of nature. Morality afterwards came between men, and for their security, and, in consequence, then God became personal, such as themselves, and more moral than a law of nature. Creation and work was taken away from him, good and evil; moral business was alone assigned to him, the bringer of good, the averter of evil, the rewarder of the one, and the punisher of the other.

If good be a power, and evil a power, according to the Christians, what is it but ascribing thunder and lightning to a personal power? Man first believed in evil. If thunder and lightning made him believe in a God, evil was the evidence of God, or he would never have thought of a God. A good God was an afterthought of religion. Fear of evil, therefore, is the origin of religion, as Lucretius said.

No man has more faith than the animal; none yield more to authority; yet the animal, who has faith more than man, is not superior, or in a state of perfection, inasmuch as he has less reason than man. The condition of the animal, therefore, is not an analogy by which men can be directed amongst

themselves. Else slavery would have its full precept from comparison of animals with men. The slavery of the body may be said to be a divine law, or a law of nature, as nothing is better for us than work; but there is no slavery of the mind which has its promptings from nature. The slavery of the mind is peculiarly the province of religion; faith as a law in preference to reason, and of one person to another person. We are told to have dominion over the world, but not corporeal over each other, much less mental.

No Providence is mentioned; that a God has to take care of that which he has made, and to be moral governor of the universe. No present judgment is to sit upon our actions, and no future is promised, though a future is pointed out to him. God was perfect, or he was not; and he had made, therefore, things complete in themselves, or he had not. If he had not, how could we rely upon his ever doing so any more than man? Life—living, is the object; there is no soul separate from the body in man, none in the world. There is no likeness of that sort imagined, but which has been since imagined, that our souls and the soul of the world are the same. Why did God not say it if there was the likeness?

We come out of death into life, therefore; by many God is said to be life, or the soul matter is death, and no God, and God is life. We return to death, and matter, and no God. We are to guard against death, to preserve life, and, therefore, are subject to it. There is nothing said to the contrary that we are immortal, and, therefore, should not want the means of life. Death is included in living. There is no other world mentioned but this as the theatre of men's actions; no other beings mentioned, who we are to become; we are not to subdue death, by subduing this world, and conquer another world, and become the inhabitants of it by any acts of our own.

But we are promised an immortality, not of the individual, but of the species, in the command to multiply and replenish the earth; and as much as the idea is conveyed of the future of ourselves in our children, so is the idea of the past, of the gone, and of the dead, included in the perpetual progress forward of life eternal.

There is nothing in the first chapter of Genesis but what is now called blank Materialism and Atheism, and ideas, not facts, on the subject of creation. Afterwards, on the foundations of the alleged facts, new ideas arose. Instead of the ideas being adopted, the facts were mistaken for realities, adopted as facts and ideas, or religions founded on them purely of the imagination.

If Paul's ideas found utterance in facts, and he did not know the difference between them, surely it is not too much to ask that the stories of the origin of the world, and of man, should be taken in the same sense when they could not have happened, and are not said to have happened to the knowledge of anyone, as they did to Paul. The stories are not of

this world, not few, or single, as in the case of Paul, but of secrets said in the Bible never to have been revealed to anyone. Isaiah often asked whether anyone was with God at the origin of all things.

Good being accounted for on the world as it is, evil had been accounted for, or how it was brought into the world through the instrumentality of man, for those divisions into good and evil must be necessarily human and finite. The world and man made, his future history was to be given; and the principles of his existence, his subjective and objective relations; the world within himself, and the world without, as presented to him. Good and evil are together the infinite. Good and evil separate are the parts to the whole. Neither one can be God.

People who cannot believe they were only made to die, who disregard the authority of Scripture, their senses and their reason really pronounce there is no God, if there is not a God concerned in any of these declarations. They say they do not believe the world is made as it is made; they do not believe in anything. They say the world was made without good and evil, and will be without evil, though they do not show how it can be in another or any world. They pronounce there is no God under the conditions in which we are, for he made it, and will make it different. In denying the effect, they deny the First Cause, and that there was any Maker or Creator of the world. According to them, God and the world are incomprehensible to us under totally different powers or power, to which we are cognizant.

GENESIS.—PART II.

‘I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and *create evil*. I the Lord do all these things.—ISAIAH XLV., 7.

THERE can be no greater proof that the Bible was a collection of current traditions; that, therefore, there was no belief required in them; that they were fables, and represented current ideas, than the assertion made in chapter ii., verse 4, after ending the first creation, that there was another creation to be related, and a totally different one. Chapter ii. professes to give another order of creation to what was contained in the first creation. ‘These are the generations,’ it says, which follow; and they are not created in six days, but in one day; in the day that the first chapter, first verse, said the Gods created the heavens and the earth. Only instead of Gods the Lord God is said to have done it. Instead of Elohim we have Jehovah. Some have called them, therefore, the Elohist and Jehovist relations; and would prove thereby, from their names, as well as their matter, that they were not one and the same, but two different relations. The name Jehovah is said to have been first made known to Moses. Jehovah is said to mean the one God, the ‘I am that I am,’ the existence of all things, of the no God. A writer might give the idea that the world was made from many causes, and from one cause, without thinking of any contradiction; that out of these opposites were formed the one God, and that neither Polytheism nor Theism were truths separately, but together. God was not made to stand for Gods, the singular for the plural, in defiance of the sense, as in our version, to suit modern ideas.

Instead of the earth being submerged in water and darkness, light being wanted, the idea seems to have been that the earth was made out of fire, and was suffering from drought. God had not yet rained upon the earth; and, therefore, he was obliged to supply it temporarily with dew, or a spring, before there was any water, as he supplied the earth in the first creation with light provisionally before there was a sun. We cannot suppose water or fire existing one without the other, whatever existed previously; we cannot suppose it without the two. We cannot suppose one element without the other; the world and water without heat and light; and the world, and heat, and light, without water. Among the ancient philosophers some supposed fire the first principle, some water. Here we have an alternation of elements—earth, air, fire, water. The three last, at least, are supposed to be under divine agency; but the first, the earth, opposes a stubborn fact of nature and matter as a beginning. Believers in religion, however, find no contradiction in God making the world over

again as many times as he likes; and going on entirely opposite physical and moral principles.

Commentators have said, with reason, that this second tradition came from another source, and under different circumstances. Such a creation of the world must have been imagined by Arabs in the desert. It was an Arabian Messianic idea of those who thought the world had been burnt up, and, therefore, it was the first duty of a benevolent Creator to supply it with water. We find in the Bible that water was considered of paramount importance; physically, it was the great temporal desire in a land of drought; and was the fulfillment of the future in the Messianic ideas of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Water was such a want that it became morally the idea of life and salvation. Drink as well as food, baptism as well as the supper, were two things necessary to salvation, besides the external influence which water exercised, and became the symbol of purification in the soul, and of morality. Water was also emblematic of good, love, or charity; and fire was hell, and represented the violent passions, a destroying fire. Therefore, Christ depicted charity or love as giving a cup of water; and Lazarus is depicted as having plenty of it in heaven, and Dives begging one drop of it to alleviate his thirst in hell fire. It is apparent that there was good and evil in the second as in the first creation; evil first, and then good, because the drought is the evil, and the water is the good, as the water had been the evil and the contrary, the light the good. Such is nature; good and evil take the place of each other, and arise from the same things; they are essential to each other, and balance each other.

Instead of light and heat, and life, fermenting the mass, as in the first creation, water is brought to the work in the second creation; man is made out of mud and air. The labour of man was necessary to make the earth productive for man; for *that* he was made, and nothing else, according to the first commandment of God, and not to supply the place of fallen angels, to live idly, and to go to heaven, as the priests say and do. The Bible says there was not a man to till the earth. Man is put into a garden in order to dress it, and to keep it. So there was work before the fall, and in Paradise; and if in the earth, labour, rest, and change; so in all things the same order of creation and destruction. Seeds must have been put into the earth; the refuse of the dead must have been committed to the earth, and man must have lived upon the life of the earth therefrom. He must have worked the soil, lived upon the vegetation of the soil, and enriched the soil. If Adam had to dress and keep a garden, gardens and gardeners must have been the same as now. Adam was in the place of a servant, slave, or labourer of the Almighty. God did give what Hume thought wanting to man, nothing but work; told him that was a virtue, the contrary a vice. Evil, sin, the temptation and fall of man, is to escape

from labour, to be as the Gods; and his knowledge of good and evil makes him think labour a curse. Man, the servant of the Almighty, or of nature, was cast upon the world without a master as a punishment. Man would not work unless he was obliged by the force of circumstances, which is the character of man according as he is placed. Man is more active and industrious on unproductive soils, and under inclement skies; idle on rich land and under hot suns. This was, perhaps, signified by a coat being given to man as well as thorns and thistles; the climate was against him, as well as the produce of the soil. In warm climates, religion has worked its greatest evils, and made men look to another world, the more of a paradise nature had given him here. The more man had to do in the world to make a living, the less has he looked to another. However abundant the world is, there is always evil attached to the good; and man cannot imagine good unless the world is made for him alone. The good of others, their existence, and means of existence is evil to man. So morality is founded upon man, not upon nature, the good and evil to him. We are told in the Douay Bible that from the beginning 'God had planted the garden of Eden, or paradise of pleasure,' showing that beginning was merely a finite term, a point of time applied to the commencement of anything in this world. Again water is thought of the first estimation; and four rivers flow out of Eden to supply the four quarters of the known world, as if they were of as much consideration as the constellations of the heavens were in the first creation to rule the earth. In the Messianic kingdom upon earth seen by the prophets, rivers were to flow out of Jerusalem to supply all the world. It is impossible to say what sort of water was meant. Physically, the Deity is more limited in the second than in the first creation, and more of a demiurgus. In the first creation all was made good, but here it is directly declared it was not good. It is not good for man to be alone. In the first creation, male and female were made together, which not only seemed much better for mankind, but more worthy of a Divinity. In fact, we cannot suppose one of a sex made without the other; the one implies the other. Every division, every second thought is also derogatory to the Divinity. It would here appear that God went from one most finite conclusion to the other, and there was no grasp at infinity; that instead of being omniscient, God did not know what the man he had made was made for; and lastly, that he was far from omnipotent, for the devil made the final cause contrary to the intention of the Deity. The devil made the ends of creation, though God may have the beginnings. We have seen there was work, and good and evil, before man had ate of the tree of knowledge—of good and evil. These apparent contradictions, and signs of infirmity, show these stories were not intended as facts, but only as fables to convey ideas, and give account of things.

The idea of the origin of language is given in Adam naming everything.

Language is supposed to come primarily from things, therefore they are called nouns, or names, substantives. Some have derived our word *think* from *thing*, *thinging* a thing. But, according to the Bible, Adam and Eve went soon beyond naming things; in the conversations between Adam and God, the serpent and Eve, they seem at once to have acquired full proficiency in the language, which we may doubt to be a language when the serpent spoke it. From this we may judge they were not individuals, but representatives of the history of the human race, from the earliest to the most advanced stage.

There is a play on words often occurring in the Bible, probably much more than is known. Adam says, 'She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man;' therefore, the signification of the word in Hebrew, meant she was taken out of man, or something similar; that was the supposed derivation of the word, and the woman might have been given the name in consequence of the story, or the story might have been to answer the name. The signification of the word and the story may also physically express the intimate relation between the sexes, that as the man proceeds from the woman, so the woman proceeds from the man. The union between them, the one the issue of the other, and the union of living between husband and wife—they shall be two in one flesh is described. That all things were, as they are now, is admitted by Adam saying, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother.' He was as fully acquainted with the process of human generation, as if he himself was the son of the father and mother he mentions, and Eve of other parents. We cannot conceive life without death, and, therefore, the latter may be fully inferred from the former, as human parentage may be presumed from the presence of men. The offspring going on and forming fresh connections, the parents cease to be physically, as well as morally, though they may actually be in existence. Generations of men are said to consist of twenty-five years, as by that period the issue of man gives issue to others. But as the being of evil, as well as good, is allowed, also there being labour, so the sexual knowledge of each other, which is a knowledge of good and evil, the consequences in children, the pains of childbirth, are admitted by the speech of Adam, when they are not supposed to have happened till after the fall. If the usual propagation of the species is not supposed in the beginning, by Adam being formed out of slime or mud, and Eve out of his rib, the regular way, and the only way known by man, is acknowledged by the speech of Adam. Childbirth is supposed to have been the punishment of the woman attendant upon the fall. Even being subject to a worse childbirth, supposes there must have been a prior better, and no doubt a worse childbirth is consequent upon our sins, and the desire women have ever shown to avoid all work, and be as the Gods. All these inconsistencies only show the real nature of the Bible, that it was a collection of different

traditions on the cosmogony and nature of man, and, therefore, sometimes quite opposed to each other, if that can be called opposed in details which were not delivered as facts. The ideas were distinct, and were conveyed through different mediums. The ideas being irreconcilable, may also sometimes arise from a difference of opinion on the subject. In the course of time additions have been supposed to have been made, the fulfilment of fresh ideas, which have not always united congruously with the original. New wine has been put into old bottles. Not only new matter may have been added to the Bible, but the figures of old have been made the recipient of new ideas. Christ was against the endeavour to accommodate new ideas to old ones. Paul made the Christianity of the New to fit into the Old Testament. Perhaps he only used the old as illustration of the new ideas; afterwards they became united as facts in the scheme of Christianity. For instance, the fall and the atonement.

As there was so much about water, river, and mud, the source of both creations has been referred to the Euphrates. They may have originated in Babylon. The drought, however, is of Arabian or Syrian origin, showing how traditions mingled the one into the other. The rivers of Assyria and Egypt were known to the inhabitants of Syria, and probably were the admiration and envy of those who dwelt on the dry rocks, and sandy deserts between. In supposing the Bible to be all ideas and no facts, we save it from disrespect. The only blasphemy, Lord Brougham said, was in believing there was a God, and saying that he told untruths, made evil, and was a bad character. Plutarch and Bacon had said the same thing, no doubt with a view to Pagan mythologies, and Scripture history.

There is no such God, or no God is no blasphemy of one; it is rather speaking good of one; you must believe God to exist to blaspheme him. In the same way, if you do not think such a person as Jesus Christ ever existed, or what is said of him ever happened, and you find fault with it, you do not blaspheme him, but defend him from blasphemy.

The first chapter of Genesis, and the first creation confined itself more to matter, and what was material in man. It applied itself to what was good. The second creation enters more upon ideas of human nature, upon morals, how evil comes to man, and is made by man out of what was made good without distinction of evil. In giving the causes of evil to mankind, the author does it as any other writer, only in the style of fable or story, not history of facts. Evil consists in the knowledge. As Paul said, the law convicted man of sin. The Ten Commandments were a knowledge of evil, and Paul thought a time was coming when there was to be no law, or no knowledge of sin.

When all was good, and very good, the Messianic idea of the kingdom of heaven upon earth was carried out. One would think God had made the universe as good as he could, and he is made to declare it good. Man,

nevertheless, overthrew his own construction, and said, in pursuance of the Messianic idea, that the universe might have been made better; that the work of God should be destroyed; the old heavens and the earth should be rolled up, and a new heaven and a new earth should be unfolded. The Messianic idea was again realised in the Garden of Eden, a supposed improvement upon our present condition; but we are not to return to it with superior powers and experience to enjoy it; it is equally rejected for the imagination of the Christian future and the new Jerusalem; and instead of the country, the town has been preferred in the reveries of St. John. We can only say religion changed in its tastes for the worse.

It must be allowed that Christ, in the sermon on the Mount, is made to enter into the vulgar Messianic idea, and promise his followers no work, no care, that they should be provided by God with eating, drinking, and clothing, without any Providence of their own.

It may be said of this, what a universal idea is slavery, for man seems to have no higher notion than that other men should serve him as well as the animals; that there should be dominion over one another, and subjection to one another, and the condition of Paradise to be, that God should be their slave and wait upon them. But, however universal the notion may be, it does not make it true; it is still a false notion, and the only truth is the love of one another, and that all should work for the good of themselves and each other. People are always talking about what is and what is not natural to man, what is and what is not designed by Providence. But it may equally be said that it is our nature, and that it is against our nature, that it is and it is not designed by Providence that we should work. Jesus Christ even appealed to a law of nature in the lily, and the sparrow, and applied it to man as a guide to his conduct, and interpretation of the ways of Providence towards him. Slavery is not natural to man, it is argued; and at the same time it may be said it is natural to man. It is designed by Providence, some say, and the proof, a strong one in religion, is the fact it is. Others say, who read the designs of Providence differently, it is the curse of man at the fall as well as the curse of Canaan. Others may say, it is impious to do away with what has been ordained by Providence or made a punishment of our sins. The only question really is, What is best for us? and the laws of nature and the designs of Providence are beside the question. Jesus's estimation of the realisation of Christianity shows that he fully entered into the Jewish Messianic idea, material, temporal, and of this world, and not the Messianic idea of modern Christianity, an after life in another world, and the immortality of the soul.

The third chapter gives the other, the evil side of nature and humanity, the religious history of mankind, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil. It is a history of the unnatural elevation of the human

idea, and its consequent fall. It is an account of what Francis Newman would call the soul; the history of that side of our nature which inclines towards God—the aspirations and sorrows of the soul. It is employed upon what Fox, Parker, have largely speculated—the religious idea. It equally condemns the dogmatic assumptions of positive beliefs, and the cultivation of religious ideas and hopes, which are the foundation of the more extended and established faiths. The subject is our dissatisfaction with our present state, which it is shown, however good it might be, would not content us: we would have a knowledge of good and evil. Our desire is to be with God—to be as the Gods—to be with the maker of the world; and to make it better is the subject of the third chapter of Genesis, as it has ever been the subject of man's imagination. It may be said to be a universal idea, but the futility of it is shown. Religion, in its relation to God and superstition, is shown to be alike, and equally worthless. The subject is the endeavour to unravel and to reconcile the moral anomalies to us of good and evil, which cannot be found out, as they do not exist; the despair of succeeding, and, therefore, the effort to possess a future state and life, which God and nature ridicule in the thought, jealously and cruelty guard against the attempt, and make us return upon the earth abashed, humiliated, and rejected.

There are laws of nature, but they are good and bad to us, and are equally laws of nature. The distinction we would draw would be between the laws of nature and those which are no laws at all—the ideas of the supernatural, religious ideas, which, though they may be said to be natural to us in imagination, yet do not find their counterpart in the facts and laws of nature.

We have only to do with nature, and not with what is not nature. We had been told in the first chapter of Genesis that nature was sufficient for us. No religious idea had come from God or nature, therefore they were to come from man. The nature which was declared good, as it was is so until it is thought bad, and we want another nature; and when we reject nature, instead of returning its love, it rejects us, though we must come back to it. As Horace says, you may expel nature violently, but it will come back. Man's thoughts and devices are no criteria of the truth; you must seek for it in nature. What was declared good in the beginning, and in the first creation, is declared good in the beginning of the second; for it says, from the beginning a paradise had been created for man, and a paradise it remained until man yielded to the temptation of having religious ideas. A hell of earth was made, and swords were drawn to defend the tree of life, which was within reach, and was not forbidden until man thought it was not in this, but in another world, and in the eternal individual life, instead of the common and everlasting universe of existence. The ideas of man make the evil, religion, wars, etc. There would be

comparatively little, and that unavoidable, if all men worked, multiplied, and replenished, whilst they subdued the earth.

We suppose that no one will assert the serpent spoke; therefore the whole story is not to be taken in the letter, but as a fable. Beasts were spoken to by God; now one speaks to the woman. The serpent tempts the woman, or man, with the idea that their eyes shall be opened, as every religion does; that they shall see what they never saw before, and what they never will see, as was proved, when they had partaken of the forbidden fruit. She was told that they should be as the Gods, which is the aim of the religious idea.

The temptation and the fall is experienced by the woman in the first place, because she has ever been more open to the religious idea than the man. She is more the creature of impulse and imagination. Though not possessed of so much passion as the man, she has not so much reason to control it. The woman equally drew upon earth the deluge by making alliances with heaven, which was probably only another development of the religious idea. The religious idea is not content with being human, but would be as the Gods; is not content with earth, but only with heaven. The knowledge of good and evil is one which has ever been attempted by mankind, and has signally failed. Man will not accommodate himself to facts, but wants to account for them. On such vain labours Milton says the damned in hell are employed. In such speculations man is lost; and it is needless to say that in trying to account for evil, he involves himself in contradictions, and in religious dogmatic miseries. He has to imagine a history of evil, in order to account for evil. He has to suppose the existence of things without evil, which is the same as to suppose their non-existence, or annihilation. He has to think himself bad, and join a God in his offence and in his punishment. As for free-will, neither he nor God had it when there was another, a serpent, who followed out his will, to whom man yielded, and God could not resist. On the origin of good and evil the whole of religion is built, and man was not satisfied when he yielded to the temptation—ate the forbidden fruit. He obtained no more knowledge of good and evil than their existence, which was thus brought upon himself, and is not in reality more than the religion to rectify it. Thus it has ever been; man has tasted of the forbidden fruit in some fresh revelation or religion, and he has met with the disappointment of his hopes—he did not know more than before—he experienced no difference in his condition.

There must have been evil before the knowledge of it, because if God made good there must have been evil. Besides there was winter, which is an evil, and always has been considered the opposite of good. Death is certainly an evil in our eyes, and winter could not be, creation could not be without it. But supposing death was not in the world, there was evil without it. We cannot allow every contradictory hypothesis—that God

knew of the fall, and therefore prepared for it, as if it had taken place, than we must allow he was the author of evil, or was the same as nature—could not make it otherwise than it was. Evil, therefore, may be reconciled with nature, because good cannot be without the evil—the one cannot be without the other. We may say we rest content and passive before the existence of evil, but we cannot have a knowledge of it. To know God, it has been said, is to be God himself; and to know nature, or the causes of nature, would be to be nature itself. Without evil as well as good, we cannot tell how we should exist: any imaginable state of perfection would be a blank. Evil is necessary to creation, and to every good. Therefore, as the serpent said, man must be as the *Gods* themselves to have a knowledge of good and evil. But only reconcileable with nature, the existence of evil is irreconcilable with an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent Creator. We cannot say to nature it might have been better, because in the presence of it, lost in ignorance, we acquiesce it could not be otherwise; but we might reasonably object to a Creator that he might have made it better. Some small improvement would have made considerable difference in the happiness of mankind. We might have said, things must be as they are; but give us a better knowledge of what is good and evil, and, consequently, our practice will be better. Hume suggests that if man had been inspired with more love of industry, it would have been better. We might have suggested that if he had been made less superstitious, and had attended more to the concerns of this world and less to another, it might have been better. But such questions are idle before nature. She seems to have made everything on the broad principle of creation and destruction—good and evil to us. These are the two great laws of nature; all the details fulfil them—are only accessory to them. We can only move within their circle, and therefore all we do is equally good and evil, or there is no good and evil to nature—the parts make the whole—become order or perfection.

Though, therefore, primarily, we think the great philosophical question of the nature and origin of good and evil was intended in the story of the fall; that we should be as the Gods, and therefore have a knowledge of good and evil, when we tasted of the forbidden fruit, and by knowing good and evil we should know God, and be as the Gods, which is ever sought after and ever denied to man, yet there was another knowledge of good and evil which was secondarily meant. In a comparative manner, if man attained to this secondary knowledge of good and evil, he would be as he commonly thinks the Gods to be; he would know what was good and evil for him; he would know what to seek and what to avoid; what to do and what not to do; and in his practice, consequent upon his knowledge, he would be as the Gods, compared with his former situation as man. It is unnecessary to say that man, in his endeavours after progress, in this sense wishes to be as the Gods, and to have a knowledge of good and evil. But

in a contrary sense he wishes to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, for in all the plagues he brings upon himself by superstition, all the miseries by war and crime, and in all he individually suffers from the pursuit of pleasure, he wishes to be as the Gods, and to have a knowledge and experience of good and evil. But mankind are never agreed what it is to be as the Gods, or to have a knowledge of good and evil. Men are never agreed as to religion, which is to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil. They are not agreed as to morality, though there is less difference about morals than there is about religion. Men are agreed amongst themselves about what is necessary to their common existence and self-preservation—the first law of morality. The bulk of the Ten Commandments have been observed by all. It has been the magna charta of mankind against evil. The only part of it which met with no acquiescence in the world were the first and second commandments against religion. They seem directed against the universal idea of mankind, which sought for God in everything and not in the whole. About religion, men can never come to a theoretic or practical agreement. About morality, something is known and certain as between men. About religion, nothing is known, as it is between God and man. All that is certain in religion is made into morality. Duty to God is your duty to man. What is not known, but imagined, of religion, is drawn from man, and consists in exaggerations of his virtues, vices, and powers, though we may say a personal God is more characterised by the latter than the former, though they are claimed for him.

We all seek individually our own good, and the few at the expense of the many. We cannot, in imitation of the nature we have depicted, make individual sacrifices of our own desires and their accomplishments to make the greater good of the whole, and enter into the general order we see. God is called good, or God, because we desire good, and worship it. Nobody can be said to desire evil, but in his wish to avert it. He may appear to worship it by propitiatory and deprecatory offerings and sacrifices.

Man has a *beau idéal* both in the past and future, but it is not real. From perfection to imperfection, he would imagine we proceeded, but he is obliged to interpolate the fall to account for the reality. So strong is the actual, that the state of perfection is obliged to be acknowledged imperfect, when man is made to wish for something better. The lesson, however, taught, is, that man's paradise is here on earth, and not elsewhere in heaven. Things have not gone from better to worse, but from worse to better. Ideas, and facts conformable to them, are of progress, though in the eyes of infinity, there may be no difference between the past, the present, and the future. The atonement, Messianic idea, or hope for the future, supposes we were not at one with the creation, when we must be at one with the universe. Religion makes us at variance in imagination, though it cannot actually make us not at one with nature.

Every individual is thinking what is good for him; never blessed, but always hoping to be blessed. One says this is good for him, another says the same is bad for him. Some are for the present, and some are for the past, and some only see a hope of good in the future. Even with the unprejudiced philosopher it may be a question that what is gained by civilisation, may not be counterbalanced by what is lost by it. Even some think that man cannot go forward; that if apparently he does to us, he goes backward in the same proportion; there is action and reaction. Hume and Macaulay both have declared it just as probable that man, if he abandons one thing which is hurtful to him, will go to another folly equally hurtful, or return to the same. Evil will be triumphant, and the good will succumb. Probably the remedy is the one which is given in the Bible; and constituted happiness and paradise before the fall, which is the fruit of every tree in the garden, and not forbidden to any of us, and which Hume thought a little more of, would be a great improvement in the condition of mankind—that is, industry or labour, the cultivation of the soil, the primary means of life to all, the greatest possible happiness to the greatest possible number. The Bible story says that is the end of creation; we possessed it in the earth, and we thought we were designed for another purpose. We went in search of a distant happiness; and in grasping at the shadow have lost the substance. In creation there is a good; we are nearest to the Creator or nature, in making the earth produce. There is good to us in the doing it, and the end. Labour gives the means of life and happiness in the getting it. Indolence has both evils; we lose the means of life, and of health and happiness. In consequence as the story goes, we are sent to the land to seek out our salvation, which we forgot in other ways upon the earth, and sought in heaven.

It cannot be denied that as we have increased and multiplied and replenished the earth, so we have subdued it, and had dominion over it in proportion by a constant succession of wonderful inventions. Whatever may be said against progress, it was inaugurated, and the terms of it published, by the declaration of God at the beginning of the world. The Messianic idea, the hope of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, is no other than the idea of progress. We may well hope we shall make mental, moral, social progress on a par with our advancement in science. Imagination and poetry, as Macaulay says on Milton, cease with civilisation.

The opinion of Hume, to which we referred, was, that if the world got rid of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he cited as the most absurd of any in religion, they might adopt another equally false. Macaulay is of opinion that Roman Catholicism might be flourishing when Protestantism and progress had ceased to be. Perhaps such events would only show the falsity of religion ringing the changes on the impossible and absurd, and not its perpetuity. If religion is poetry, a product of the imagination,

and will cease with civilisation, there is no proof that civilisation will expire, and we shall go back to the dark ages and reign of imagination.

Sir Humphrey Davy, in his 'Consolations of Travel,' has a fine passage to the effect that in the fall of empires, ruin and death to man, nature asserts her prerogative of creation; and fresh forms of life occupy the place made vacant by man. Man is death to nature; and out of the death of man comes life again. We subdue the earth. We find the earth full of vegetable and animal life, and the very qualities which produce them are often death to man. He may seek his health and happiness oftentimes in the most sterile spots. The earth which yields her riches to him gives forth ~~the~~ effluvia of mortality to him; and produces, from the minutest insect, to the largest and most venomous beast, injury, misery, and death to him. He clears the space, and is comparatively freed from evils, if he did not produce others by his civilisation. The crowded cities gives forth the causes of death, it is said, more than the country. The attainment of civilisation produces the vices, and the passions, and the follies, which destroy life. The habits of the city, or of civilisation, tell upon the country, and reduce their inhabitants to overtoil, indigence, misery, and death. Through a different course we end where we began; we decline and fall; and the bramble, and the thistle, the insect and the wild beast, are reinstated in possession. We crush the serpent's head, what we call evil; and the evil or the serpent bites our heal, the produce of the woman, the son of man, humanity. Nor is it less a physiological fact. We see the dunghill reeking with life; and life marches with death in equal step; and all becomes life when we are dead. In the economy of nature, as it were, by another and a double process, the means of life are in death; and all the excrements, and refuse, and death, go to fertilise the fields. Every act of destruction—the way of death and the means of life, which ourselves and the animals exercise towards each other—are parts of the great system of creation and destruction.

Though it is all the same to nature, and our vices and our passions equally serve her purposes, though we cannot get out of the range of those circumstances. We cannot be as the Gods, and have such a knowledge of good and evil, as to alter the nature of things and supersede ourselves. Though we cannot have such a knowledge of good and evil as will make all do the best for themselves and each other, yet, what is called morality, is between ourselves; and we are the authors of the evil and the good which exist between ourselves. We, therefore, in fact, are our own God, and our own Devil. We make our own good and our own evil. We are the creators of good, which we made in our own image in the first creation of Genesis; and the creators of evil which we made in the second creation of Genesis. The Rev. Mr. Law, and the spiritualists, have thus interpreted the story of the good and evil, and God and the Devil in the Bible. We

may say a greater authority than Mr. Law has delivered the same. What else can be meant by God in us, and Christ in us; God our Father, and the Devil their Father; worshipping God, and worshipping the Devil? We are our own God. Man is God to himself, whether he likes to make him in the form of good or of evil. We impersonate a Deity, or Deities; but out of ourselves, and viewed as a whole, we can see nothing but nature.

If we believe that God wrote the Bible, we must believe that the fall of man happened as he says; but if we do not, that man wrote it, as he imagined the state of things, and that it did not literally happen as he says. But the Fathers believed that God told untruths—that is, he told it as man would—that the form was not the truth but the idea. We have the difficulty, if we believe the Bible the work of God, and not man, of deciding beforehand what God was, and reconciling the God we have made with these ways of revelation.

Being as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, involves all the questions of dogmatic theology, also of philosophy and metaphysics. The former, the dogmatic theology, thinks it knows everything; and the latter, asserts it does not—its own ignorance. We need not say we think the latter the state before the fall, and the former the result of eating the forbidden fruit, and esteeming themselves as Gods, and possessed of the knowledge of good and evil, not only of deciding upon the nature of the Gods and men, and universe, but giving the history how all happened, and evil came into the world. The whence, the why, and the whether, are all taught in the Bible. From earth we come, and to earth we go. We are made to increase, multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. Any other aspirations of philosophy, or religion, are vain questions, and vain answers to them—temptations of the Devil and our fall. If we want to know more of the why, it seems things cannot be without creation and destruction, life and death, good and evil—therefore, we are. Hence, we must be from the earth; whither to the earth, and why, because we could not be otherwise.

The punishment was, man should return to the earth, whence is the only knowledge we have—the simple causes and effects men see in the earth, and whence by comparison and storing up of facts, they can enlarge their knowledge. When God is made to say that men were to increase, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, &c., and all the things that he had made were very good, the extent of our knowledge and extent of our action upon earth, and no more beyond, was defined and thought sufficient for our happiness. It is we who have thought that more knowledge, more freedom of will and action, and a future life, were necessary to our happiness.

Man was fated to be as he is: it could not be otherwise; and we have made God not able to help it—have given him no freedom of will, or man

had no freedom, but was made by God to do as he did, and as he does. Of the alternatives we think there is no question which to choose. The first is nature—renders unnecessary a God—and does not reduce our reason and our will to a nullity and absurdity.

We cannot conceive God making us and not making us, and not making us as we are, leaving us freedom of will. It comes to the same as saying he did not exist, and never did make us. Even if there was the interference of a God, one of many causes, a cause within causes, we should have still less freedom of action. We should hold God responsible for everything we did or did not. We should have looked for aid in our favour when the serpent tempted, and there was none. Is it not telling us there was no God, whether we prayed to him or not? Can he be said, therefore, to exist, and as a limited being? He is either absorbed in nature, or there is no place for him out of nature. If there was a God, truly we might say, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, as he led us into temptation, and did not deliver us from evil when we fell. The *Quarterly Review* on Mr. Jowett's book, cites the prayer as an instance of God not being the cause of evil. The prayer then is material, and might as well be addressed to nature as God. It prays only for daily bread, though the Catholics say that is the bread of transubstantiation. Daily bread is the kingdom of heaven and the divine will done upon earth; and there is no prayer for any other kingdom, though the Catholics say the coming of his kingdom to us, means our going to his kingdom in heaven.

Man had already fallen when God came. God always comes in after the event, and says that he does that which has already taken place. Such is the incongruity which must happen in telling a story attendant upon the impossibility of making a God act as a God, showing the impossibility of our being one, or our believing in one. But Christians say he provided a scheme of salvation for us to act at another time. If we limit him in time, the God of one time and of another time, at the fall and salvation, it is the same as if there were many Gods. Besides, the salvation has never arrived any more than the fall is known to have happened, and the non-issue of salvation does away with the Pauline or Christian interpretation of the fall. Atonement made no difference, and original sin, therefore, made none, in the state of things. In the first creation we are given a very limited range of action, and we have a freedom of will apparent between ourselves; but, like good and evil, it does not exist in relation to the whole. We are surrounded by the inexorable necessity of circumstances. Man has no freedom of will: nor God, nor nature, has freedom of will: but everything that is moves in its own circle.

According to Paul, only 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Romans v., 12. James does not know Adam and Eve more than his

brother Jesus did—'But *every one* is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth *death*.' James i., 14, 15.

The Douay Bible observes, in a note to verse 7—'*and the eyes,*' &c.—they must have known what was good and evil before they tasted of the forbidden fruit, because the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold. And they knew evil in knowing it was wrong to eat of the fruit. They also must have been acquainted with death. God had told them that was the punishment for violating his commands. She told the serpent what they were afraid of, and he told her they should not die. Death, therefore, existed as a natural attendant upon life: they could not be told they should die unless there was death. God had said to man, Thou shalt surely die; but the woman could not keep the revelation of God; she changed surely into 'lest' or 'perhaps.' If our first parents could not recollect the words or purport of a revelation, much less can we. Eve was the first infidel, and was an example there could be no belief without doubt; and on actual experiment she found there was no literal truth in revelation—she did not die. The command not to eat the fruit was not made to her, but to Adam. She must have received it from her husband by way of tradition, which is proof that revelation has no effect when it ceases to be direct, and comes to a second from the first person, said to be the object of revelation. Revelation, therefore, if it was, is of no use to mankind. God failed in the first revelation to man, as an example to all future time. There is nature, and the many against the one, in revelation. It may be said that the penalty was fulfilled in the general sentence of death upon the human race; but the argument is done away by God having said, according to the Douay Bible, 'For in what day soever,' or, according to our version, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' or 'die the death,' according to the Douay Bible. It is God says man shall die—made Adam acquainted with death. It is the woman who has her doubts and hopes; and the serpent says they shall not die—which is religion coupled with being as the Gods—and that they should live for ever. But as the woman doubted the signification of the penalty, the serpent gave a moral, and not physical, meaning to the penalty of death; and as they did not die, there must have been some common agreement as to the meaning of the fable. Death was the alternative of life: life was good, and death was evil. Religion would tell another story—that death was life, that life was evil, and death was good. This was a knowledge of good and evil in exchange for ignorance, which constituted the fall. The knowledge of good and evil is confined to us; it is not in nature, which knows of no such distinction. Man, by his knowledge of good and evil, which he calls religion, would entirely reverse the order of things, and blot out nature. There was no everlasting life mentioned by God, and

eternal life was not held out by the tempter. Some have said life was renewed to our first parents by eating from time to time of the tree of life; but renewal of life supposes death. The tree of life, therefore, could only have been the alternative of death—as you partook of one you did not partake of the other; and it had a moral and physical meaning of the whole of life and death; but both trees were there in the midst of the garden. If they had been forbidden the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and it actually conveyed everlasting life, that would have been the tree which the serpent should have recommended them to eat, and at once put them on the equality with the Gods and out of their power. But if we were to interpret the story any way literally, it would only involve contradictions, which necessarily must arise from the use of non-natural language, but which disappears when explained as a fable, conveying a moral, the nature of things, and the ideas of man. It may also be said that man, by his death, would have been completely out of the power of the Gods, which perhaps may have been the meaning of the serpent. There is a limit to the power of nature over man. Man has the exercise of life, and a knowledge of good and evil. He is as the Gods are to him—death comes, release to man, and an end of the Gods. The Douay Bible interprets the story, not as a fact, but spiritually and morally in the sense of their theology. It says, ‘Their eyes were not opened to any more perfect knowledge of good, but only to the unhappy experience of having lost the good of original grace and innocence, and incurred the dreadful evil of sin.’ They could not have had grace, or grace was worth nothing before the fall, if it did not prevent them sinning.

We only accumulate proof there is no God by making a God. We find him always in the way, and a failure. The hypothesis of a God is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Natural and revealed religion, as Jowett says, are the same, in trying to make, and do away with the difficulties of, a God. Natural religion, to account for the world, raises a God, and then has to account for the God. Revelation comes to prove a God, and tries to explain the ways of God, and creates still more difficulties, which require explanation.

Viewing the story of Adam and Eve as reality, everything is seen from an afterthought, from our present condition, and contradicts Deity. Eve had all the acquaintance with things she ought not to have had before the fall; and God is represented as not forbidding sin to her, but making it as tempting as possible in her eyes. For Eve did not trust entirely to the representations of the serpent what the effects of eating the forbidden fruit would be. She used her own eyes and her own imagination, which gave the tree every excellence which it was capable of possessing. She saw ‘it was good to eat, fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold.’ Nor did it appear that on experience it was disagreeable. It was the know-

ledge of good; but, as everything good in nature, has the seeds of evil to us. As God did not prevent the fall it could not be otherwise, and the consequences followed as effect upon cause, death upon life, evil upon good. Eating the forbidden fruit had no effect on Eve: it was not till Adam ate, to whom the command was given not to eat, that the fall was felt. It could not be anything real eating the fruit, if it had not the same effect on each at once. Had it been anything real, Eve should have profited by the trial, evinced the truth of God's word, and warned her husband. Not only the union of man in the two persons, male and female, but the union of all things, good and evil, may be foretold by the necessity of the double action in everything to accomplish a fact.

As to the immediate effect upon them literally, it would be trivial and untrue. We know there are savages who have no shame of being naked. This shows that the story was written in an advanced stage of civilisation, and, therefore, with the eyes of civilisation cast back upon the origin of society. Clothing is an effect of civilisation, what we should call a *good* arising out of evil, or barbarism. It also shows the *evil* brought upon us in the fresh wants and necessities of mankind; our departure from good, and the alterable nature of good and evil—how they arise from each other, and flow into one another.

The nakedness seems to have a more enlarged meaning, when from themselves, this consciousness of it extends to what is not themselves, and to what is without them. Their nakedness and sense of shame was, besides, accompanied with fear. Though the civilised might be ashamed, we do not know, as a natural result, that civilised or savage would have fear in being naked, unless nakedness is meant in a more enlarged sense than the nakedness which produces shame. Fear has been said by Lucretius to be the origin of religion, and the Bible says the same, and is a commentary upon our first parents' fear after the fall. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the knowledge of good and evil.' When the savage hears the thunder and sees the lightning, he imagines there is a person in the heavens, and the thunder appears to him the voice of a person. Such a person manifested in sight and hearing, extended in the heavens, and on a scale proportionate, can be no other than the presence of a Deity. Such an idea of a power, some have thought to have been meant when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, because at such times lightning and thunder take place. 'They hid themselves from the presence, or the face of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden,' which was the state of nature under the conditions of storm, when man flies to the refuge of the woods.

The moral sense of being naked and afraid, must have been the supposed state of man in his origin, naked and trembling in the presence of Almighty nature, exposed to every real, and alive to every imaginary evil—

the beginning of wisdom. Fear may have helped man to some useful inventions: those who had it not would remain in a state of ignorance and innocence. Religiously, their nakedness and fear might not only mean their utter destitution and feeling of dependence, but their utter worthlessness and fear of the Lord; that they had not, in the words of Scripture, filthy rags, but nothing to clothe, cover, and protect them.

As far as we can judge from savages, they do not so badly as we should think, in a state of nature. It may be difficult for us to conceive how they can do without clothes and live on the fruits of the earth, scarcely removed from the animal, and without any conceptions of a Deity or a future state. Such human beings have been found in Australia, Africa, and South America. They represent Adam and Eve before the fall, as we do them after the fall. Being enlightened, becoming as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, make the greatest difference to savages. The approach of civilisation or knowledge kills them. Civilised man comes in the shape of the tempter, of the serpent; and on that day they taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, become as other civilised men—Gods to them—they die. The first exercise of their free-will or their independence, proved the ruin of our first parents, and proves the ruin of the savage. It may be better for man to be under subjection to superior circumstances; as the savage who has free-will dies, whilst the savage, who is a slave, does not, but, according to the account of the Jews in Egypt, and the negroes in America, increases. We kill the savage, whilst we preserve the slave.

Adam and Eve, or man, had no knowledge of God before the fall, except themselves; their knowledge of God was their fall, all the knowledge out of themselves contributed to their own unhappiness.

How many desire a thing, the possession of which proves our ill, and the loss of which is an advantage! The story of good and evil being a history of our desires and their failures.

We find our first parents fully alive to evil in Paradise, without going out of it.

If there was not the difficulty of a God, there would be no necessity of a fall; there would be no necessity of giving a God credit for having made everything perfect, and man having fallen from perfection in order to meet the fact of imperfection in his own eyes. God is made good, but man is made bad, that he may go from worse to better, or from worse to worse, until heaven arrests his downward course, and leads him on to progress. Man naturally, in his own ideas, has had but one history, and starts from the point the religious would eventually depart from—from the state of the savage to civilisation.

As he who sees nature as it is wants no fall to account for the deficiencies of the Deity, so he wants no disturbing power to account for the circumstances of good and evil. The belief in a God drives the believer to a

disturbing power to account for evil—as if a God could be disturbed, as if there could be order where there was disturbance. Yet the *Quarterly Review* on Jowett sees the most easy exit out of the dilemma in a disturbing power. What an affliction to think there is a God, and, therefore, he must have a hand in all our misfortunes! No wonder men must have thought God angry in shipwrecks, earthquakes, volcanoes, fires, plagues, and imposed upon themselves voluntary misfortunes, human sacrifices, in order to please and to appease him. The infidel in God, but believer in the laws of nature, is saved all these religious horrors and perplexities.

Amidst the probabilities of man offending in the race and the individual, a disturbing power, an impotent or malevolent Deity, what counterbalance can there be in the possibility of a protecting Deity? The religious have made for themselves doubts worse than those reproached to the sceptic, who doubts the doubts of the religious, who doubts whether there is such a God, and who does not doubt nature.

That the story of the temptation and fall was more than eating of fruit, and the effects were otherwise than death, was shown in the result. Otherwise, God and the serpent would have contradicted each other, and the serpent would have been the truer of the two; whereas they were both true in an ideal sense. Death does come over man as the fruits of evil; physically, it causes his destruction; morally, it extinguishes the life of goodness. After dreams of being as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, there is a fall in the hopes of the individual; and the religion which promised so much, and did not realise it, gives place to another. They were not to eat of the tree; much more, they were not to touch it; they were to have nothing to do with it. Yet how many religions, promising to make men as the Gods, and to give them a knowledge of good and evil, have men not touched and tasted, and only found them yielding misery in this world: never fulfilling the promises made to men of being as the Gods, or having a knowledge of good and evil? Yet, by a strange reverse, the man who tells them the vanity and death of their expectations, is called the enemy of mankind; the Devil who flatters them to touch, and taste, and eat, is esteemed the benefactor of his species—is rewarded and revered as securing them the fulfilment of his promises, giving them hope, comfort, and consolation amidst their miseries; and the man who acts the part of God, warns them before hand, and points out their fall, is persecuted, and perhaps put to death. As the story is now interpreted, the Devil takes the place of God, and God is the Devil. In our interpretation of the story, God does act the good, and the Devil the evil. After having made our first parents good, and surrounded by suitable circumstances, only to think of themselves and this earth, he warns them beforehand of the folly and the misery which will ensue to them in seeking after religion, wishing to be as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil. Such evil is neces-

sarily in the world; superstition is the nature of man; holds out, as the tree did to Eve, every prospect of happiness; while the world, on the other hand, in the eyes of the religious, and those who have tasted of the tree, is under a curse; affords nothing but brambles and thistles, nothing but misery in life; and, a climax in the thought, that when they die they may return to the earth from whence they came, and to the bosom of fallen and much-abused nature.

It is no account of the *origin* of evil, for it is impossible to be as the Gods, and to have a knowledge of causes; but it is a complete and philosophical account of good and evil as it is. That Adam and Eve did not die, shows that the story was not meant for the individuals it is told of, but for the race of man after long experience of their human condition. In making Adam and Eve perceive their nakedness, and provide themselves with aprons, one of the origins of clothes is given. It would here appear that it was more for ornament than utility, based on their knowledge of good and evil. It might arise from a variety of opposite calculations on good and evil. They might put on clothes to avoid evil they were become aware of; clothes were, therefore, a good. The clothes were an evil, because their sins, and what was disagreeable, required covering. The clothes became an evil, because they were a superfluity, and degenerated more and more into luxury and vanity, and became more and more necessary as we deteriorated physically in our bodies.

No doubt, as we have said, there are other and a variety of meanings attached to the myth, probably more than we are aware of, which is the beauty of the myth. But all interpretations of the myth give a moral and historical signification of humanity to the story. The letter is confined to the perversion of the divine, and to the interests of the priesthood. Dr. Donaldson has lately interpreted the story of the temptation and the fall, in the satisfaction of sexual passions, and the punishment arising from the excess of them. No doubt this has always been one interpretation, and the text will partly bear it out. But it will be difficult to make all the text agree with the Donaldson interpretation. He confines the temptation and the fall to one evil, and not to all evil, as we interpret the text. The satisfaction of the sexual passions is in obedience to the commandment, 'Increase, multiply, and replenish the earth'—is declared to be very good, and cannot, therefore, be an evil.

Our interpretation that the story is principally of a religious and moral purport, agrees with the text from the first to the last verse, when our first parents are banished from Paradise, lest they should eat of the tree of life—do nothing, and refuse to progress in the spirit of the first two commandments, which are purely worldly and material. Secondly, our interpretation agrees with its being a history of humanity; the second and metaphysical epoch of humanity according to Comte; an account of man's igno-

rance, his search after good, and avoidance of evil, and perpetual and practical dilemma between the two, founded on the nature of good and evil.

Mr. Mackay, in his 'Progress of the Intellect,' says the fall is the portraiture of the feeling men had when, from a state of ignorance, and thinking God near them, they come to a knowledge that he was far off. But we think this but a partial account of the matter. We may observe that his interpretation so far agrees with our own, and differs from the religious; that, instead of a fall from a better to a worse condition, he would make the course from the savage to the civilised state. God was thought by man to be near them in the clouds; and he has gradually become removed from them farther and farther, until from an idolator man has become an Atheist.

Some have said it was an Eastern fable to explain the superiority of the male over the female sex, and that woman is depicted in it, as she was, physically, mentally, morally, and socially inferior. Certainly the story invented by man is not complimentary to the woman, making her the primary cause of all evil, not only to herself, but to man, beast, and the earth. As we have said, God treats her in Oriental fashion, as if she had no soul: her soul was in the man's, and went along with the man's. That she was originally made out of the rib of the man, at once reduces her from an equality with, and makes her but a part of man, or, as Adam might say, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh; the life of my life, soul of my soul. She was to be the mere help to man through his career of life. She possessed good, and she changed for evil; she liked evil as well as good; and it may be said, not only of the female, but of human nature in general, that it tires of one thing, and, for a change, it would take to evil. In dress, manners, as well as in religion, more perhaps the woman, but also the man, have eccentricities, not to be accounted for, as the change seems unnatural, and the worse for the better, as rings in noses, tight lacing, shoe pinchings, and female fashions and habits in general.

If we look to the letter, there is certainly something of a retort and satire in the answer of Adam to God when he charged him with his sin. 'The woman whom thou gavest to me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' It will be recollected that God had said that it was not good for him to be alone; and he had given him a help and a companion to make him better, who had proved his ruin. In the first instance, if he gave him a help, it proved that Adam had to work. It also shows in what estimation the East held the woman; that she was a help, and when not employed as such, or kept at home, that she was more harm than good, gave loose to her imagination and conversation, listened to others rather than her husband, and brought ruin upon the domestic hearth. It also denoted that she was more given to religion than the male; and we owe to her our aspirations and our fall; our being deceived by superstition, first in her person, and afterwards through another female. It will have been

observed that Adam had no communication with the serpent. He took it all on the report of the woman, that no harm would happen to them, but that they would be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, if they ate of the forbidden fruit. In the Bible we shall find almost all the religious revelations from heaven first made to women. It is a saying of man that religion is necessary for women, when they do not think it necessary for themselves. They seem to allow it them in pity of their feebleness. It is remarked by Cicero how mothers and nurses imbrue the minds of children with superstition. They are also fond of the priests, who play the part to them of the serpent in the story; and promise that they shall be as the Gods, and the mother of Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil. It is also remarked that the woman is more caught by the eyes, inflamed by the imagination, and less subject to reason. Sometimes the origin and cause of religion is ascribed to a female quality—sentiment, or feeling. People often have no other argument for religion than, We feel it, and you have no sentiment for it; you are destitute of a sense. In many treatises we have lately read on the being of a God, the argument for one ended in men feeling there was one, being conscious there was one, which, if not womanish, is childish, and certainly no proof. The woman is also ambitious. Thus a Lady Macbeth is depicted by Shakspeare as acting the Eve to Macbeth. It was ambition made Eve fall, not so strong in the man as it is in the woman.

But the Fathers of the Church and the divines have not been more complimentary to the woman. Origen and Pascal both say that Eve represents the passions of mankind, and Adam the reason, led away by them. After this, the letter of the story no longer remains as the foundation of Christianity. With the doubts thrown on Paul's use of language and meaning, his confusion of fact and illustration, ideas and things, it would be difficult to say whether Paul attached a literal meaning to the story; and he says, 'Adam is the *figure* of him that was to come.' Romans v., 14. The woman also is made to receive her compensation in becoming the mother of God, and through his aid crushing the serpent's head. Things, however, remain as they were; and we do not find mothers or their offspring, more virtuous, if the serpent was sin. The animal remains the same as he was—just as much disposed to bite our heel if we put it upon him. We may suppose, therefore, from analogy, as there has been no change in the physical, there has been no extraordinary revolution in the moral world. Such faulty resemblances as these are made in the first instance; and when not allowed to pass, and pointed out, the fulfillment of them is made in what is not, and is put off to another time.

It is as well for those who thus religiously have depreciated woman, and those who without religion have thought her only fit for it, and, as Adam did out of pity to her, have participated in the forbidden fruit, to

consider whether she is not capable of knowing the real state of things and her own condition; whether she would not be happier in the truth than indulged in the falsehood of the Devil; whether in the bringing up of ourselves, of men in superstition, we are not bringing the evil upon ourselves, and for ever perpetuating it, rendering hopeless the good. Men have also relegated the consequences of the fall to the poor and miserable of mankind. They have to live by the sweat of their brow, but in compensation, are taught they are as the Gods, have an immortal soul, knowledge of good and evil; whilst those above them are blinded by their situation, are ignorant of the truth, are not the favoured of heaven—their situations will be one day reversed, if not in this world, in another. This delusion, men of the world say, is to compensate those below them for their misery, and make them content with their position. Such language the *Univers*, of Dec. 1st, 1855, uses to Mr. Charles Dollfus, a young and rich manufacturer, who said, the idea of a God and a future state were drawbacks to the happiness of mankind. The *Univers* said, they were the only means to make men subservient to the fortune of others. However, in England, and probably in France, so far from the artisans being induced by such prospects of heaven to sacrifice themselves to the advantage of their masters, it is well known that the infidels are the poor, and the rich are the faithful, who follow it from their interest in Church and State. Religion is aristocratic and respectable in England; is conservative of the present state which does well for the upper classes, and promises them another and a better future state for their faith alone. With those who are well off, religion is a fact in this life, as well as faith. The poor have not the fact—present possession—and though promised, they have not much faith in the future; which, therefore, must go by reversion to the rich.

The woman laid the blame upon the serpent or evil; and we cannot suppose all this ignorance on the part of God, all this dialogue—question and answer—any more than the previous conversation between the woman and the serpent, or the subsequent address to the serpent and the woman as real, only as the succession of evils, thought externally and morally to have fallen upon mankind. The serpent was the representative of evil, as the most deadly to mankind; and not doing evil by open force, but insidiously, was also a symbol of wisdom, or cunning. There was enough fulfilled in the judgment of the serpent without going farther to fetch imaginary resemblances. As the upward attitude is the prerogative of man, and, walking upon all fours, is the next step in degradation, so going upon the belly is thought to be the lowest in the animal scale.

His eating earth was a vulgar error in natural history, of the time it was said; and we find Pliny full of the like to it, but those who believe in the letter, would fix such a mistake upon their supposed God and Creator. As for the enmities between men and snakes, it has happened from the nature

of things. We must tread them under our feet when they are there; and they naturally will return death in their bite.

One would think it would be enough that there was a moral and spiritual sense also in it, besides the physical; and that whilst evil is at enmity with mankind, and is the symbol of low, grovelling desires, we tread it under foot; and alternately it bites us, and brings upon us destruction and death. But divines of the letter appeal to it as evidence of Christianity being as old as the creation, and would see in it a prophecy fulfilled in the Messiah. There is no authority for it in the New Testament. No one ever thought at the beginning, or end, at the nativity, or in the epistles, not even Paul, of appealing to the passage as a prophecy of Christ. We think such Christianity of the letter and the fact, Mary, the mother of God—the representative of Eve—predicted before the sentence on the serpent, for it was condemned in the temptation of the Devil to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil.

The sentence upon the woman shows an event after the origin of man; caused, not by the sin of Eve, but from the effects produced by civilisation. The pains of childbirth are not general to women in a savage state. The writer, therefore, speaks of women as he found them; gives an account of an evil incident to them and other animals, and which, in the case of women, has been brought upon them by the fall, or bad habits of living. It is living as the Gods, or having a knowledge of good and evil in their own ideas, which has brought the extent of the evil upon women. On the other hand, having children is made a greater blessing to them than to men. Maternal fondness is in the animal as well as the woman; and there is very little paternal affection in the animal; and less in the man than in the woman.

It may almost be said that the condition of women became worse under Christianity than it was under the Old Testament. The fall seems to have had no influence in the Old Testament—not to have been known; and women figure there as prophetesses, judges, and heroines. But the woman suffered from the fall when it was an idea taken up and carried out in its consequences by Paul. As we have said, the woman was scarcely recognised in the story of Adam and Eve, as having a soul, and distinct from the man; and Paul seemed to have formed his ideas of women, and their future, from their former position in the fall. Instead of being allowed to preach and to prophesy, they are commanded by Paul to keep silent in public, though he allows the fact to be otherwise; and, with his usual inconsistency, permits their prophesying when he says, 'But every woman that prayeth, or prophesieth, with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head.' Cor. xi., 5. Paul was severe upon the woman, as if he did not think Christ had made any difference in their situation; and he refers to their condition at the fall, as if no atonement had taken place. He

says, a man is God to a woman. 'But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.' 1 Cor. xi., 5. 'For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this *cause* ought the woman to have a covering on her head, *because* of the angels. (We do not see any cause at all, or are they always soliciting her?) Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; *but all things of God.*' As Paul began in a manner uncomplimentary to the women, so he ends, and redeems himself by representing the story of the origin of man and woman in a Pantheistic or Atheistic sense. We may, therefore, claim him as authority against the literal interpretation of the story, and as coinciding with us, that it is a figure of nature and materialism. Whatever divisions into parts there may be, man, woman, and all things are united in an indissoluble whole—God is man, and man is God. As he said before, Romans xi., 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' And, as the Apocrypha said, 'God is the sum of all things.' As we came in the way of one extraordinary instance of reasoning against the woman on the subject of her toilet, which is curiously enough mixed up with theology, metaphysics, and the origin of man, we must continue the quotation in order to give another instance of Paul's want of reasoning, and the remarkable jumble of thoughts and things in his mind. 'Judge in yourselves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?' This is begging the question. 'Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him.' We should say nature taught just the contrary; and nature did not give us our hair to be ashamed of it, and put a pair of scissors into our heads and our hands to cut it. But this is an instance of the way we have mentioned in which people commonly employ nature in favour of themselves, and say this is contrary to nature, this is agreeable to nature. As they think, Paul might have thought, we Jews and Romans cut our hair short, though the Greeks keep it long: we are in the majority, therefore, nature must have given us the idea that it was wrong for men to wear long, and right they should wear short, hair. Whatever a man does, may be said to be his nature; but the production of nature seems to be much more nature than the art of man. Besides, what an argument against God having a design in anything, when our hair, which would be a covering to us against the heat and cold, and for which we are obliged to employ substitutes, is pronounced contrary to nature, of which we should be ashamed, and should be cut short, or shaven. But as a still further instance of Paul's inconsequence in reasoning, we

must give another verse. 'But, if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering.' We should say this was giving a reason why she should go uncovered; against which he was arguing. Such a class of arguments we should think might have taught him on which side nature was, when his way of thinking could not be defended by better arguments; that if a woman felt hot in church, it was more natural to take her bonnet off, and, if cold, to keep it on; and that it was more a sign of respect to nature, or God, to use his ornaments than those with which they are in the habit of concealing his, or setting them off. Having told them they were not to pray or prophesy uncovered, to throw themselves in the manner of the Magdalene, with dishevelled hair, at the feet of their Saviour, he next adds they were not to give utterance to their natural emotions, and were to learn from their husbands what was right, as Eve did from Adam. 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.' Gen. iii., 16. 'And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a *shame for women to speak in the church.*' 1 Cor. xiv., 34, 35. Could this man think a woman had a soul? He must have thought she fell, or was saved through the man. How, if she had not a husband? But we agree with Paul, that where there is religion, or none, it should be confined to the family; and the members of it should not go to the confessor, the priest, or the clergyman, for their faith. Theological division—bad anywhere—is worst in a family.

Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, lets us know some more of his mind about women, and how he is governed in his appreciations of them, by their origin in Genesis and conduct at the fall. He recommends them to adorn themselves in good works, which would be equally good advice for the men, though the women certainly are given to other ornaments more than the men; yet they may claim their equal share with the men in good works. According to Paul, is it not nature that teaches them to adorn themselves? and is it not Paul who would not let them trust to the adornment of nature? But he seems to have had the greatest horror of her talking, or of her logic. 'But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. *Notwithstanding* she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.' Chap. ii., 11 to 15.

Paul then promises, notwithstanding their demerits at the fall, that they shall benefit by Christ in avoiding the curse which fell upon them. If such a change in their physical condition had taken place, there would have been a practical test of Christ's having come into the world—of faith in him,

and his having produced a change in the world—of a fall and its effects, having been done away with. The physical, moral, and social condition of women might have been improved by a different state of things, which would have been the advent and presence of Christ to them in this world. When Paul says so much against women, recalls all they did at the fall, assigns their salvation alone to the man, and only holds out a difference to them in child-bearing, which did not take place, why did he not mention the prophecy and promise of the woman's issue in Christ and her rehabilitation in the scale of creation, if the passage had admitted such an interpretation. Did he know of Mary? Did he think Jesus Christ was born as other men, or though in the flesh in appearance, he was not through the flesh as other men are? We are given no authority from him of the gospel history, and yet what a parallel, what a scope for illustration, would have been woman born of a rib, and woman returning the compliment, beginning a fresh creation, and producing a man, as Adam had produced Eve. Christ said to his mother, What have I to do with you? which does not give her the foremost place and new position to women, which is inferred from the passage of Genesis, and Mary being the mother of God. Christ, in his intercourse with women, seemed disposed to allow them greater freedom, and put them on an equality with men. His argument in favour of the woman taken in adultery, was that men should not punish women so severely for what they did themselves. Christ, by some instances which he gave himself, and by what was objected to him in the case of eating, drinking, women, and not fasting and praying, does not seem to have been against the enjoyment of this world; and according to Paul there was not much morality amongst the Christians. The idea seems to have been of Christ that a time would come—death—when they would be deprived of earth, and therefore it was not wise to deprive themselves of any good they could possess whilst living.

Mary being made a God, queen of heaven, an object of greater worship than her son, may, in the imagination of the Roman Catholics, give to the woman a higher position than the man, or that she ever held before, or among the professors of any other religion. They may think it may elevate the sentiment of the men towards the women, but it does not seem to have produced to her any more beneficial results in countries where such is the faith, than in Protestant countries where it is not. Some think whatever greater consideration women may have in modern times came from the former Pagan, and now Protestant, countries of Germany. Whatever was intended for the amelioration of women at the advent, was done away with by succeeding times of Christianity. Women were conspicuous characters in gospel history, prophets and deaconesses in the epistles—the former office was forbidden to them by Paul, the latter was soon taken away from them. Paul seemed to have thought a woman was only a help to

man, or an apostle, as Eve was to be to Adam. Shutting them up in convents as the only passport to heaven, and their only chance of salvation made to consist in their exclusion from the world, was no idea they were better from the effects of the atonement—was no redemption to them from the consequences of the fall—was against nature and the Bible before and after the fall—was against the blessing and the curse, which made their good and evil in obeying the laws of nature, increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth, in joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, and giving men to, and helping men, to subdue the earth.

The commentary upon the temptation and the fall, is delivered by Solomon in Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, where he passes in review all that is sought after by man as happiness—religion, among the rest, and decides that all is vanity and vexation of spirit—all is fall, except what is contained in the first and second command of God to man, and the sentence on the fall—that we should eat of our labour and enjoy ourselves in our family.

The whole of the Bible, the whole of history, the whole of the ideas of mankind, are based upon the temptation and the fall. There is an apparent confusion and contradiction in the chaos of ideas which are presented, but such confusion and contradiction are natural in the ideas of mankind. It is probable that the larger part of the history of the Jews is only following out different ideas as a nation of what was being as the Gods, and a realisation of good, and an avoidance of evil. Of course it will be tinged with the colouring of local reality, but will be based upon broader principles common to all humanity. Being as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, is the same as being alone among all nations—the especial people of God, and being directed by him as to what is good, and to avoid what is evil. But as mankind has different ideas of good and evil, so they are all represented in the Bible. They are told what is good for them in the first chapter of Genesis, and in the temptation and fall, and in succession. Moses very positively tells them what is good and what is evil. If they follow the one they shall have life; and the other, death. Now it is impossible to reconcile this with the total ignorance which David and Solomon seemed to have of all previous history and morality, David being represented as after God's own heart, and Solomon as equally favoured, unless we suppose them the Gods of the people, or the Gods of the Jews, and the royal state after their own heart, which many thought the highest good and the Christ. At the same time that they were wrong, we are told in the Bible, because it was wrong to have any king. And the event proved, as beforehand, by the admission of Christians, that David and Solomon were not the types, but a Christ was the type of salvation for the Jews. He was not to be as the serpent represented—as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, such as they imagined, but as Adam and Eve were after the fall—the miserable, crucified son of man.

Thus history is made to unroll itself from these axioms, or principles, of human nature—these ‘in the beginnings,’ as it were; and alternately we crush the head of the serpent and it bites our heel, being the antagonistic powers, the good and the evil. The evil apparently misleads us—morally and physically opposes us in the world.

The Messianic idea was alternately democratic, or being governed by God; or regal, being led by a Messiah, a prophet, or a king. Jesus was the popular idea triumphant, particularly so, if wholly a myth, and there never was such a person.

Out of such a common observation as is conveyed in the fifteenth verse, chapter the third—that there should be enmity between men and snakes—and the manner of it, has been founded the great falsification of Scripture, the great error of Christianity. The English authorised version, in the headings to the chapter, calls it ‘the promised seed.’ The Douay Bible calls it ‘the promise of a Redeemer.’ By such assumptions they get the idea accepted without inquiry, as they might appropriate any other common place of Scripture, and then afterwards appeal to it as a body of prophecy, begun from the first and continued to the last. From one—the first, and the foundation stone—all may be learnt, the worth of prophecy and the superstructure of Christianity on such a basis. The delivery of such oracles they have ascribed to their God. When the letter of Scripture is thus interpreted, and a simple fact of nature is made to apply to another event, or idea of religion in the future, what can be said of adhering to the letter on other occasions, and allowing no sense to be made of it? When reason would make it clear, then they will not have it, but will rest on the absurdity of the letter; and when they can attach a non-natural sense to the letter, they will not have the letter which is clear in itself. The mention of *seed* to the race of man, or to an individual or to a nation, is a promise of the birth of their Christ with Christians, and is appealed to as the most plain evidence. Yet the common sense of Paley made him acknowledge that such prophecies were accommodations. That is, it was an afterthought of Christianity, not in the Bible. When the idea had taken possession of men’s mind, they looked for any fancied resemblances or analogies in the text of the Old Testament; and having founded Christianity on the actual facts and words attributed to their God, they could not separate them from their Christianity without taking away the basis, and laying the whole superstruction low. Dr. Arnold, in a sermon to the boys at Rugby school, dismissed the whole letter of prophecy as no longer sustainable. Yet, as the Christianity of the letter is founded upon it, the Universities and Schools continue to teach the letter of prophecy, beginning with the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Genesis. The Jews, though they were full of Messiahs and the Messianic idea, and originated all such verbal associations, never thought of applying the verse to Messianic pur-

poses. But the writers or compilers of the book, the people to whom the literature belongs, are said by Christians to have no knowledge of its contents. God spoke, according to Christians, in vain, the word to those by whom it could not be received any more than by the beasts. The curse on the serpent may also be looked upon as the state of all animals, and wild beasts especially, towards man. They are in a state of enmity and opposition—we to them and they towards us; we take their place and they take ours. Such in the Bible is the picture of Palestine, when the inhabitants were destroyed or made captives—it was overrun by wild beasts. Thus, the state of animal nature is first described; then the natures of the woman, of the man, and of the earth. God is made to say to man, that labour will be to him a curse, now that he has aspired to be as the Gods, and to have a knowledge of good and evil. That will be to him a curse, which he was told on the first creation was a good and a blessing. God does not curse labour; but the idea of man or the fall condemns labour, because he has hearkened to his wife, and ate of the tree—that is, yielded to passion and imagination rather than to reason. Adam was working in the garden, when Eve was left at home, and on his return he listened to her story of being as the Gods, having a knowledge of good and evil, and having no work. Therefore, it is cursed for his sake; it is as it was before, only changed in his own eyes; subjectively to him it is cursed, objectively it remains the same as when labour was a pleasure and the end of life. Labour is still the same; it is a pleasure and a blessing to those who think it, and use it properly, and a curse to those who do not like it, and have to abuse it. Men suffer from want of work, as much as from overwork. Man is perpetually placed between the good and evil. Labour brings him the means of life, exercise health, and, therefore, life, and the pursuit of them, pleasure. No book has inveighed more against idleness than the Bible, and more honoured industry. The evils arising from idleness are depicted in its pages, and the examples of the ant, and exhortations to industry, are held up to the imitation of the reader. It does not, therefore, require that we should enlarge on the theme of the benefits of labour, and on the misery of having nothing to do. Whilst on the one hand, man fancies that having nothing to do but enjoy himself is to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil; yet in the use of riches which gives it him, and the employment of his time, we see a craving for excitement or employment which will not rest satisfied until it even rushes on the ways of death. Man hunts; he roams by land and by sea; he gambles; plays the priest, or engages in other fruitless labour; pushes to the extremes of toil, activity in law, commerce, surgery, or even working the land; or seeks something to do even in the cannon's mouth, or in the ways of evil, to exhaust his energy. Man seems to know no moderation in industry; he pursues every good into evil—so difficult to separate one from the other. How often labour proves real life to a man; he looks

forward to the end of it; he gains his wish, is unhappy, and dies. If labour is pronounced a curse in man's eyes, and sometimes in his abuse of it, the Bible has pronounced that its contrary—having nothing to do—is the great curse, the greatest of all evils, when it said idleness is the root of all wickedness. Where nature yields the most with the least effort on the part of man, where he has only to take and eat, there he seems the worst off. We cannot call the Australian savage well off; but in Africa the effects of abundance lead to positive results of unhappiness. The negroes make war against each other, and either dress the tops of poles with the heads of the vanquished, or sell them as slaves, when they may work, and incur the opposite curse of too much labour. Such, apparently, is the superfluity of life from the superfluity of means, that a king has ten thousand wives, who, at the same time, serve as soldiers. Men will ever thus have different ideas of happiness, difficult to keep in the medium which was held out to him in the first creation, and which, in his excesses on one side or the other, too much leisure or too much work, prove his fall or his curse. But, worse than all, leisure has given rise to the multitudinous superstitions with which the world has been cursed; leisure gave rise to it in Eve, leisure in Adam; and a great part of mankind in a profession of priesthood must be devoted to leisure to keep religion alive in people's mind, and a great part of their time must be destroyed in attending to it or doing nothing. It was for that God is made to say that the earth should be cursed, for our having attempted to be as the Gods, and to have a knowledge of good and evil. Manual labour in the persons of those who propound and discuss the dogmas of religion, would go more to eradicate original sin, and make a return to Paradise, than any other remedy. There would be more love, more work, more union, and more enjoyment amongst mankind. God is made to say, That with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. That is, it is not a proper state of things unless that which man eats he has worked for, and earned his living. God said no more than a truism; not a curse but a happiness, when he said the earth which brought forth thistles and thorns should, by the labour of man, give him food to eat. The secondary causes are explained when the primary are given in the first creation. The earth produces food for man and beast; but it is made attainable to man by work, which is the difference between him and the animal, as there is no work to the latter; and, therefore, instead of a curse, it is a prerogative and a dominion over the earth and the animal, which man either kills or makes to work.

As a climax, God is made to say, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. The cure of all diseases is said to be in the promotion of perspiration, so that in the sweat not only does man procure himself the means of life, but in the act gives himself life. Thus a great physician—Abernethy—prescribed to his patients—Live on sixpence a-day and earn it. One half of

mankind eat too much, and the other too little; one half work too much, and the other too little, when there would be enough for all, and not too much or too little of food and labour, with a more equal distribution of production and employment. The only inspiration which God directly claims in the Bible, may be said to be that of agriculture. God is made to say he taught it man. Cicero has said that a man who produced food from the earth where thorns and thistles had grown, or multiplied the productions of the earth, was the greatest benefactor to mankind. Thomas Carlyle has said, labour was divine, and the most God-like man was the worker of the soil. So that instead of a curse, God is made to return man to the original blessing before the fall, and save him from yielding to the temptation and its consequences. In his crucifixion, or curse, or labour, or evil, he is at one with God or nature. *Laborare est orare*—to labour is to pray—is a saying of the monks, and does not only mean that the objects of our wishes are best obtained by our own exertions, but the kingdom of heaven is made to come upon earth, and the divine will of heaven is best obeyed upon earth by the labour which results in giving us our daily bread. The earth is an emblem of love in the satisfaction of our wishes, and forgiveness of our trespasses, and our follies towards her; and, therefore, gives us a lesson of love towards each other. Nature is more a mother than a father to us, and the woman answers to God as much as the man. The union, therefore, which Paul would make out step by step, is much better fulfilled by proceeding from the male and the female, the father and mother equally; and had he known of the position of Mary, he would have no doubt followed out such a metaphysical exposition of the dogma. Man, woman, nature, or God, being all one. So far, the Roman Catholics have followed out the philosophical meaning in the Father, and the Mother, and the Son, as they have done in transubstantiation. We must bring the kingdom upon earth; we were not to look for heaven in another world, or in another life. Therefore, man is told, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' It would appear from the above that death was in the world from the beginning. God never says that they brought death into the world; he reminds them that they came out of the earth; were formed of the earth, and, by the necessity of things, therefore, must return to the earth. It was not an alteration, therefore, of the laws of nature at that time that reduced men from eternal being to a finite life; had eternity been given, it could not well have been taken away, eternity coming from eternity. But it would be an alteration of a law of nature, if man after continuing, as God is made to say, being formed from the earth, and returning to the earth—a law which, according to the believers in the letter he has himself declared—a law which, according to Scripture history, continued till six thousand years after the creation; man should at that

time have commenced to have another life after this. It is, we think, clear, according to the Scripture, that man lived and died by the same laws of nature before what is called the fall; still more clear that after it he was governed by the same laws, and has ever continued in the same laws when they are said to have been reversed. We may judge from their not having been altered at the Christian era, that they were not at the fall; that if, from life everlasting to eternal death, they were not from eternal death to life everlasting; and we may reverse the argument, and say, that if not altered at the fall, they were not at the Christian era, and that the future life and immortality of the soul has been purely an idea; a hope, as St. Paul calls it, entertained by some, a substitute for another hope, and a different hope to what is entertained now. There have been different forms of the temptation or fall, or different ideas of being as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil.

The tree of life was in 'the midst' of Paradise, in the same situation as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not defended from eating it in the first instance, because it was not an idea that would first come into their heads. The serpent, therefore, does not tempt them to eat of the tree of immortal life, but with a more mundane prospect, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil upon earth. The tree of life, it may be said, had no more the properties, literally, than the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was a symbol of the moral qualities which were accomplished in mankind, as in fact eating of the tree of life would have given them a possession, very inconvenient to the Deity, and it could not be fulfilled in any moral sense. They could not be well told by God that they should die if they were to touch the tree of life, if they were to live by it, as was contained in its very name. It was, therefore, to avoid any contradiction that man was not in the first instance forbidden to touch the tree of life; and yet it was mentioned in the beginning as placed together with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of Paradise. This has been a puzzle to some commentators upon the story; but with our interpretation it is perfectly clear we think, and expressed things as they actually were.

Man desires to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil; he perpetually falls, and fails in his endeavours; is reminded of his common wants and his nature; and that from earth he came, and to earth he must go for his happiness—that is the limit of his faculties and being. It is after repeated falls and failures of this sort, that he thinks he cannot be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil upon this earth; he begins to think all is under a curse; that nature is bad; that life is miserable; and there is no extrication from woes except by another life and another world. On the other hand, it makes the philosopher go to nature, seek out wisdom, and do without a God. The spread of knowledge, provoked by the futility

of religion, does the same for the people. Why are we so often told in the Bible to apply to wisdom; that wisdom was at the foundation of the world, and no one else; except to teach us the origin was not as reported in the Bible, but as our wisdom would teach us. In the history of men, and of his religious ideas, we find that the savage has very few, if any; that his first are of a Deity, or of other beings who are superior to him, and, therefore, may bring him good, or avert from evil, and make him as the Gods. The Gods often are supposed to have a very human signification in the Bible, and to be as the Gods is to be men in high places, or heroes. The God himself, or Gods of the Jews and other people, are not themselves raised in history above the human. They are all men, or he is a man in a superior degree. The history of the Jews, or the Bible, abounds with instances more than any other history of the idea of a people, that they would be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil. But proposed as a history of the Jews, or of God's people, it is equally a history of humanity. It becomes prophetic when the Deity is made to conjecture that a time will come; the next delusion will be, when man will want to eat of the tree of life. The Bible is spent in conjecture, whether God has anything to do with this world, why the good should be miserable, and why the wicked prosperous, why such reverses should attend the Jews as a nation?

They are perpetually asking why it should be so, and changing their conduct towards heaven, in order to obtain the object of their desires, but with no better success. In turn their conscience accuses them of having neglected to commit the most horrible crimes which has caused the wrath of the Deity, of having omitted ceremonies and observances, or having left unpractised real virtue to gain the favour of the Deity. Their history tells us that the temporal prosperity at which they aimed could only be acquired by conquest and the encouragement of a warlike and ferocious spirit, obliging them to conquer or die, for if they did not subdue, they would suffer the fate from rivals and enemies they had provoked by their cruelties and exclusiveness. The opposite view was told them by their prophets who only saw moral and spiritual virtues where others had seen material facts; as they turned them from their human sacrifices, so they would turn them from their other ceremonies and superstitions, spiritualise and moralise them; and, perhaps, such an intention was no other than the idea of Christ. Dr. Arnold seems to think that the prophets only meant sin by Egypt and Canaan, virtue by the Holy Land and city. This would make all Jewish history symbolical and ideal; and where they begun, and where they thus ceased to express themselves, it would be impossible to know, and would make it doubtful whether there is any reality in their relations. In the time of the Romans and Christianity, Edom and Babylon were names given to Rome by Jewish writers. When writings were ascribed to David and Solomon, of which they certainly were not the authors,

doubts may be entertained of their history. When books are given to prophets, whose names have a meaning indicative of the subjects and contents, generally of a Messianic character, the whole volume seems composed rather under the influence of ideas than by persons, and as a picture of those ideas rather than a record of the times. The preaching submission to injuries was necessary. Man, as a nation, or in society, has ever been in this dilemma—either he must conquer all other nations, or other nations will conquer him. The Jews failed in the first, though ever held out to them as their end upon earth. They had, therefore, to submit to be conquered, unless they could impress upon all the world the other sentiment or idea of a Messianic kingdom. Such have ever been the differences between the peace and war parties, between good and evil in society. You cannot return peace for war, good for evil, unless it is reciprocated. Christianity is represented as preaching and practising peace, goodwill, love, forgiveness of injuries, returning good for evil, as long as it was in a subject condition, or as long as it was an offer on the part of Christians to their own advantage; but when they were in the ascendant, their peace principles were never carried out. Jeremiah recommended that the Jews should pray for the Babylonians, who took them into captivity; and, if smitten on one cheek by them, they should turn the other. It was good, he says, for them—that is, if they had resented it, they would have been treated much worse. But the prophet bid the Jewish people look forward to a day of vengeance, when, as the Psalmist said, they might dash the heads of the Babylonian children against the stones. The New Testament said pray for, love your enemies; and it looked forward to a time, immediately coming, when Christians should see most signal vengeance executed upon their enemies. Paul cheered his followers with the hopes of that day as much as Jeremiah did the Jews; and the other prophets alternately suppressed, and lashed into fury, the Jewish hatred of their enemies and their neighbours. Nations and individuals can also preach and practise Christian morality when they have got all they wanted by a contrary conduct; and the adoption of such morality by others would preserve it to them.

The prophets said, virtue was meant by their religion, when the contrary had not produced its fruits; and, instead of universal conquest and hatred of their enemies, they recommended to them submission and fraternal affection.

They represented a time when all the world should look to the cultivation of the soil, as the source of the highest happiness; when all should be of one religion, or none; and there should be no priests, but everyone should be his own teacher. Such was the state to be—that if they did not look forward to an actual change in the disposition of nature, when the lamb would lie down with the lion, and the child would play with the serpent, under these figures, they represented the peace, the fraternity, and equality,

that would reign among mankind. A time would be when there would be no violence or war; and the innocence of the child might vie with the subtilty of the serpent. Thence the figure in the new-born age, under Christ, of the child, or of children. Hence in the Old Testament, and in the New, God is represented as sending them strong delusions—laws that were not fit for them, laws that were made for the hardness of their hearts. Such expressions could be no other than condemnations of the actions which we all morally condemn. There was ever a temporal, and moral, and spiritual Messiah in the ideas of the Jewish people from the beginning. But from our present ideas of inspiration, and our totally misunderstanding the Bible, bishops and priests feel bound to defend the slaughter of the Canaanites, and human sacrifices, equally with the prophet's ideas of virtue and happiness, and make these opposite qualities and contrary circumstances of different times the foundation of their Christianity.

The prophets apparently did not know Paradise and the story of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from it, else they would have mentioned it; but they had the ideas upon which it was formed, when they pictured the primitive condition of our first parents, as the future upon earth, and attainable by humanity. No people, according to their own account, were greater examples of a belief and trust in God than the Jews. They have given the history of their disappointment and religious experience to the world; and, instead of returning to nature, and making the best of it, as recommended after the fall, they exchanged their hopes for a future state, and everlasting life, a day of happiness for themselves, and condemnation of their enemies, though that state, as one of imagination, was ever in a state of transition.

Apart from the excitement of the passions, the philosophers and the prophets preached the great truths of nature. None of them in more distinct terms than Jesus Christ proclaimed that God or nature was the same to all—the good and the bad—as the sun which alike shone upon them both. Men did not suffer misfortunes because they were worse than others, nor did they escape them because they were better. The herb in the eye of God, or nature, was the same as man. He put the lily higher than the highest of man. The lily was more the glory of God, or nature, than man. He said, Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed as one of these. The late Rev. Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, made some observations to the same effect, derived from our more accurate knowledge of nature, and used them as an argument against the idea of the immortality of the soul, which we might derive from the fancied superiority of ourselves over the rest of creation. The great temporal idea of the Jews was fulfilled in Solomon. Solomon was the accomplishment of what David was the precursor. David was war, but Solomon was possession in peace—was wisdom and riches—and yet, compared to nature's works, he was not so much as a lily.

Yet if this Providence of God, tried on a small scale in the Jewish people, proved a failure, applied to the world and to man it was found wanting. The history of the Jews is rather a proclamation of their disbelief than their belief in God. They could not be kept to him, but were always seeking other Gods, and never had a right idea of God and their own institutions. They always adhered rather to the letter than to the spirit, and are examples that people cannot be brought to a spiritual by a symbolical worship. It must be the history of man, and not the experiments of a God, which ended in such a failure. Though they were flattered that they were the chosen people of God, he was seldom or ever assisting them in the present, but always in the future, until it vanished into another and a better Messianic world. Strange that the uncertainty of a God and Providence, and of any change in this world and life, should give the present idea of the *immortality of the soul*, when such precedents would rather go to disprove it. If nothing supernatural occurs in this life, why should it be in another, when it would be so much the more supernatural; and not only another life, but another world must be imagined. As a future state, therefore, arose from a denial of God, a future state is a denial of God and of nature—is Atheism. A denial of everything that is, is an affirmation of the is not; and the to be is not the being.

The Christians have adopted the Old and the New Testaments as one in their system, and profess to believe in a Providence in this world, and another life and another world. Every nation, and every individual, has his God. The God of one makes war against the other. The Pope has his God, and the people have their God. Jewish exclusiveness, which is railed against, is carried to a greater extent among Christians than it was among the Jews. There is a God of every sect; and the exclusiveness is not in this world only, but survives the grave, and is carried out to the total extermination of each other in another life. Nature is the only God of all, therefore God cannot be divided, and there cannot be two natures—a nature to one and a nature to another—a heaven and a hell. The believer in nature is therefore the only believer in God, or has a belief worthy of a God—is the only believer in the true Messianic idea of the Bible—is the only Christian according to Christ, and has the true faith of a Christian. The Bible proclaims there is no God but nature—no other world and no other life for us but this—this life, not only in the individual but in the perpetuation of the species, and in the progress of the human race—the Messianic idea of life everlasting and the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and God's will done according to the two commandments in Genesis. In the first creation there is no God except ourselves and nature, and our duty towards God is our duty towards ourselves and nature, expressed in the commandments. God is in us, and we are in God—that is, nature is in us, and we are in nature—made like unto it and to do the same and we

cannot be divided. Christ, John, Paul, the philosophers of the schools and of the Bible, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Christian, come to the same conclusion. God and Christ point to the only satisfaction of our nature in nature.

The religious Messianic idea, which is never in the possible present, but always in the impossible future, denies a God. Such a Messianic idea is dissatisfied with the present nature, hopes another nature, and is always to be realised. It is evil in the present, and only good in the future, and therefore cannot be the acknowledgment of a God. Religion, an external, separate, and personal God, and a future state, are the only things contrary to the facts and the laws of nature. We must keep within and follow nature to arrive at truth and certainty.

There is a reverse God to nature, a reverse God in the Bible, and a reverse Christ; there is evil and the Devil, as well as good and God. The evil is in wishing to be as the Gods—in thinking what they have done, what they ought to have done, and what they can and will do. Men invent the Gods, and men would have the same knowledge as they give to their Gods. They aspire to a personal immortality with their Gods, and to have after this a future life with them. The story of Satan and the fallen angels is the same as that of Adam and Eve—the perpetual desire of being as the God they have elevated above themselves. They would share with or dethrone him.

The course of the Old and of the New Testament is prophecied in the story of the fall. The Jews yield to the first temptation to be as the Gods, and go from fall to fall. They are crucified as a nation, and look to a resurrection from their death on the cross. After the close of the Bible, those who succeed make the Old and New Testament their inheritance, and call themselves Christians, or possessors of the true Messianic idea, aspire to live for ever after this life, believe in the resurrection of their own bodies, and the life everlasting, or the immortality of the soul, and the kingdom, not of heaven upon earth, but in the heavens.

The Old Testament would give us the idea of a God making the world and managing the affairs of mankind—natural and revealed religion. Man copies his own nature in his revelation, and, therefore, as might be expected, it is a failure. The New Testament would give us the idea of a God upon earth—a model man—but the picture is filled up by human motives and ideas, which are fallible, and, apparently, by several hands.

The twenty-second verse of the third chapter of Genesis has ever been considered irony. 'And he said, Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil: now, therefore, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever.' It may have been said before Pascal; but he is the great authority who gave the above as the first instance of the employment of irony, or satire, by the God of the Bible.

We referred to it when we said that, 'Let us make man after our own image, was the original. The words and the idea are the same—the appeal to the Gods, or Elohim. Man is made in the image of nature, but he thinks himself made after the supposed God of it; and if he thought so before, he thinks he resembled God still more after the fall. As the former occasion was, so is the latter. Whilst it conveys a truth that we are the Gods we make, it is a satire upon our imagination. Mr. Rogers, the author of 'Reason and Faith,' has justified his own use, abuse, or attempt at wit on religious subjects, by the example God had given him, which he makes an apology for his own apparent want of reverence. The origin of the world, of man, and of good and evil, viewed as moral and philosophical questions—the whence, the why, and the whither—are certainly deserving of serious attention. But to those who take the letter of the Bible as an event and as a religion, the circumstances are the most awful in the history of humanity. To mankind religion has been no laughing matter, though the Gods, as Shakspeare said, do laugh at men—an opinion which the ancients shared with the Bible, and is certainly well grounded from the vanity of men, and the monstrous absurdities displayed in their religions. Here we have Scripture writ for the idea; and, indeed, in other places of the Bible, it does say that God laughs to scorn man. What will the public—the judges henceforth—say of ridicule and abuse? Here is God the Father turning into ridicule the faith, the hope, the comforts, and consolations, of his children.

Certainly a joke upon the creation was not to be expected; or upon the fall of man, which, according to Christianity, was to bring such consequences, not only upon the world, but upon God himself. The absence, as it was said, of all levity in its pages has hitherto been adduced amongst the evidences, that the Bible was the word of God, and very lately by a reverend, who writes from the mountains of Wales. The Douay Bible admits that the speech was a reproach, or satire, upon man's pride; that what was said by God was not the truth or the fact, but a condemnation, conveyed by professing to admit what man wholly conceived. The Douay Bible says:—'This was spoken by way of reproaching *him* with his pride, in affecting a knowledge that made him like to God.' Yet the priests and Christians seriously affect that knowledge, which God is made to attribute to them, as a joke, in order to reform them of the fallacy.

Irony is a resemblance to reality—it is stating that as a fact which did not happen. It is generally done, in accordance with the idea of man, as the Douay Bible says it was here. If, therefore, the Deity himself employed such a form or speech to express himself, we may take it for granted the word of God, on all other occasions, used similar language—namely, fabulous or mythological. There God is made to say Adam is become one of us, knowing good and evil, when we know such was not the case, and is not

meant. Therefore as Adam did not become God, except in his own conceit, the idea of a God, and the story of being beguiled by the Devil, never existed except in the imagination of men. God was not a reality, but a necessary impersonation in the fable, which is pointed out in the moral at the conclusion, and certainly in the second account of the creation, by a formal renunciation of the character of God, and attributing it to the ideas of man. Whenever God steps forth singly as a cause he is man. The serpent did tell them true, and his promise was fulfilled. But God would not be made to say it and contradict it himself, who said they should die if they eat of the fruit of the tree, unless it was meant morally. They could not, in the first instance, have been told they should die, unless they were subject to death: and when they are said to become one of us, they are equally said to be subject to death, and no difference made in them by the fall. They have arrived at their being Gods in their own estimation—know all about good and evil, its origin, causes, and effects—primeval religion.

Equally ironical in a God is the second portion of the verse, and only susceptible of a moral application. Our version says, 'And now, *lest* he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.' But the Douay Bible makes the passage stronger: 'Now, therefore, *lest perhaps.*' There must have been a purpose in the difference of translation, and the Anglican Church must have wished to avoid the difficulty which cast its shadow before as much as possible. It supposes that man could do anything he liked against the will of God, and in every respect make himself equal, or the whole of nature. God is also made to express deliberately what might be the intention of man, and what they might do, when in conformity with the character of a God he must have known what would happen, and had power to permit or to prevent. Such a manner of speaking, therefore, was strictly human and agreeable to the experience of Jewish history. The doctrine of everlasting life was of very late adoption, and considered by those who adhered to the canonical Old Testament, the more ancient opinion, and to Moses, as being opposed to all these—a modern novelty, and not orthodox. Therefore 'the *lest, perhaps,*' makes everlasting life spoken of as a possible speculation of men, and not a part of religion, which being as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, had become. It seemed, indeed, that idolators of the Gentiles had an idea of a state of life after death and of departed spirits, when the Jews had it not, and they were as much warned against it as they were against the Gods of the heathens. Witness Saul and the Witch of Endor.

That man has become as the Gods, is to say there is no God but man; and thence the origin of the world, given by man in the Bible, is the being as the Gods, and the knowledge of good and evil derived from the fall.

It may be said that God, in his speech, is made to allow, such a notion of God is a universal idea; but at the same time this universal idea is charac-

terised as false, and, therefore, there is not much gained by the argument in favour of the being of a God—that it is a universal idea. The idea of a future state, which is also claimed to be universal, is not allowed by God to be universal; it is only stated to be a possibility in the history of natural religion and progress of human perversion. God declares the idea of a future state coming into the mind of man to be a ‘perhaps;’ and Rabelais and others have called it the great may be—*le grand peut etre*. It may be said, God however admits the possibility of a future state, of man attaining everlasting life under proper conditions. No, we say it is as much irony as the preceding part of the verse, and shows it to be a moral study of humanity conveyed in a fabulous and satirical form, and not a relation of facts.

But if religion is universal, why should not man have invented it, which seems to follow rather than that a God, a creature of our imagination, not a fact, should have given us that which is not a fact?

The necessity of revelation arises from failure in the beginning. God ought to have done without it, since he had the making of everything as he wished it to be. The means of revelation, miracles, &c., are equally indications of failure, because if he should have done without revelation in the first instance, he should have made his revelation when he was driven to it without having recourse to miracles. He did not make his revelation when he made the world and everything in it; and when he is said to have given it, in order to prove it, he is said to have had to unmake nature, or undo the laws of nature.

If God said at one time a thing which is not, he said at another time a thing which is not, and we were never made in his image. Not being as the Gods, and not having a knowledge of good and evil, it is we who have thought and said it; and in the same way we were not made in the image of God, but have thought and said it. And though God said we were made in his image, and had become as the Gods, there is no more probability in it than in the living for ever, which he says man is just as likely to think and ascribe to God, or think he has obtained in spite of God, as he did the other two. We made ourselves in the likeness of God by favour of God; we became as one of the Gods in spite of them, as if we would have the good and the evil, the affirmative and negative side of nature. We aimed at eternal life, and to accomplish it made God become man, and undergo death, that we might have everlasting life. If we could not rise to God, we would degrade God to man. Do we not see in it the eternal circle of nature—nature coming to us in life, and we coming to nature in death? The whole in the part and the part in the whole; God in man, and man in God; God in all things, and all things in God; for God is all things, and, therefore, all things are God; ‘and Christ is all and in all.’ (Col. iii., 2.)

Whenever we have represented God saying and doing anything, we have

been painting our own characters; we have become as the Gods, have made the Gods, and have made the Gods make us and the world. The creation of Genesis in the first chapter was, therefore, the effect of a fall—made us be as the Gods, or the Gods be as us, and we arrived at a knowledge of all things, which God or nature sovereignly ridicules. But, still more, he treats with contempt the almost impossible idea that man should ever conceive that he was eternal in himself; that made by God he should take the place of God, and live for ever; that not from eternity, he should be to eternity; and the unity of nature or of the Deity should admit of infinite division and substracted power in man; that mortal, he should put on immortality; and made of earth, he should undergo no more change, but become incorruptible. Mortals that would be immortals, are told from earth they come, and to earth they must go, though they would change it for heaven. God, or nature, is made to use the plain fact, and the most overwhelming argument that ever was used against the immortality of the soul. All other arguments may be said to be only variations of the one, and based upon the great truth of our coming from earth, and returning to earth, our not ceasing to go to earth, and no instance of a traveller returning. There is the plain fact of man's dissolution, and the same matter assuming other forms of life, which is not denied, though from it Paul derives his idea of eternal life. The transmission of life one to another, and not the same, is a future state, and perpetuation of the species, and which makes against the idea of each continuing the same. Paul, from what is not, would draw what is—from a negative an affirmative. There is the impossibility of our being made as we are, and enjoying an everlasting life. If we became other beings, we should not, after all, preserve our identity, which is the dilemma Paul feels, and which he would get out of as the advocate, by abusing the defendant, and calling him a fool. The coming out of dust, and the returning to dust, is evidence of our senses which God, or nature, declares, and which he thinks it would be impossible for man to reject. God, however, is not made to say, man is a fool, though he treats him as a fool in claiming immortal life. He only says it might enter into the heart of man, which imagineth evil continually. After a fall only could come such a hope, a hope arising out of despair, the conviction that, of all men, they were the most miserable if they did not live again. Such was the state of Adam and Eve after the ejection from Paradise, and the failure of the Messianic idea, and such was the state of the Christians when Christ was crucified, instead of fulfilling the Messianic idea, and they were turned out again from their Paradise. While he was with them, and having a foretaste of Paradise they were to rejoice; when he was taken away from them they were to grieve. Whilst they had life they were to enjoy it, for in death there was no enjoyment. Nothing, however, is impossible with God, it is said, meaning facts; but nothing is impossible with

man in idea, and, therefore, he imagined a future state to fight about in this, and make the present miserable. For religious hatred, rivalry, and intolerance, never raged in the same degree until the doctrine of a future state became the common property of all sects. It would appear the more distant, and imaginary the good, the more men would show their faith and human endurance in sustaining it, which does not say much for faith and martyrdom. All such arguments in favour of religion, human credulity, miracles, and martyrdom, may thus be disposed of; if these are in the nature of man, then they are not supernatural, and you cannot argue from the facts of nature, proof of supernatural laws or revelation.

How regularly man ascends in his religious dogmas, and as regularly a rebuke is administered and a moral taught; in proportion from the mildness of a smile at the mistakes of infantile ignorance, man making God in his own likeness, to the severity of a fact in man abandoning himself and nature, and becoming as the Gods, or their instruments on earth, having a knowledge superhuman and supernatural. Thence wars, and the horrible facts of superstition, human sacrifices, occur. Finally the full punishment falls which such imagination has brought upon itself—the sword of retributive justice, which seems drawn and executed by and on each other, directly man thinks to eat of the tree of life and live for ever: ‘a *flaming* sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life?’

First, man thinks himself physically and intellectually made in the likeness of God; and if he had followed God, or nature, as he had himself depicted him in the Bible, imitating the laws which governed the rest of nature, and which were commanded to him, if he had only seen nature and himself in God, goodness in the Creator to be aimed at in the creature, there would have been a moral attached to the story, as well as a reflection on the feebleness of man, in not being able to be as the Gods, or nature, and represent it in his own finite person, and have a knowledge of good and evil in the whole, so as to reconcile it with himself individually, and attain the greatest measure of human happiness. But next, and secondly, in creation, man in his ideas is rebellious to the laws of nature, aspires to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge far beyond his powers, then God, or nature, is represented as reminding him he is nothing but earth, and shares a common lot with the other inhabitants of the earth, though imagining himself superior to all the rest of the creation.

God goes over the first commandments he gave to man. It must be supposed that if man became as the Gods, and lived for ever, he would not multiply and replenish the earth, and live by the sweat of his brow, which has been the case with priests, and those who think themselves most like God, and as Gods have a right to a future state in after life. In the ideas of Christians, men and women of the present, the virgin and barren possessors of life are parents and heirs to themselves in another and eternal life.

Thirdly, man, in spite of his fall, persuades himself that he could only have been made for eternal life. The same temptation only in another tree of life, in another religion is presented to him and he falls. Man is the same after every temptation and fall; after the non-fulfilment of every Messianic idea, he argues if it did not turn out temporal, it was eternal; if it was not for the Jews, it was for all nations; if it did not happen in a David and a Solomon, it was to take place in a spiritual and moral reign upon earth; if not on earth in heaven. In the Apocalypse of St. John, there is always something to come after the failure of every delusion. Christianity before the crucifixion was Jewish, after the event it became Christian. Judaism was more the fact, Christianity was modelled after the event by the imagination. Greater ignominy and worse consequences attend the giving way to the temptation of the tree of life and the fall from it, for there peace is ever promised, and a sword succeeds. 'I came not to bring peace, but a sword, into the world.'

If man had everlasting life, he would probably do nothing, because he could live without it. Even if strongly possessed with the idea of an after life, it is difficult to conceive him doing anything, or caring at all about the consequences of not doing anything, when he would be immediately transferred to a state which did not require doing anything. Men have, therefore, ever been found testifying the strength of their faith in a future state, by renouncing the means of living, or voluntarily wishing upon death as a certain passage to life everlasting.

The Lord God is said to have acted in accordance with what he said; and the moral is again repeated, 'And the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the earth from which he was taken.' The moral is, man is taken from the earth, and his business is to till the earth. He was brought into the world to till the garden; that was the design, as it is called; that was good; but as man is not governed by good alone, he was driven forth to do it, or compelled by necessity and evil. God does not say again that man will return to the earth; that was a necessary and immutable consequence, which was shown him at his birth in the beginning, but could not be proved until his end. In the work of tilling the earth, man sees the course of nature, which is to convince him that he is taken from the earth and returns to it. Man sees all things growing out of the earth, as they are said to have arisen in the planting of Paradise by God himself. God, indeed, at the creation, is not represented to have said that he made anything out of nothing; but the waters are said to have brought forth of their kind, and the earth of its kind. Man is made separately; but, as we are told afterwards, that he was also made from the earth, we have the more reason to believe that the story of man being made in the image of God, is not given as the fact, but as the way of conveying the idea, and the superiority of the human over the rest of animal life.

God, therefore, says, From the nature of things you must die, not from the nature of things you must not die; as Christ and Paul are made to argue from the seed of corn for the resurrection of the body. The 'some man will say' of Paul, is God himself, who has declared 'How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' And Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, prophesied of Paul, or Paul referred to Solomon. Paul answers his own argument by an appeal to nature, and his own words, that to every seed is given its proper body in the propagation of its species. If the seed be dead, it has lost the properties of life, and returns to matter—becomes other forms. The seed does not become the same seed, any more than the father becomes the son. But if Paul meant no more than the immortality of life, we agree with him; there is no greater mystery, more wonderful and more defying discovery, than the origin of life. We have not the origin of any animal life before our eyes, but we have the continuation of life. It has been thought that the origin of animal life could be discovered, but it has never been thought possible to impart the power of continuing life. We are, therefore, as we have said, endowed with a wonderful immortality; which is so much more supernatural than the origin of life out of matter, that it has always appeared to us a much better argument for the being of a God and for design. The author of Proverbs says it was one of the most puzzling things to him. But those who think the system is to be reversed, and each individual is to remain the same, at once takes away the power of nature or of God, and brings us to the thought of annihilation or the impossibility of *being*, without change or movement.

This immortality, however, is to all life, which we would reserve to ourselves, and deny to all the rest of creation, under different laws, or no laws. Materially it has been supposed there have been alterations in the whole—revolutions in the universe; and, therefore, the Christian hope of a better world may be realised; only it will not be for self only, but for others—not for a part, but for the whole.

There is another immortality also to all life going on in the life of each. It is now known we change the whole of our bodies, even our bones, several times in our lives, and yet remain the same as long as we live. The renewal of the body does not go to lengthen its course; but the new substance serves for the decaying and the growing; the old forms are retained, whether natural, or unnaturally, superinduced; and the mind, or life, undergoes similar vicissitudes. This has been used as an argument for the immortality of the soul, or of life. The soul, or life, is no exception to the whole. It continues in all particulars conformable to the same process. This same change occurs to all animal and vegetable life; therefore, we must grant the body of each of them may be transformed into another in time: their inward, or individual, life remains the same; and, therefore, they all have immortal souls which return to the same existence after they

have perished. In the way of nature, we have the further proof of the immortality of life in the individual; under all these changes he lives, as by the other process, he passes on his life from one to another. These are two reasons of prescribed change and rest; that there should be no other sort of immortality; where, after a violent and unnatural change, there should be no more change and rest for ever—where we should rise the same, and yet continue the same. At what moment, might we ask, could we transport our transitional, to our eternal, state?

Nothing appears more certain than that everything goes on in a gradual course, and not in a series of revolutionary crises. What nature shows us, would appear of most reasonable application to God. We judge God by the human understanding; and nothing feels more repugnant to infinite wisdom than sudden revulsions of the system. There seems to be no reason where there is no cause and the consequent effect. Instead of will, there seems to be no will, but chance, in God. Instead of the *simul jussit et semper paret* he once commanded, and it always obeys, there is the everchanging of caprice, and the never-resting in the same conditions. The corresponding idea of the religious, that extraordinary revolutions have taken place in the material, as in the theological and moral world, is derived from the imperfect knowledge of nature. Such is the idea of an infinitely better previous material and moral state, then everything as it is; and finally, everything to be again, as it is not, but formed on another revolutionary ideal.

We must suppose our origin to be from what it depends—the earth. Life within is the lesser; and, as it is seen, becomes the more extraordinary to us who have life, and, therefore, so far comprehend it, as to compare it to another life and superhuman power, to whom we hopelessly give up the cause of matter and creation. The seed produces a tree; the tree, fruit and seed, which again produce the tree, or a bit of the tree will produce life when brought into contact with the soil. But both must have vitality; life must be to produce life, otherwise it will not, and dies; becomes earth, or food, to the life—assimilating matter to the creation. Our origin is supposed to be from the earth, as our return to it; in growth and decay, we must ever be assimilating food from the breasts of our mother-earth. There are variations in the man, the animal, the tree, and the herb; but the further the investigations of science are carried, the more they appear to resemble each other. But life must be to give life; and death must return its trust to earth. Paul would argue that the body must die to return in the same form to life. God argues from induction of facts—from the cause to the effect, from real analogy—that, as from dust man ever comes, so to dust he should ever return. So he convinces Adam to the negation of any imagination to the contrary, though he does not call him a fool. Christ and Paul argue from the fact, that it happens to man totally

otherwise, which is false analogy. When he is dead, they argue, he must rise again; and, from the various forms of life, that he must take a totally different form, although the same person—a perpetual and a stationary life. If body must be fixed, thought must be fixed; and on what are we ever to dwell. Isaac Taylor, and others, are obliged to return to a state of progress; but then we only have the world over again—a return on the Messianic idea—what it was when Christ was supposed to have come; the kingdom of heaven upon earth—a change for the better.

Paul, according to Jowett, confounds illustrations and facts. The seed might be an illustration of his meaning. He might have said, there are horses and men; cut them in half, and join them together; and have we not centaurs. Paul argues from a premise which is not a fact, but a figure—that the seed dies to live; and comes to a conclusion as a fact, that we must die to live again. Secondly, Paul argues from the contrary fact—the seed passing into another form—to a figure of his own imagination, that our body proceeds individually from a known to an unknown condition. Paul has the original sin; he would be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil; and there is entailed upon him, in consequence, the desire to live for ever. He is, according to his own account, and of all those who indulge in the forbidden fruit, the most miserable of beings if their taste is not gratified. Paul and his followers were, therefore, the most miserable of men, and are Adams ejected from paradise. Paul, therefore, without intending it—as others have done—said, Thou fool! to God. The God, and the wise man, in the process of time, the Bible also, become the fools in the changes of religion. Solomon said to man, Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die; and another said, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Facts, reasoning, religion, and God, are alike lost upon those who would eat of the tree of life, and live for ever. Man is not satisfied with the superiority which nature has given to him, and God has assigned to him. If there had been any superiority he ought to have aimed at, it should have been announced to him, when the position into which it had pleased God to call him, was signified at his creation, and at his fall. Man, therefore, rejects the idea that God, or nature, is the father of us all; that he made us essentially alike, and is the same to all—the animal, the vegetable, the good, and the bad—the most minute part, the hair—and the most in estimation, the mind. Man will not believe, that without sharing each other's identity, without remaining ourselves in another, we have all to go the same course of creation and destruction, dissolution, and reformation; everything in us, and we in everything. Man asks, Am I no better than the beast? Did God make me only to die? as if there was no reply to such a convincing inquiry. The religious idea is, man is a separate being, as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, which he ascribes to the fall; forgetting that before, in a

state of innocence and ignorance, he was one with the beasts of the field; and that he would separate himself entirely from the fate of the rest of the creation, which was made good, blessed, and told that it was made for the same purposes of life; that all should increase, multiply, and replenish the earth; the fruit-trees were to live and die for man; the herbs for the animals. In time, the animals followed the same course, and were preferred by man for food.

Man, in his superiority to the rest of life, was as the Gods, and having a knowledge of good and evil, in the first creation, as far as was good for him, since he was said to be made very good. Therefore, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil afterwards, must have been the religious idea of the second creation. There was the good and the evil. Ignorance is better than knowledge of the wrong; all accounts are original sins. Ignorance, I do not know, is the only satisfactory reply to the inquiry, Why are you here, as to ultimate causes? and is far better than to account for it by religious ideas, and stories of falls and redemptions.

The argument of Paul and the Christians for the resurrection of the body, or of man, from the death and resurrection of Christ, always seemed to us to fail from its very admissions. The proof of a God to man, that he could live for ever, would not be to die as he did, but to live for ever from his first appearance, as God or man.

Even if he returned to life after death, he should have remained. A continuation in life would have been much more convincing than an alleged temporary resurrection. The expectation was, that he should come for ever; and, then, that he should come again for ever; and he defeated both expectations. Christ did neither one nor the other; and men did not rise again, nor did he come again to live for ever, which was promised after all as the only proof; so that, according to Paul's own argument, neither Christ rose again, nor would they.

Our first parents were slaves in the Garden of Eden, and they wanted to be free and independent. They wanted to have free-will, and be independent of circumstances; be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil; so they were sent forth to till the earth. In those countries most approaching paradise in spontaneous production—in Africa—man is nearest the animal. They are in the state of Adam and Eve before the fall, going naked, and having a disinclination of work.

The Lord God made for them clothes before they left paradise; and took them from the skins of animals, who must have died a natural death, or been killed, to deliver up their skins for the purpose of covering men. The first clothing of man is said to have been a wholesale robbery on the beast, and metamorphosis into the animal. The entire skin of the lion, or cow, was transferred to the man; the horns appearing at the head, the claws or hoofs at the extremities, and the tail behind, so as to have given the idea

of a Devil. Therefore, the fashion given to man by God after the fall, was from his likeness to that of the animal and the Devil; and marks all the descent from the beauty of nature to the tailor, who has had the most to do in the making of man since he came from the earth. Shakspeare says the tailor made man.

Hunting was probably the primeval occupation of man—in this instance, was shown to him by God. Hunting has been deemed regal and godlike; and paradise has been turned to that purpose. In the change from a state of innocence to evil, such was to be the first occupation of man; and though where countries have been overrun with wild beasts, possibly a hunter might be thought a benefactor to his species, yet the vanquisher of the animal is too likely to turn his arms against the man, who, collectively, ought to protect themselves against such enemies. We do not think, therefore, it ought to have been the primary lesson to mankind, taught by the impersonation of a benevolent Deity, though it might be by nature. There often seem introductions in Scripture without regard to the main story. The above seems one of them. Probably it was one among original myths made to include every account of circumstances in the history of man as they happened to him in the beginning, and put in this compilation. We know such was the object of every mythology. In all mythologies, everything was ascribed to God, or derived from a higher power; sometimes from one in spite of another, as fire was taken from heaven, and given to mortals by Prometheus, in spite of Jupiter, and our knowledge of good and evil in opposition to the will of the Creator. God, clothing man, stands much in the place of fire, and is essential to him. The Promethean story would also include cookery. Nature certainly assumes the aspect, in regard to man, of denying him benefits, which he has to gain in spite of her; and, therefore, it may appear by the assistance of some other power. God appears in the Bible to be more nature than in other mythologies—to be the all instead of contending forces. First inventions were supposed to be conferred upon man by the Gods; and, however they may now appear natural to us, such as making bread, &c., supplying our commonest wants, yet they may excite wonder how man came to the knowledge of them. It is not extraordinary, therefore, that man, in his infancy, should ascribe all to God, or the inspiration of a God; think them all evils overcome, or benefits gained in spite of the Gods. The Scripture seems to us to wish to give the idea of God being good, and to avoid the idea of his being evil; a subject of fear to be deprecated, or his favour sought by any actions of ours, that what was ascribed to God arose from our own inspirations, and the nature of things, whether good or evil, and nature was indifferent.

There was the idea that man could not be entirely left to himself, and, therefore, required a garden to be filled up for him, and the most favourable circumstances to live. It is certainly curious to have known how he could

have first lived, in fear of the unknown, and at war with the known. When on reflection, God was not seen nor found assisting man, then it was supposed as if it had been, and that he was thrust forth to till the earth, make good out of evil, clothes out of skins, fruits out of corns, as a punishment for some offence. The fall is an acknowledgment there is no God.

Before the fall, God does everything,—which is the first imagination of men. After the fall, there is the supposed interference of Providence, though he is not seen. The Providence is disputed, forgotten, put out of the arrangement; and, virtually there is no God. Still mankind cannot do without a First Cause, as the first idea of God when he did everything, banished to a beginning. Science and metaphysics have shown there can be no such God.

Man is told how he is made, and how he ends. He could not have known before he was told, or had seen. He is told before he is turned out of paradise, according to the text; and he is equally made to know before he has any children, and before he knew his wife, that she is the mother of all living, as he did that he was the son of his father and mother. The natural and fabulous are mixed up together; and the fabulous is only another way for telling the natural. There was as much necessity to be told by God that his wife would be the mother of all living before he had children, as that he would die before he did die. It is a record after event; and as Adam did not speak it, no more did God. Some have thought having children was a blessing, as originally instituted by God in the Bible. Others have thought them a curse, as proceeding from the fall. These represent the two different ideas, and the opposite sides of nature. Children are a pleasure and a blessing; and, at the same time, a source of great care and trouble to the parents, as of pain to the mother in producing them. God, therefore, did not inflict upon us a curse, which is contrary to Scripture, reason, and to nature; but which those who believe in the letter must think. It would seem that Adam called her, and conferred upon her the title of the mother of all living, as a honour, and not as bringing upon him and them a curse. Life is a blessing, and death a curse; life good, and death evil; and she is the mother of all living, and not of dying, as the fall, taken in the letter, would make her out to be. Indeed, the mother of all living would be a curse, if, in consequence, we were to rise again to eternal torments. We wonder the Roman Catholics do not interpret the mother of all living to be prophecy of Mary. We need not say in all ages where there has been any sentiment of virtue, the mother is revered; and Adam here speaks of her as of a son. Mother has become an impersonation; and has represented earth the mother of all things, and the queen of heaven, in ancient mythology, and, in later the Virgin Mary—mother of God—in precedence of him.

Adam called her Eve, which would only, in the Hebrew language, have the

signification of the mother of all living; and give the reason why she was called it. Adam also, they say, is derived from mud, or earth, and equally tells the story, or the derivation of man, how he was made, and should have evidence of it in his death. If Adam honoured his wife on her making, and proclaimed that man would give up father and mother for her, which must happen to him when he had children, so here, as a son, fully cognizant of the same consequences, he shows the respect in which she will be held by the world, as the mother of all living—male and female humanity.

There could not be good without evil; God made the good out of the evil, the face and forms of nature out of chaos, light out of darkness. God brought the dry land out of water, and the water to the dry land. God overcame resistance, and wrought the opposites. There could not have been a world without the other planets, and a world and the planets without day and night, times and seasons. There could not have been the seasons without winter, and, therefore, without evil and without death. There could not be a tree of the knowledge of good and evil without there being evil; and there could not be a tree of life, without the being subject to death. The land could not be subdued without having evil in it; the reign of the animal was to be replaced by the man; thorns and thistles were to give way to fruits, the savage to the civilised. The one only is with the other, and is not without the other, the good and the evil. Evil is death, or non-existence; good is life. Creation and destruction are irrevocably united—existence and non-existence of the parts and eternity of the whole. We do not know how the whole would continue to be if the parts always remained the same, if there was no motion, no life, no death. This will apply to the idea of life for ever, or not being subject to death before the fall, or to the immortality since conjectured in the future.

But the serpent was the most *subtle* of the beasts of the field; so there was already evil amongst them, and comparative evil, for the serpent was the worst of them all. But neither God nor the serpent had anything to act upon, unless good and evil were already existing, the motives in persons, and the consequences in things. As the serpent represented wisdom, or the evils arising in the course of social progress, so the other beasts of the field would represent force and violence, and the natural obstacles to man, before the thorns and thistles of the earth. Man would be a hunter, and he would come in contact with the savage beasts. The serpent would carry on an insidious warfare with him; would remain unperceived to the attacks of man; himself unperceived, attack man; therefore, there would be enmity between man and the serpent. To man he was no good; and as he was not an example of force, so he was an emblem of wisdom. But God is made to turn the other savage beasts immediately to account, and make them supply man with clothing. Therefore, in fact, God and the Devil are only the antagonistic forces, good and

evil, confronting each other, though the whole was good, all tended to the order and existence of things, as in the first creation. It was only in the economy of the parts there was a duality. And as there are not two Gods, as there are no Gods of the part, so there is no God of the whole, no Gods impersonations.

Man is formed of the mud, slime, or dust of the earth, as it is variously translated. He is called Adam in consequence; he is twice told in the same verse, in the most emphatic manner, merely reversing the words and ideas, that he should return to the earth, out of which he was taken; that he was dust, and therefore must return to the dust. This is accompanied with a denial of the idea, in the most contemptuous manner, of the possibility of man's living for ever; and, again, the declaration of the reciter that man was not sent into the world to lead a life of pleasure, or for ever; or was to have hereafter a life of pleasure, in recompense for the troubles of this life. The world and man were made on no such principles, and man was sent into it to till the earth from whence he was taken, for no other purpose, and for no other end. His purpose was to till the earth, and his end was to return to it. There was to be no Messianic future; he was to live by the sweat of his brow, and the reward or good was to come out of the evil—virtue has its own reward. Cain was rewarded with worldly prosperity; driven from the land, he built cities. But it was not enough; yet a fifth time it is announced in figure to man, that however he may try, he shall never gain the tree of life, and that man's endeavours will be the source of his own sorrows. He will encounter guards and flaming swords on the way, which are the self-inflicted tortures of religion. The Cherubims are afterwards the guards of, and they cover with their wings the unknown God, and are here symbolically preserving from touch, and guarding the way of the tree of life. Man endeavoured materially to secure to himself, as well as religiously, both the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of life for ever, and be as the Gods. The Alchymists sought how to make gold, which they treated as the best knowledge of good and evil, as the attainment of riches, avoidance of poverty, and the means of acquiring power. They also sought the elixir vitæ, the medicine which would give them possession of perpetual life and rejuvenescence. As man, in his religious aspirations, has sought their gratification at the expense of much misery, so the Alchymists endured privations, and sometimes persecutions and imprisonments, declaring, and perhaps impressed with the idea, they had the secret, martyrs to it, wasting their time in hopes and delusions attendant upon hopes.

Both Eickhorn and Archbishop Whately have given a moral sense—the same which we have to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They admit that it was the desire of man for a knowledge and an existence which was above him, and which he pictured to himself as the being of the Gods. But if man imagined what he could not be, is not his imagination

of the Gods equally false? Are not the facts in the story equally fictions—Gods, trees, Adams, and Eves, and falls? Here was a universal idea, and implanted by God, if there was a God, and he made everything; or he did not give ideas, and, therefore, the idea of religion does not come from him. The Archbishop, however, reconciles his admission with Christ coming into the world, and his crucifixion to atone for the fall, though totally opposed; for Christ came into the world to teach us to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, and was himself the way to the tree of life, according to the system of Christianity and its scheme of salvation, which is to do the very thing which man and the Devil attempted, and failed. The fall is the failure, and Christ is the ideal resurrection of man's desires, and a faith that they are fulfilled, and not that the Devil, but that God is defeated; this is original sin, often repeated, and always attaching to us, and which we impute to God, saying he inspired us with the idea, and must atone for the wrong of it in his own person. They made him, and all who followed him, take up the cross which is represented by the Cherubims, and the flaming sword to be met with on the way of life. Man would say that God invites and opposes him; but it is plain the opposition and invitation is in nature, and has been in man himself to man. These are the crosses and the fiery faggots, which have been put to stop the way, and also have been said to lead to the way of everlasting life.

The religious cannot but admit that all their ideas and dogmas are represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the tree of life; that to be as the Gods, to have a knowledge from first to last of things, the beginning and end of Gods and men, and to have the hope, and to have secured the possession of immortal life, by the one who only could face the Cherubims and flaming sword, is the essence of Christianity, and of the religious idea. Over these defences to the approach of immortal life, man as God, led by his Captain Christ, achieved a victory. Man says that God put in the way of immortal life these angels and their swords, at the same time that he invites them to it, and gives them the victory. It is plain this temptation, or invitation and opposition, are in nature. From none has more opposition been met with than from man to man, as they fight the way against each other. Perhaps that is the penalty and evidence of the impossible, or the is not, that they fight for it. Certainly the is not, is evidenced by the object being never gained. Mythological tales have in all times told of possessions in heaven and of life beyond the grave, of trees of gold, and of hell, or the grave giving up its dead. The idea and the fables are not new, but Scripture is written in derision of them, and is a fable where the moral is quite plain, and said over and over again, if people would only see it, that they should not be as the Gods, and have everlasting life, or any life after death, except in multiplying the species and replenishing the earth. If man does not, by propagating his species, by

his own life and death, give death and new life, feed the earth when alive and when dead, he cannot get out of the circle of creation into another of his own fancy, which he thinks to be the existence of the Gods, and enter into their place of abode and condition of things—another world, the heavens.

What is taught in the stories of the creation and the fall, but the laws of nature and our nature, the good which is before us and to be sought, and the evil which is before us and to be avoided, not any impossible good to be attained or evil averted? 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' The knowledge of the world we are upon, and of ourselves, is our duty to God and ourselves. As for any other duty to God, or any other knowledge of God, or any other God there is none. Every human effort that would make us as the Gods, is punished by the knowledge of good and evil with respect to the Gods. The knowledge of God, and the knowledge of good and evil religiously, go together. There is not one or the other, except between men. God is man, and morality is only between men.

The result of our imaginations is to find the Gods in the same predicaments as ourselves; and instead of bettering our conditions, we must take up the cross here and there hereafter, their heaven and hell. If good and evil are equally divided here, the evil is to be in the majority hereafter. The good and evil we would know is not of this, but of another and imaginary world, and the conduct of the religious in this world tend to the reversal of our notions of good and evil. To be as the Gods, coupled with a knowledge of good and evil, show the religious nature of the knowledge man aspired to know. The greater part of the world, or, we may say, all the world, more or less, side with our first parents, and join in the original sin. In theory, if not in practice, men submit to the religious view of the fall, or allow all the consequences of it injurious to the society, some under the plea that the falsehood is good to society, as Adam and Eve thought it good to them, and some that the delusion is more agreeable than the truth. Those who are worldly are given up to the pursuit of being as the Gods, and having their knowledge of good and evil. Those who are religious—and the priests seek divine and repudiate human knowledge—will not allow there is any knowledge worth having, or any morality without religious dogmas, and teach them only to those who are in want of other knowledge. They will not permit education without religion; and the progress of the world fixed by God is entirely lost in the progress towards heaven established by the Devil. They profess to neglect all the enjoyments of the world, all mundane pursuits and occupations, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil contained in the dogmas of religion. So did Adam and Eve neglect the present for a future life, and try to find life in death. In religion good becomes evil, and evil good; so far it is symbolic of the truth. The religious do evil, or suffer evil, and declare it to be the good of heaven, as the good of earth is the evil of heaven, refusing to work

and to multiply, and enduring the martyrdom of the flesh. They have the declaration of Christ that what is evil is good, and will be rewarded, and his example who suffered death as good. Out of this also may be the truth of nature, the knowledge of good and evil, and being as the Gods. As we have said, Christ in his life, by eating and drinking, by not fasting and praying, the marriage feast, the feast of the loaves and fishes, the last supper, was opposed to the religion of the fall, and of the Devil or evil. He preached our version of the Scripture, and, in many respects, his doctrine and practice were material. He opposed the Pharisees, the Baptists, and the Essenes, and favoured the Sadducees, only in the particular, we should think, that they were against the future state of the immortality of the soul. The Sadducees, on the contrary, were for keeping to the laws and institutions of Moses, which Jesus Christ did not admire in the Pharisees. But a future state of the immortality of the soul was quite against the material future state of Jesus Christ, which he and the Jews expected immediately to come. We can, therefore, only suppose his future state of heaven and hell a figure, which is now taken for a fact. His language and description can only be made to agree with the former. It was only after his death that the other doctrine was preached; the Pharisees and all the outsiders finally prevailed; the progress he proclaimed did not take place, and a reaction succeeded; another world was substituted in the place of this world.

Some ascetics seek death in life and life in death, as the best means of being as the Gods, and gaining immortal life. Something very equivocal about eunuchs has been ascribed to Jesus Christ; and Paul was against marriage, and Paul was a Pharisee. Some have seen in him a Jesuit Pharisee. Paul imagined a release from the laws of nature and of morality—they convinced him of sin. Such is a knowledge of heaven and the good and evil dependent on it, when knowledge is equally requisite how to increase and multiply, live and subdue the earth, till it, and give the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Those who fulfil the commands of God or nature, given in the first creation, ensure a blessing; while the religious neglecting them, commit the original sin, and entail the fall and curse of our first parents on themselves and posterity.

On such a foundation only as the commands of nature, given in the first chapter of Genesis, as a command and as a blessing, and enforced as a punishment and a curse at the fall, can a perfect state of society be founded. Priests, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, and a crowd of other professions are the effects of evil in society, or are the remedies administered to those evils, when the whole of them would not be, and, therefore, not the professions, if mankind were to carry out the simple commands of nature, or God, to find life in the earth.

GENESIS.—PART III.

'Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.'—JOHN viii., 44.

'I came not to send peace but a sword.'—MATTHEW x., 34.

'I am come to send fire on the earth.'—LUKE xii., 49.

'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his *own* life also, he cannot be my disciple.'—LUKE xiv., 26.

THE fall is always going on. Original sin had to run its course in Cain, and give the first example of the greatest crime against morality—the murder of Abel, the consequence of religion. No sooner were the father and mother of mankind the givers of life to their children out of Paradise, than their offspring yielded to the same temptation, and the penalty was no longer imaginary, but real. Cain and Abel started separate religions, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, and encountered death in all its forms. We sin the same, if not more, since Christ. The sins of religion have probably been more numerous. There was a fresh temptation and a fresh fall in Christianity, and more divisions and more murders of the Cain and Abel character flowing from it. The sacrifice of the 'righteous Abel' and the Christ, ended not in the punishment of Cain, but in his building cities; and Humanity, the Cain after Christ, established an empire over the crucified Christ. The temporal reaped the profit of Christ's death, if his death did not fulfil the temporal expectation of the Jews. Kings and priests, Church and State, the rulers of society, hold by possession—the 'true faith of a Christian.' The sceptre and the mitre are exchanged for the cross, which is still left to the people. There was no redemption through Christ from the effects of the fall, in a moral change. Now they say redemption is from death and punishment after life, when it was to be in this life. Those who profess the 'true faith of a Christian,' prove it by accepting their reward in this life, and they can well afford to leave their assertions of the rest *to be* proved. There is no present evidence of the future state of Christianity; and the proof is placed not only in the future, which is always receding, but in the impossible.

We are always falling from our high estates, and never so much as in religion. Religions, sects, arise and claim to be as the Gods, and fall and pass away as autumn leaves.

'And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain; and said, *I have gotten a man from the Lord.* And she again bare his brother Abel.' The fourth chapter of Genesis is another epitome of the history of man

from the savage to the civilised state. We have had the origin of man—his external and objective state, which was pronounced good—his place in the order and economy of the universe. Next we have man's subjective condition; the principles which would agitate him; make the prominent facts of his existence; his ideas of good and evil. The fourth chapter shows, by example, a later period in the history of man. Man has to shape his career on those ideas of good and evil. Not only the present, but progress, the future, and the various forms which the Messianic idea takes, are before him, and he has to fulfil them. Man looked tremblingly and hesitatingly to God as a guide, not acquainted with what would please him, and, therefore, not knowing there was any higher power. There were two lines of mankind—Cain's and Seth's—those who had the least idea of any future, and those who had the greatest. Ignorance and superstition seemed to be thought the most regarded by God, and knowledge at enmity with him. Humility seemed to be supposed the virtue man should have, and not the pride, which is now thought to be the promise, not only of excellence in this life, but of being as the Gods, and having everlasting life after death. Men's ideas have had to be turned round and be inverted from the innocence of animal life to the consummation of the most daring facts and flights of the imagination, present and future. The fourth chapter treats the subject of religious crime—morality, justice, war, society, nations and races, the arts and sciences. The first verse introduces, and the last mentions, religion: the centre of the chapter may be said to be a contrast between the religion of man and the morality of God. The history of religion is given, and what results from it. Morality is pronounced to be better than religion. Religion has no effect upon heaven, or heaven anything to do with man; but morality has its reward among men. Morality is said to be best for all men, though no doubt an individual may practise it and not meet with any return, and another commit crime and not meet with any punishment. In the birth of the elder brother, the natural means in the propagation of the human species are given first. Next, the religious idea performs its part, and, probably, not in a material or philosophical, but in a religious sense, ascribes his origin to God. The birth of the younger brother is announced in the usual way, without any reference to material conditions or religion. The first-born is generally the best beloved of the mother, and is still more appreciated when a male child. Out of these natural sentiments the most contradictory ideas have been engendered by religion. When a son was supposed to be gotten from God, it was next supposed to belong to God, of right, or be devoted to God. That which is most beloved of the human, was thought to be the most acceptable to the divine parent. Abel, therefore, brought of the 'firstlings of the flock.' That which hath opened the womb, and the male, is the sacrifice commanded by the Mosaic laws. We may, therefore, with

great probability, ascribe to the Jews the sacrifice assigned to Abel, and the preference given to it. The most beloved, and the most worthy to be devoted—the eldest son, the only child—was offered as the preferable human sacrifice. Such was the worship of Moloch. There are sufficient indications of the practice among the Hebrews, and therefore it is supposed that the eldest-born male of all animals was substituted by the Mosaic law in the place of man. It was this also which may have given rise to the expression, that the offering of Abel found respect in the eyes of God, because written at a time when animal sacrifices were established, and human were abolished. They also devoted their enemies to God; and Cain, in the death of Abel, may have been represented to have done that which was forbidden by God in the moral sense and philosophy of the Bible.

This strange idea of being devoted to God, and, therefore, made a sacrifice to him, gave two contrary meanings to the word sacred. Sacred meant accursed, as well as blessed, for it brought the greatest evil—death—upon a person, as well as the greatest favour. It is said to be used in both these senses in the Scriptures; and was in the Latin language, where *sacer esto*—be sacred—meant accursed; and was a sentence of condemnation.

The sense of cursed, not blessed, in *sacer*, is still preserved in the French language, where, for our word damned, *sacre* is used. It is still more strange and curious, that these two opposites—this confusion of ideas—should be preserved in the dogmatic Christ of Christianity, where Christ is represented as the beloved, and the accursed, son of God. We can only account for such incongruous ideas by the knowledge of good and evil baffling the researches of mankind; and becoming more perplexed by religion, and the impersonation of the Deity. Or confession is made by mankind, that good and evil are so intimately united that they cannot be separated. Man only represents nature by his symbols, whether he really believes in them, or whether they were only used as expressions of the fact. The ideas and myths of the Bible have probably emanated from contradictory sources—infidelity and superstition—and both have had a hand in forming the compilation called the Scriptures.

If God is the maker of all things—of good and evil—evil, as well as good, is equally acceptable to him. The cursed is blessed, and the blessed is cursed. The accounts of the origin of good and evil, therefore, do not account for it; no religion solves it, but renders every step more confusing; and the only accounting for it is, as a whole, without a Deity. God, as well as man, is represented as constantly falling, redeeming himself, and becoming at one with himself, as good and evil alternate in time, or the condition of things; nature is impersonated, called God instead of man. The story of the fall of man, animal and human sacrifices, the best and the worst, the lamb and the scapegoat, finally God, or good and evil combined, are said to account for the entrance of evil into the world, and be a remedy for it.

Man, in religion, has become confused by his own metaphysical ideas. In his endeavours to have a knowledge of good and evil, and account for them, he has produced his own fall. God did not offer to account for the state of things, or give a knowledge of good and evil. Evil, or the Devil, did, and deceived mankind; and God laughed at the idea of man having a knowledge of good and evil. Man has made a perpetual riddle to himself of his own devising, called dogmatic theology; and must be accounting for his own accounts. The incarnation of Christ required, only the other day, the immaculate conception of the Virgin. Original sin, or the sin of procreation, is not got rid of by one step more backwards. Anne, the mother of Mary, was born in sin by natural means. Yet there is a truth acknowledged in the fresh dogma—it is a return to materialism—man must go back to the virgin earth for his mother, and God for his father—the unknown cause, or beginning,—the spirit, the life, or the Holy Ghost. Man has no other belief in the original mother of man, and of God. The younger brother, however, as in this instance of Abel, is very often placed in Jewish myth before the elder, as the chosen of God, and the favourite of his parents. We think the circumstance to be an ingenuous confession of the Jews, that they were a younger nation, whilst they took everything from the elder, or those who went before them. They acknowledge they were not the antique nation they are supposed to be, but spoiled those who were in possession before them. They were unacquainted with their own origin; and, therefore, made stories of individuals, their transactions with the ancient inhabitants thousands of years before, to give them a title to the land. They put themselves in the best, and the former proprietors in the worst, light. The political idea sought sanction from the religious, for the atrocities of one nation against another in the precedent of those consecrated in sacrifice. The blessed, and the accursed, the eldest born, and the human sacrifice, devoted to God might be equally orthodox, in the case of one nation against the other, as was exemplified by the Hebrews in the execution of the Canaanites. The Israelites, as representatives of Abel, came to punish the Canaanites, as the heirs of the murderer Cain. It is nothing that the deluge intervened; the mythical is not to be judged by the actual.

As Christ was Abel, so were the Jews Cain. The New Testament, or Christianity, is the younger brother, the Old Testament, the elder. The succeeding time was considered more favoured than the ancient; and, therefore, supposed to be regarded by God in taking the place of the elder born. The myth is founded on human and natural, as well as political, ideas. The youngest of society, the present, and the progressive, the father to the future, the Messianic state, the most civilised, is thought more favoured than the ancient. When we are individually young, we think the present better than the past; and the future will be still better. When we are old we think the past not so bad, and not everything should be allowed to the

later, or the coming, time. The younger conquer, destroy, and enslave older nations; and consider it a law of nature. The older inveigh against it as immoral, and think they did not give such precedents.

But amidst the political transfiguration of circumstances, the private moral is opposed to the national; and passes judgment upon it as bad, not only in precept, but in story. Abraham remonstrates with God in favour of his eldest-born, Ishmael. Isaac blesses Esau. Ishmael and Esau are the representatives of the Arabs, and of the Edmonites, older nations than the Jews, if the Jews were not the same, but an inferior offshoot. The Arabs and the Mohammedans say, a change has taken place in the Bible; the original documents were derived from them, and there the eldest-born, themselves, had the supremacy. It has often been said by scholars, that the Old Testament was formed by the constant interpolation of documents, which would account for the mystery of contradictions, the inscrutable decrees of Providence, and the scheme of salvation, or the philosophy of the plan of salvation. Whatever may have been his example as a father, Jacob stood up against the infraction of morality by his family, under whatever pretexts—political, religious, or even moral. Jacob was against the destruction of Hamor and the Shechemites; and, therefore, against the extermination of the Canaanites under pretence of religious, or moral, motives. The Shechemites were adopted by the Israelites, and were circumcised. The Shechemites intermarried with the Israelites in Shechem and Dinah; and the former were pardoned for any offence they had committed against the latter. The Israelites had come amongst the Shechemites, not the Shechemites amongst the Israelites. An example was given how the Israelites should have behaved to the Canaanites, or any nation they were amongst, or even invaded and conquered. But Levi was religious; and the circumcision was probably a form of consecration to the wholesale human sacrifice which afterwards took place. The patriarchal condemned the Mosaic and Levite dispensation of the future. 'It was not so in the beginning.' Jacob at the moment bitterly condemned the conduct of his two sons. He then foresaw such practices would make them hated by surrounding nations; and confession was, thereby, made that the Israelites would be distinguished by human sacrifices. The patriarch, in his dying and prophetic end, anticipated the history of the tribes. The cruel nature of the priesthood and of Levi, which, according to history, was true, is foretold, according to its origin, in the affair of the Shechemites—its subsequent career.

The command to sacrifice the eldest-born actually remains in the Pentateuch. A human sacrifice vowed, must be performed. Jephtha gave an example. Jacob is also a witness against them, when he says to Levi, 'Simeon and Levi, brethren: vessels of iniquity, raging war. Let not my soul go into their counsel, nor my *glory* be in their assembly, because in their fury they slew a man; and in their self-will undermined a wall.'

What the wall means we do not know, unless the walls of Jericho; and according to the Douay Bible, Hamor stands for Jesus Christ, and the Levites for the Jews and priests, who put him to death. Here we have authority for our supposition that Levi stood for the Jews and the tribe of priests, and therefore were condemned, in continuation of the type, for the destruction of the Canaanites, as much as they were afterwards for the sacrifice of Christ. Christianity constantly shift the persons and things in the Old and New Testament. Sometimes they represent one, and sometimes another person and thing. We have an example in making Hamor and the Shechemites stand for Jesus Christ and the Christians. The Douay Bible says, verse 6, *Slew a man*—viz., Sicheu, the son of Hamor, with all his people. (Gen. xxxiv., 26.) Mystically and prophetically it alludes to Christ, whom their posterity—viz., the priests and the scribes—put to death. We say it alludes to human sacrifices in general, to the priesthood and religion, and the conduct of the Jews to the Canaanites.

When they were reprov'd, Simeon and Levi defended their conduct, as the Hebrews justified their cruelty to the Canaanites. Simeon and Levi accused Shechem of his crime—'Should he deal with our sister as an harlot?' In the same manner, the Jews represented the crimes of the Canaanites as exonerating their murder and the appropriation of their land. Was it not the tribe of Levi, or the priests, who always urg'd the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites, and said the Jews were punished for their sins in suffering the Canaanites to remain alive? Yet the Canaanites were the types of Christ as much as the Shechemites, according to Roman Catholicism and the fact.

As Christ said, He who is innocent let him throw the first stone; let him punish, so it happens, that when the interest of man is concerned, or his religion, he pretends not to see that what he does towards a criminal is worse than the offence committed. The crime of Shechem, and of Simeon and Levi, it will be allowed, may be thus compared—the punishment was worse than the offence. The Jews acknowledged that they were as bad, if not worse, than the Canaanites they exterminated. The Jews were, therefore, so much worse than the Canaanites in punishing them, and give us reason to think they laid upon the inhabitants of the land the crimes of their own introduction, or following, when they afterwards reformed their own worship.

The real differences between Cain and Abel, Levi and Shechem, the Israelites and the Canaanites, were their interests under the guise of religion, and not morality. National interests, inflamed by prejudices, make men blind, and they see the mote in the eyes of others, and not the beam in their own. Justice should not be left to such directions. Morality should be immutable. God and religion are not rules, because they can be urg'd by everybody and on every side. In the Bible he is good and evil: he plays so many parts, and goes with man on every and the most contra-

dictory occasions, that he can be no other than man. What Jacob disapproved God did not, and from the tribe of Levi he appointed his prophet and his priest, which was ratifying the act of Levi to be carried out, as it was, against the Canaanites. The Jews looked back, and what was done by Moses they said was not done by the patriarchs; what was done after the deluge, was not done before the deluge; what was done after the fall, was not done before the fall. Jesus said it was not so in the beginning. They had laws given them for the hardness of their hearts; they had bad laws and delusions. They were forbidden to have kings; they were given to them for a punishment. Yet a king was after God's own heart, and was to be a type of the Messiah, who, when he came, said the Christ was to be a far different person.

It is evident from the Bible, that the philosophy and religion of the Bible was against kings, and there was a large part of the history of the Jews when they were not governed by kings before Saul and after the captivity. But there were some who saw in a David a Solomon and a Herod, the Messiah, and a king after God's own heart, which was their own heart. The previous part, therefore, of the Bible, will bear witness against that which is to come; the future, by facts when present, will bear out the prognostications of the past; the prophets not only are made to foresee the future, but to condemn the preceding. Yet Christians are made to say all is right in the Bible, and no judgment is to be exercised on the different acts and different appreciation of them in the Bible. The prophets said the Jews were robbers and murderers, and have given them the worst of characters. The majority of the kings of Israel and Judah were addicted to the worship of Gods who required human sacrifices. The people answered the prophets, We were told to commit murders; the prophets replied, God gave them bad laws and sent them false prophets. Jesus Christ said they were all thieves and robbers who had gone before him—that they were murderers from the beginning. 'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' (Matt. xxiii., 35.)

Our origin in the beginning, and in the first chapter of Genesis, had been derived from God, or the Gods, in common with all other things. The materials did not require to be mentioned. There was matter before there was life, and there was life before there was man. It is not said in the Bible God made anything. The Bible says that the earth brought forth animals, water, the fishes and the fowl, in the first creation. In the second creation, it is said, 'God formed man out of the ground, every beast of the field and every fowl of the air'—that is, matter made them all, and he fashioned them as he had done the heavens and the earth. Those who think the world was made from nothing, ought to think man was as well as

the world. He is to go to nothing—exist after he is nothing, and have that state in the end which must be similar to the beginning, when something was when there was nothing. If all things had the same origin, all ought to have the same end; the world and all things therein, as well as man. Either there should be a future for them all after they are not, or the beginning and the end, which are the same in nature, should be to all alike. The authors of the end of the world in the Bible seem to have come to the conclusion, that the universe, heaven, and earth, were to pass away, but God and man were to remain. Therefore, man was from the beginning, before the world was, as it naturally followed that if he could remain after, he could be before the world. The world was made first, all life came next, and man was last, but wished to be first. There was an idea in the Old Testament, which made wisdom, or the intelligence of man, before the world was a companion of God. Such an idea became still more human when the word became God—the Son of Man became the Son of God of the New Testament before the beginning of the world. Such an idea of his having existed before, may throw doubt upon his having existed as an historical fact at any time. A myth is an idea rendered into an imaginary fact; and when you can trace the idea down to the alleged fact, which is slow in forming, and has no contemporary evidence to support it, it may be presumed that the veritable myth has been arrived at. If supreme intelligence, or wisdom, was the parent God, we, being made in his likeness, must have been his son. If we deduce a God from design—our intelligence—we are necessarily one and the same. The divinity travels backs from us to him, instead of having come from him to us in revelation; and we are, consequently, one and the same; an issue in Materialism or Pantheism which the design argument may not see. The design argument, if not made the best of in Pantheism or Materialism, is a *reductio ad absurdum*, and proof there is no God. Design, say they, proves a designer, and they take a watch, the design of a man. Therefore, design must prove a man, and nothing more. They have no right to change the terms, and out of a human design take what is not human design, shows no signs of it, and say it proves a God, who is no designer, who is no man. The work of a man proves a man, but it cannot prove two other totally different things, as God, Creator, and procreator. People would not have a man for a God, though they do talk of a personal Deity. Therefore, there is no God; we are not made or generated.

The sons of God were equally good and evil before Adam and Eve were supposed to exist. They were equally made in the image of God, and God was the same God to both. As angels, they were supposed the same as himself, and then he was not; they were eternal with him, and he was not infinite; or he made them, and they could not have revolted. If infinite, God must include good and evil. His powers could not be delegated

to others, as some suppose, or he would cease to be, much less could they be against him. They can only represent the forces of the earth; and in them the Polytheism of the ancients was more consequent than the dogmas of modern religion, which make one God, and then separate him into good and evil, independent shapes and qualities. He himself is made at division with himself, and another is made antagonistic without him. Was the serpent an angel then, the Son of God, or evil twin with good? As matter he is reconcileable with nature, but as a person we have all the difficulties of religion on earth transferred to heaven. Why did God make an angel? and why did he fall? Calmet says, some heretics supposed Jesus Christ to be the serpent; and we cannot imagine the serpent or man to have acted independently of God. The serpent was worshipped as wisdom, and by the Jews, on a cross or tree, which the Christians have supposed to be a type of Christ on the cross. Afterwards, as we have said, the Jews thought wisdom was before, and was with God at the creation; so that there we have Jesus Christ and the serpent wisdom meeting. If Christ was evil, good and evil made wisdom. As we have said, all dogmas founded on the ideas of good and evil, of man and of God, the same and separate, must necessarily be taking each other's places. We have remarked, Jesus Christ, according to the dogma, came exactly in the same shape as the Devil and the temptation, and both alike suffered. The dogmas, therefore, of Christianity, as accounting for the origin of everything from the beginning to the end, only lead to contradiction of ideas; while as a history of man, and of the effects seen and experienced, they are true. Prometheus was both the serpent and the crucified Christ.

All wisdom may be very well represented by the serpent; the human wisdom as well as the religious, which made him more than human, wiser than man; and instead of raising him to heaven, laid him prostrate on earth. The old serpent superstition was to grovel upon his belly in proportion as he had walked erect, looked up to heaven, and deluded man into being as the Gods. *The second serpent did not fulfil the promises made in his name, but falsified them on the cross.* The serpent who bit them was to heal in the wilderness, as the serpent who bit them in Paradise was to heal them on the cross. Then, as before in Paradise, out of the signal discomfiture of their hopes arose the wish to live for ever, and the idea of everlasting life. Such is the idea of man, who, stretched upon his cross, thinks there must be another world to make up for his miseries here. As man would go back to the origin of all things, before the universe was, so he would equally imagine the future. Such a thought, the religious say, makes man a God, and assures to him the truth of his ideas. The serpent on the tree in the wilderness is acknowledged by Christians to have been a type of Christ on the cross; but it is another of their contradictions to make the serpent, through whom the sin came into the world, also the

representative of the Saviour; and certainly gives grounds to the ideas of the heretic Ophiusites, that the serpent was Jesus Christ. 'And they looked upon him and were healed.' As another instance of Scripture contradictions, taken literally, is the condemnation of the serpent during some alleged reformation of idolatry. The worship of the serpent also shows that dating the destruction of idolatry from Moses, is a pure fiction. It is part of the old building left which betrays a modern renovation.

The Messiah was God; the Messiah was wisdom and with God, and the Son of God; the Messiah was the serpent, was Adam; Messiah was Cain when he was *born*, and Abel when he was dead. The Messiah has filled every conceivable situation in men's ideas, and may be said to stand as the representative and the result of his wishes. The moral Messiah is to be found in the Pentateuch of Moses, in the Proverbs delivered by a Solomon, in the political maxims of Jeremiah, in the other prophets, and in the Apocrypha. There was a moral Messiahship equally among the profane in the time of Cicero, Menander, or Terence; and before, about the time, and after Christ, the same morality was preached in conjunction with the temporal Messiah. The temporal Messiah has ever been the favourite Messiah of all nations. The Romans conquered under the idea. The Jews imagined it in Moses; in the Judges, Saul, David, and Solomon, and they had to accept the cross at the hands of the Romans. All men had to suffer the cross, and, therefore, all were glad to take up the precepts of the cross, and proclaim them to be the Messiah, which was to redeem the world, and which did make a revolution, so that the Messiah of the cross became the temporal Messiah. The very dogmas, or philosophical and metaphysical ideas, came more from a profane than from a Jewish source. Paul, says Mr. Jowett, only used figures from the Old Testament which frame dogmas. But Plato, Philo, and the Alexandrian school, invented the ideas of the Trinity, and the Logos, and from these materials were made the Messiah of the Gospel of St. John. It may be asked, from such a variety of sources, is it possible there could be any reality in Christ, further than that which romance bears to reality?

The Messianic idea is the religious idea; that side we have towards God, the realisation of God in us. But this God is only our good—what we think best. Objectively and naturally, God must be also evil as the Gnostic Christ.

As the temporal Messiahship has gone up in the world, the moral Messiahship has gone down, and when the temporal Messiahship failed, up went the moral. Such was the case equally in the history of Greece and Rome. Socrates arose and his school, after the political glories of Athens were gone by. The moral philosophers of Rome and the Christian moralists flourished when the Republic was no more, and the empire was declining. At the same time, moral improvement went along with the extremes of immorality, and seem to have arisen the one out of the other,

the Pagan philosophy quite as much as the Christian, though it is alleged that the Christian alone came to redeem the world from its licentiousness. And at the same time, as in all times, philosophy, the most independent of religion, was accompanied by the lowest superstition. Superstition or imagination is one of our sides towards God, and whilst reason is flourishing in the good, the evil may be equalling it. Science, as it is wonderful, may feed religion as well as destroy it, which is evinced by Spirit-rapping and Mormonism. Evil is natural to mankind, and is a side to every good.

In the individual, the temporal Messiahship is disputing place with the moral or spiritual. Paul had two in him. We see throughout the Bible, and throughout history, one man would have his happiness in sensual indulgence, another in virtue. When Christ told his disciples, they need not fast or pray, but their business was to live whilst he was among them; when he was taken away, they would have time for sorrow; was it not under a figure, the same as saying, Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die? The man of social and moral progress has the Messiahship in him, whilst the professed minister of Christianity, who is content with the loaves and fishes, things as they are, has none of the Messianic idea, the philosophy and religion of the Bible in him. The Messianic idea, however, is all for this world, and not for another.

The materials, as we have said, in *the first* chapter of Genesis are not mentioned out of which man was made. They may be inferred from matter preceding man. But as man would rather follow his imagination than his reason, he has supposed that neither was he from matter, nor matter was of itself, but both had a preceding origin from nothing. Man imagined that he was made after the image of God, which was true in a material sense, coming from earth and returning to earth; that we are in him and he in us; that the earth turns us out, and we return to it to do the same to other beings. As a part, or man, we are made by earth and God; and as earth we are God, and make man. We also might think we are in the image of God, when in the procreation of our species, we seem to do what he has done to us—he made us and we make ourselves. Therefore, he is called Father, as we are called father, when we stand in that relation to our children.

God becomes flesh, not only in the woman, but daily in every one of us—*our daily bread*, in the mystery of the incarnation and of the supper. The religious have wished to create something out of nothing, and they are obliged to fall back on matter as the first cause and not spirit. The incarnation, the immaculate conception, transubstantiation, are denials of God. They are all equally denials of a future state, as God or Christ could not become man, could not make a change except through matter and man. We must do the same to arrive at any future state; we cannot arrive at the future state of present Christianity without going through the same means

to get to heaven, that God took to get to earth. We must have proof that another life can do without humanity and matter, as we are promised to be born again without father or mother. The nature of things are inverted, and instead of out of life we are out of death. Man out of a woman, as Christ was said to be, disputed as the fact is, is only half doing a miracle. God is obliged to yield to the nature of things. He is born of a woman, and he dies, as we do, to all appearance. The first cause of life is unknown, as in Cain, the first man born of woman. Cain was the first man, the type of Christ, and not Adam, because Adam was not born of a woman, and Christ was. Paul's analogy, therefore, between Adam and Christ fails, except as an idea, Adam being humanity, and Christ being humanity. It is no use asserting a God, if by all the assertions, it is proved there is no God. God is an idea, and then he is endeavoured to be made a fact in Christ. But by making a man God—Christ God, there was an end of a God. The only way out of the difficulty so as to have a God, which would answer to the world and would not be matter, but thought or intelligence, is to allow God or Christ to be an idea, an abstraction, quality, abstract humanity, or nature, which we may call spirit, but which really means nothing more than our own intelligence or idea, our way of describing things or impersonating them. If God is time, Christ is time in action, the infinite and the finite. Our thought is invisible, and, therefore, may be called spiritual. Faith in things unseen was a confession by Paul that there was no such person as Jesus Christ, when Paul, a contemporary, who must have lived with him in his assigned time, never saw him except in idea. When a man sets about proving a God, he proves there is nothing—there is no God, as Bishop Berkeley proved that there was no matter, as matter was obliged to give up its claims as well as its existence, in proving a spirit God. Such a *reductio ad absurdum* proves there is no God, only matter. If you prove God is nothing, you prove he is not. If there was a God he would not want proving; the very attempt to prove him shows there is no God.

If there was a God, we should never have to be told what he is not, as in the Bible, but should know what he is. For the Bible is a book against God, inasmuch as he tells you what he is not, and does not tell you what he is.

But as man thought he was made in a metaphysical, supernatural, spiritual, and ideal image of the Gods, distinct from matter, he thought he would be as he conceived them to be, and have the same knowledge as he had given to them. Man is, then, informed of the fact that he was manufactured from the earth; and it is declared to him that he will return to the earth, as if to teach him his precise origin and end, and that he could not be, or know more, when he wished to be and know more. The nature of our origin was shown to prove the inevitable necessity of our end. The whole circle of existence, and of nature, was made manifest; not only the origin and end of man, but the origin and end of all things—that we were

all made alike after the same image or the same type. Any other idea was declared to be the vice, the fall, and the curse of mankind. We are made after the image of the lowest animal much more than after the image of the highest ideal, and only made after the image of the highest in relation to the whole in common with all things. That we are made after the image of the lowest, as well as the highest, follows from the text of the Bible, as all life had precedence of man—even vegetable—and, as Burns said, his

‘Prentice hand he tried at man,
And then he made the lasses O.’

Man reverses the order in the second creation, as if to show his superiority and closer union with the Deity. At last he gets to be with him before the world was. From the inferior came the superior, as in all the similar works of man—one is an improvement upon the other. Man would invert the order of nature, and make all things come from an idea, as if that idea was not formed from a thing, and played merely a connecting link, before and after, after and before, as life between all beings. The story of the fall, therefore, is not to prove, as is commonly thought, how death came into the world, which could not be, as the compilers did not believe man was ever, or could be, not subject to death. It was, on the contrary, to convince man of his mortality, who—if he did not yet think he should live for ever—thought he might be as the Gods. It was to convince man that, as there was no life after death, he could not be as the Gods. As man was made of earth, so he must be as the earth during life; not as the Gods, or having a knowledge of causes. The fact was made evident to him in his returning to earth. The mortality of the man—his having no immortal soul—would prove to him there was no God, such as man conceived him to be. The mortality of the man did not so much require proving, as from it that man’s ideas of God and himself were quite misplaced.

It is natural that man, when he has imagined a God, should not only think God made man in his likeness, but that it was in his own, or human power; that some time or other he could be as he conceived the Gods to be. In fact, he supposed that men were the Gods turned out upon the earth, to be Gods again after life. They were dead in life, and alive in death. Only exchange matter for God, and it is the Materialist’s creed. The earth sends us into life, and receives us back again. It is doubtful whether man had any idea of everlasting individual life, such as Christians now profess to have. The ancients do not seem to have held it even with regard to the Gods. The Gods were thought to be subject to matter, time, or fate. The Hebrews had not the word in their language. Man not being able to be as the Gods, proved there were no Gods; and man has been going on the same theme ever since—proving there is no God and future state of everlasting life, by attempting to be as the Gods, to know God, and have immortality. Disproof certainly goes by no proof, and by not having, the

want of proving the affirmative, proves the negative. The *onus probandi* is in the affirmative. A man has not to prove to another who sees a ghost, that there is no ghost. It does not prove a ghost, because a man cannot disprove it to the man who declares he sees it.

The mortality of man was conceded in the beginning. Life was not for ever, but it was a question of time, and longer was allowed to him. Accordingly the Hebrews thought the first men, whether good or bad, lived to an immense age. Their length of life, and violence to each other, after the fall, was rather contradictory, as the violence must have shortened their lives, and checked the propagation of the species, which was directly contrary to the supposed design of the Deity, in giving them a long life. But what would be a greater contradiction in fact, and a greater upset to the design argument, than the deluge, which cleared the face of the earth, after the creation, and the blessing to increase, multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it? *The Bible is against all design.* However, as individuals are supposed to mean ages of man and races, we cannot speculate on individuals. In fact, the idea of a man living eight hundred years, is almost as absurd, physically and morally, as living for ever.

The story of the temptation and the fall was, therefore, to convince us, there was no existence but this, whether reckoned long or short, ephemeral or more than man; that we have no powers or knowledge beyond the earth. The circle of our existence is confined to the circle of our knowledge, and from earth it must come, and to earth it must go. We may have a knowledge external to ourselves of good and evil—but of earth and of life relating to ourselves. Good and evil, considered as a whole, is the highest knowledge. The knowledge of good and evil between ourselves is another knowledge, and is called morality. The knowledge of good and evil, as the knowledge of the Gods, is the knowledge that there is none.

From good, people draw the idea of love and life. The first creation, therefore, was declared to be good, and especially good towards men. But man said that was not enough for him; it was not enough for him to be very good—he wanted to be perfect as the Gods. Love is instinctive. It may be cultivated and handed down by hereditary transmission, and then we have morality. We have only to follow nature in its highest law of good. From the feeling of good towards us comes the feeling of good towards others, which ought to be shown principally towards man, and also, though less, towards other life. We should be *good* to everything but *very good* to man. The feeling of good towards us, which makes the feeling of good towards others, is called love. Love, therefore, is the foundation of morality, as it is of life. Sexual love and maternal love is instinctive and reciprocal, and ought to produce the moral affections. Natural morality flows from the family relations, whilst religion separates them. Therefore the next story is to show how, in spite of the natural law

of morality, religion will make men hate each other, and take away that which they consider the greatest blessing—life. The religious say the natural law of morality is not sufficient to keep men from sin—man must have a revelation, or the proclamation of heaven, against the laws of nature. There was no necessity for a revelation, if God had the making of the world. If he had not, there was. But we cannot see there has been one; and amongst the professed ones none have done us any good—they only profess to show the dilemma into which God, or a disturbing power, has got us, and the failure of all remedies.

In spite of what is said to the contrary, man has managed to get on without religion. Morality has always been, whilst revelation, or religion, has not always been. Morality is a settled thing—enough to answer the purpose—whilst religion is not. Man will take care of himself, the foundation of morality. He loves himself; whilst it does not appear that heaven has taken care of us, or shown us great love, according to the religions and the revelation they would make out of the Bible. Man fulfilled the first chapter of Genesis—increased, etc.—in spite of God, his blessings, and his curses. There was no design in any of them. Man has managed his morality, and to preserve himself, in spite of religion or any assistance from heaven, and in spite of its opposition, according to revelation.

But when we come to the story of Cain and Abel, we come to another instance of religion and revelation which does away with the moral law—the most powerful laws of nature, and introduces death amongst mankind by murder. God says he had no more to do with it than he had with the first instance of religion, temptation, and the fall, and the general death. Between Cain and Abel there does not seem to have been any other violation of the moral law. Crime was not ushered in as a contest about property and power: the quarrel was simply about nothing—religion, or its supposed advantages, faith in things unseen, hope in the invisible. Cain, as humanity, was touched in a tender point—his religion, and felt it more keenly than anything else. It provoked him to murder. Cain was a religious man. If Cain had been irreligious he would have cared nothing about it, especially when he was told by God religion did not signify, but morality did—that there could be morality without religion.

Cain was supposed to be favoured by God as the eldest son—a man from the Lord; and he thought he saw that favour pass from him when he saw others come to share possession of the land—the younger succeeding the elder-born of mankind; as one nation succeeds another, one dispensation takes the place of another.

The story might be also to show that God, or nature, was the same to all—one time was as good as another—that the former times were not better than the present or the future: indeed, that the future, according to the Messianic idea, was always better than the past. If one, the elder-

born, the supposed born of God, was favoured in one way, so was the other, the younger, in another way. There was progress.

The grand design, or purpose of the story, however, is plain and certain—that cannot be moral which makes people hate instead of love each other; which, instead of making them do good to each other, makes them kill each other. As love and hatred, morality and religion, life and death, were opposed in the beginning, so ever since hatred and religion has prevailed when otherwise love and morality would have reigned. It is a saying there is nothing like theological hatred, and the proof of it has been seen up to the present moment, that it will exceed all other causes, though apparently in itself no cause. We see Martineau, in the *National Review*, of July, '56, on the future of Christianity, says, 'Religion and Christianity have been the only sentiments which ever made man not only consign his fellow-man to death here, but to eternal death and torture hereafter, for difference of creed.' He allows Christianity has not been productive of the civilisation attributed to it; and yet he says it is the noblest sentiment of mankind, because, forsooth, it is all for nothing—man's mistaken idea of his own good. The moral, therefore, of the story of Cain and Abel is, that religion is the greatest enemy of goodness—supersedes the more natural laws. Christ summed up the results of religion and the history of the Jews. 'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' (Mat. xxiii., 35.) 'Ye are of *your father* the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the *beginning*.' So that, logically, God, the father of Cain, was a murderer—the Jews were the sons of God, a murderer. There was a sect of Christians we have spoken of called Ophiusites—the serpent worshippers—and there was a sect of Christians called Cainites, or the followers of Cain. They were Gnostics, and we have no account of them except from their enemies, the orthodox Christians. But they seemed to have some ground for their worship in this charge of Christ brought against the Jews. We can only suppose that it meant, on both sides, that evil was as much God as good: but that, taking the story literally, and shedding blood for religion, was wrong, and brought its own consequences upon mankind. It would even appear, from another passage, that Abel was a sacrifice—'And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the *blood* of sprinkling, that speaketh *better* things than that of Abel.' Here 'grammatically, the '*better* would apply to the blood, and *that* to the blood. But if the blood applied to the animal, here at any rate was Abel's sacrifice condemned by a better, which was equivalent to Abel sacrificed by Cain, or Christ by God or the Jews.

Christ said religion had made murderers of the Jewish nation, and a scene of blood, from Abel up to his time. But with fresh vigour it did it

from his time up to the present. In the instance of Cain and Abel, represented as brothers, where you would suppose that, by the laws of nature, would be inherited the greatest feeling of love, there they are excited to the greatest fury by religion. But if Christ spoke true of the past effects of religion, he prophesied that it would produce the same results in the future. He said it would do away with all these natural laws, as in the beginning—that it would make parents hate their offspring, offspring their parents, husband his wife; which was not the case of Adam towards Eve before the fall; and that it would make brethren hate each other. The legacy of religion, the legacy of the fall, which was religion; the legacy of another temptation and another fall, was—‘I came not to bring peace, but a sword into the world.’ By the more natural law—by the law of good—all men would be brethren. Christ allowed it when he said religion would force the *strong tie of nature*. But religion interferes and destroys all brotherly love, fraternity, and equality, between mankind. It begins in the family, and spreads around all mankind. ‘And behold my brethren, my father, mother,’ etc., means, that all the world are put by *religion* on the same relations as between Cain and Abel.

It is the unhappy nature of religious disputes, that beginning in religion the passions supersede even the thoughts of religion. It thus occurred in Cain. Calvin has declared that the reason of his putting Servetus to death was, the quarrel became personal. He hated the man more even than he loved God. Nothing can be clearer than that religion was the cause of the difference between the brothers, and of the murder of Abel. We are happy to say, we are not singular in the opinion. We have authority for it which goes much with the world; and, however much any man may pride himself on the originality of his ideas, it does go against the opinion of a man that nobody thinks like him. Goethe said religion was the cause of the first murder: that was the beginning of religion. Man looked up to inquire of heaven; and he received for answer, Kill on earth. What a picture—faded flowers, dead lambs, and a murdered brother—that had been the scene of pleasant life!

All life is announced as a blessing, and the greatest blessing to man. It is said, Increase, multiply, replenish the earth, subdue it, etc. Next the succession of life comes as a curse—is proclaimed to be a curse from the hands of the Creator before it begins in the course of nature—the blessing on the future of man is revoked. No sooner is man born of a woman, than that which was pronounced to be a curse, is proclaimed by the woman to be a blessing from heaven. Life is reinstated in all its honours coming from man, and under the curse. Eve, in spite of what God had said, in spite of nature’s evil—the pains of labour—took it as a blessing from him. Children have always been thought, and especially by the Jews, a blessing. The subjection of the earth, as the end of labour;

even labour itself, though only the means to the end, the very sweat of our brow, has been thought a blessing; and industry a virtue. Such inconsistencies can be no other than our notions of good and evil, which are themselves contradictions to us, but which make unity, and out of which evolved order.

Man was distinctly told that he was to increase and multiply: he was told that he came from the ground, and that he was to go to the ground. He could not help knowing he was from man: it is asserted on his part by the historian in the Bible. It was the inspiration of the future, and a knowledge of good and evil before the fall, that there were fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, the blessing and the curse of propagating the species, of original creation, yet the woman is made to say, as the other, or religious side of human nature, that she has got a man from the Lord. Woman was always looking out for a man from the Gods. First Eve listened to Satan for that purpose—the propagation of Gods—next they loved the angels; and then the women, it is said, ever looked forward to produce the Messiah; and the Virgin Mary thought she had given birth to Christ. The Bible represents all religion as coming from the woman—first in the fall, and next attributing her offspring to God. Origen and Pascal say, ‘Man, in the story of the fall, represents reason and virtue; and the woman, our passions, which lead our reason and our virtue astray.’ Religion, women, and evil are, therefore, the same. Religion, as well as the woman, represents vice, folly, human weakness; and man represents the contrary of them—the ascendancy of reason and virtue, and the having no religion. Virtue and man are synonymous in Latin. Virtue is derived from *vir*—the man. If such an idea is expressed by words of the man, perhaps the other idea is expressed in words of the woman.

The religious try to separate their origin and end from this world; they would not be a part of it. Yet man does not know how he can exist except as a part of it. Man, having recourse to this world, on every occasion, when he would get out of it, would sufficiently show the origin of our ideas. The future of man is, in multiplying his species, replenishing the earth, subduing it, etc., where there is an immortality of the species—transmitting life one to another—and a future of heaven and paradise, in the improvement of the world, and of man. His future is, then, the whole, and not a part; for the prolonged existence of the individual would make all parts, everlasting division, and no unity. Nature does not forbid a future, but encourages it; and gives ample scope for hope in the present and the future. What man, having children, has not his hopes and happiness in their future? and thus the future is carried on from man to man, even if it does not look further than the immediate posterity. It is the hope of the future which makes the man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife. They have in them the future—physically and morally

the Messianic idea. We may pray, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth*, as it is in heaven.' Hope in the first creation and revelation was confined to *this earth*. Heaven is the hope of good, or better, upon this earth. Hope would depart from this earth if it were exclusively given to another world. As it is, the objects of hope supposed to be produced supernaturally upon earth, or entirely in another life of the individual and another world, have been to the injury of the present world. The first hope was of this world given by God to man in the commandment to multiply, subdue. The next hope was a heaven upon earth. The next, earth in heaven. It has been said if people really believed in another world, and the end of this, they would give up all thought of it. If, therefore, they had no other world than this, they would pay much more attention to the happiness of it. We have the fiction of a heaven as a remedy for the evil we might help; and a future, instead of making the best of the present, on the earth.

We are reminded by Scripture, 'It is he who hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.' In a natural and material sense, it may be said, 'It is he who hath made us, and not we ourselves,' when, as men compared with essential causes, we have nothing to do with it; and do not, therefore, represent man as the work of man. In ordinary thought, language, and deed, we may be said to make ourselves. We come after those who were before us, and come before those who come after us. Our parents made us, and we call ourselves the makers of our children, though we tell them God made them. We are the immediate and secondary causes and effects—the one of the other. We do not know how we are made; and it is a question between the philosopher, the savage, and the religious, whether you give the name of matter and nature to your ignorance, or impersonate it by the name of God—the cause before the causes. Here matter and man precedes life, intelligence, soul, spirit, God, though afterwards the woman gives the precedence to the latter, under whatever name it goes before matter. The above expression of the difference between the Materialist and Spiritualist, which has the precedence, matter or mind, may be said to lie at the foundation of all religious ideas. The religious would say, it is a question between religion and no religion; but the Materialist, who thinks matter precedes mind, or that they are more infinitely combined, has a dogma as well as the Spiritualist, who thinks mind precedes matter; and, therefore, may be said to have a religion and a belief. The Materialist would think his belief more substantial, and, therefore, truer than that of the Spiritualist. The Spiritualist may say that his is a supernatural explanation, and goes beyond that of the Materialist—rises above the earth, and the reason of things, and ascends to primary causes and the essence of all things. This definition of religion the Materialist, of course, is willing to allow the Spiritualist.

The life, or intelligence, which is carried back to the first cause, passes through more apparent natural agencies previous to its development, consummation, and return to earth, than anything else. How brief is the most superior existence, or highest intelligence—natural or artificial—between men, or animals, and men themselves. But the shortness of life, which, to the Jew, was the evidence of its nothingness, is the argument of the modern religious idea, that it ought to be, and must be, longer. All intellect is, by propagation in common with other life; apart from propagation, are the greatest wonders. The universe, and all things therein, this world, and the starry heavens, are more wonderful than the generation of beings. That they are more wonderful is declared by the Bible, which makes God make the universe and the earth, instead of supposing, as the Gentiles, all things were generated. Life, or intelligence, has been compared for its insignificance to the dust; an external and, comparatively invisible, circumstance which surrounds the earth. But we are less than dust, because these minute particles return to the whole; the dust remains, and returns to earth. Therefore it is that our intelligence, or life, is compared to air, mind, spirit, soul. All these words originally meant the same, and also stood for God. We, therefore, ascribe to Deity that which is most evanescent—is nothing. That which is least, the religious say, is greatest. We say, God is life, is a spirit, is supreme intelligence, the soul of the universe. If, then, he lives, he must die. Whereas, the Materialist may say, What can be conceived greater than matter, while your Gods are contingent on matter, or abstractions from matter? It may be said, We do make ourselves, and also God, when we profess to know all about God, the world, and man, from beginning to the end. All religious ideas and dogmas may be said to have their origin in the denial of God. The religious have to account for the God whom they have raised as the solution of natural mysteries. Man has the idea of God taken from himself. When man begins to reflect, he does not see how God could have acted, which amounts to a denial of God. He supposes, therefore, stories, which he calls inspired, or revealed, to reconcile his imagination with his reason. But, as they involved still further contradictions, they must be believed, or there is no alternative left, as the religious say, but to do without a God. The ascendancy of reason, or the confession of ignorance, comes last, but may be said to have been in operation from beginning to end. The reason also gives a denial of God unknown to the man himself. The reason, and the common practice of life, is opposed to the dogmas of religion. The reason, therefore, is equally universal as the imagination, or the religious idea. The religious idea has always required to be supported by other means than opinion. Force, wealth, interest, have always come to its assistance. The religious idea, not being able to be upheld by its own influence, speaks against its universality and acceptance with mankind. The reason itself

is enlisted against itself on the side of religion; and is taught to reason the opposite of what it does on all other occasions, from the earliest infancy to the decline of life. The universality of reason shows itself in being able to sustain itself against such overpowering odds. The creed of the people may be said to be always the same, as in the infancy of society. Anthropomorphous, whatever may be the dogmas, established above them.

If the analogy of life in the body is carried out in the soul of the world, that which lives must die. There is not, therefore, one cause, but perpetual causes and effects—creation and destruction, life and death. Thus is time filled up by the succession of the parts; and we can neither comprehend one nor two always existing concurrently and independently—never beginning, and never ending. Such is the comparison between God and our life, soul and body, life and matter—but we can contemplate them as a material whole, involving the repetition of matter and life, creation and destruction, going round in a circle.

The aboriginal believed in his ignorance, but we believe in spite of our intelligence. The savage believed in a stone; a stone is a stone; and has been seen to come down from heaven. He had ocular proof of a God: he had full *à posteriori*; or design, argument before his eyes. The modern religious man knows how the stone did come; that it was purely natural, He has, therefore, lost all proof; has met with a denial; and believes in nothing—that nothing is God. He would then upset the original *à posteriori*—design argument—and would have everything which he does not see come from God, or be God. To have faith—completely a faith—in things unseen. Jesus Christ ought never to have existed. Christianity, therefore, has been founded on contradictions. Jesus Christ, or God, is said to have been seen in the flesh once and by a few persons; and on such evidence to have established his religion, whilst he has never been seen by the great majority, either in time or by witnesses; and the true faith of a Christian is said to consist in the latter alternative. We are to believe, and we are not to believe by sight and our senses, but never by our reason.

Christians have believed, and do at present believe, that reason, scheme, civilisation, and progress were bad for men; that a state of ignorance was much better for man; that men were nearer to heaven in the line of Abel or Seth. Macaulay even has assured us that an intellectual deluge will come, destroy civilised nations, uproot reason, and leave Rome, the type of ignorance and superstition, surviving as the ark. Ignorance and superstition were thought before the flood to be the state to which God had respect, and ever since the same thought has been entertained by a large party of the world. It is one of the ideas pourtrayed in the Bible. The intellect which we assign to God in ourselves is judged derogatory of divinity, and meets no favour in his eyes. The Supreme is described as jealous, and in

rivalry of the lower intelligence of man. Deluges come to confirm the idea, physical and moral, all intelligence is swept away, and the world begins again in ignorance and superstition. Noah and the animals came after the deluge, destruction and death called 'rest' to the earth, which was the name of Noah. A Sabbath was to be kept by the world. In like manner, Christianity arose, after the flood of barbarians had destroyed the empires, and brought on the middle and dark ages of chaos.

But out of the good comes the evil; out of Paradise the fall; and out of evil, the curse, or the fall, comes the good.

If the physical revolutions were clearly established, as well as the moral which have occurred, one might desire even a limited God, a governor to direct the universe, a good father to rule over his children. We may fully acknowledge our own weakness, and that we cannot go right, but that only proves the more there is no God. But all this feeling does not make a Deity, as the religious would argue. We know from it there is not one, and, therefore, we must do the best we can.

Whatever man's progress in science may be, we cannot say, after reading history, that his intelligence in governing himself goes for much. Yet we do not ascribe science to God; all the discoveries in science have generally been given to the Devil, while the intelligence shown in governing ourselves and others has been imputed to the Deity. We measure his intelligence by our intelligence in governing; and, indeed, we must think, when we believe in a Providence, that our wisdom is his, that we are but the instruments of his wisdom. Yet it is this intelligence, which is not proved by history, the religious would give to God. It is this reason, this intelligence, which the religious call poor human reason, they would give to God. Because they feel it is worthless in their own case, it is no great compliment to give it to God. The religious, with their usual inconsistency, when they would prove a God to the more learned, give a scientific intelligence to the Deity. But when we think what man was in his origin—his reason not much above the instinct of the animal—we have no reason to be so proud of it as to assign it to God. Besides, view this scientific intelligence, how it has passed away and may pass away, and the instinct does not. The historic intelligence is a sad series of human failures, which are made divine in the Bible, and in religion taken literally.

Carlyle would put down shams by his indignation against them. Kingsley would support exploded cants by the same vehemence in favour of them. We have been told by him that an All-pervading Spirit is blank Materialism; that a law of nature without a lawgiver is a gross absurdity, however opposite the laws may be; and he tells us that nations fall when they become immoral. Union is strength; and the Romans conquered the Greeks. Might has ever been right in history. The most virtuous nation must give way to those who use war to the best advantage; but the

immorality is in those who exercise it towards those who are unable to resist, not those who are obliged to submit. Under these circumstances, those of history, war is as immoral in a nation as it is in an individual, as murder and robbery are on an unprotected traveller. The most virtuous individual must succumb to violence, and he is probably the most virtuous who is never prepared against it. Besides, the Christian code of morality teaches that a man should never resist, whilst Mr. Kingsley would argue it proves immorality. What, are we to say of the fall of the Roman empire directly it became Christian, that it became immoral? What are we to say of the oppression said to be exercised towards the good in the long period before the deluge? What are we to say of the fall of the 'righteous Abel' who represented humanity, the pastoral race, before the wicked Cain, the man of cities and empires? What is this intelligence which is able to see a God, a Providence in history, revealed religion seconding natural superstition, and not able to prove it—every proof against it? A revelation is the greatest proof against religion—it proves there was none before; and other nations and individuals, having different revelations, prove there were no revelation and no religion after. That any divine revelation or true faith should not come universally to exist, is the greatest proof against it. Instead of proving a revelation, it proves by its failure there is no God. Natural and revealed religion only came in place of the superstition of the savage; they are only fine and modern names given to the old things, but are in essence exactly the same ideas. Superstition is generally allowed to be an error; we are, therefore, building on an error in our religion, and a God could have had nothing to do with it. If we came from the truth originally, then we have gone to the worse in religion, and God had nothing to do with it, or he did the mischief and was the cause of it.

As we have said, the Elohim must have been male and female, because the Elohim said, Let us create men after our own image, and he created them male and female.

Dr. Donaldson says the words male and female are much stronger in the original, expressing the organs of generation. Therefore, the organs of generation, male and female, were the Elohim and the Gods; and it would seem to bear out the Doctor's interpretation, that the temptation and the fall of man, to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, were the exercise of the powers of producing life, and thereby bringing death and evil into the world. We can now, therefore, scarcely blame the ancient worshippers of the organs of generation. There is, we think, more sublimity in worshipping the symbols or the idea of life, the mystery of creation, than in worshipping a God, who after all is only said to have made us originally as a man would put together materials. There is a doubt that the wonderful machinery of generation is owing to God, when, in the fall, evil is made to produce it in spite of God; and we think God

was only a first cause, and not constantly acting, as we see in generation. But even supposing he did institute generation, he still only originated, as man would make a machine, though he could not endue it with any such powers. In the steam-engine, man almost forms an animal; but he does not know how to make one propagate another. Man, in fact, thinks he can originate a living being out of matter; but how to give it the power of continuing out of itself he knows not. Generation, therefore, is a much greater secret than that of origin, which we try to discover, and think we approach.

There are two modes of making or creating; neither one nor the other is the great whole. If the Gods of the Bible, or the God does both, as a man does, he is a subordinate Deity; he propagates life, and he puts together materials—he is man.

The Douay translation of the Bible says, 'I have gotten a man through the Lord,' which we may conjecture originally meant no more in the mind of Eve or woman, than through natural means, or God, the giver of life. It afterwards came to be imagined that the birth of man in the woman might be direct from God. But it is singular in the history of the idea, that such connections and creations between earth and heaven were not at first thought for the good of mankind.

We were first made in his image; we were then punished for trying to be made in his image. The laws of nature and of our creation were equally good and evil. Prometheus, or wisdom, aided us in the attempt to be like the Gods. Eve was Pandora, who was sent, not as a help, but to ruin mankind, which, as it resulted in the Scripture story, was truer in the Pagan mythology than in the Bible. Jupiter and the Gods foresaw and sent the evil, when God did not. But we can see they are the same ideas of good and evil under different forms. After the box of Pandora was opened, which let out evil, hope was left at the bottom, which is human, the love of life, progress, or religion, the hope to be as the Gods, the knowledge of good and evil, and the life everlasting.

In the Bible, the evil principle succeeded the good; the woman seduced, as Eve, gave birth to the half human and divine. Life came in through Satan, if it afterwards came in through Christ. Eve gave way to evil, which she thought was good and was from heaven, that her progeny might be as the Gods, when they turned out monsters. Human beings were supposed, somehow or other, to come from heaven; though whether arising from the vanity of man, or a sense of his inferiority, man has always supposed that the heavens were, if partly in favour of him, partly against him. The story of Prometheus was, that he was of the generation of the Gods, but that he made a man against the will of the Gods; and he further offended by bringing down the arts of civilisation from heaven to earth—making man as the Gods, and giving them a knowledge of good and evil. The nature of the temptation to which Eve yielded, to be as the Gods, and have

a knowledge of good and evil, is exemplified by civilisation following in the line of Cain. If the making of man, or his completion and continuance, was opposed to the Gods in mythology, so it was in the fall of man. Yet Eve says she has had a man Cain from God. So contradictory is God made when opposite principles are endeavoured to be made into one or different stories, or ideas made into a literal whole. Death should have entered into the world as he said, and we should have been free from the fall; instead of that, life entered, as he said to Eve, and the first case of it was claimed by God. Yet the human race from Adam and Eve was as much opposed to God, as was the humanity of Prometheus. Though, in both Scripture and mythology, friendly and inimical relations, and even sexual, were kept up between the Gods and men. The loves of the Gods towards women are recognised in the Bible as well as in the Pagan mythology. The offspring, however, are supposed to be contrary to God, or are subject to the envy of heaven, and monsters in the Bible are called heroes among the profane and civilised. Some have supposed that the Elohim were the Gods of the Pagans, or the evil principles of matter. Both Dr. Cumming and Rev. Charles Kingsley pretend that these loves of the Gods of mythology were realities; but if their amours are to be taken literally, here are the Gods of the Bible equally bad. The sons of God saw that the daughters of men that they were fair. In what way, then, can the human race be divided from the divine? and are we not reading the same history as the Pagan mythology? Mythologically and philosophically, the Gentile and Jewish, and all religions, were the same. See Acts xvii., 18. The letter and the facts are only wrong.

A Cain is the forefather of the line which gives civilisation to the world; and in the great men it produces, is supposed not only to have inspiration from heaven, but to be joined materially and sexually connected with its inhabitants. These supposititious births were ascribed to those whom the world called great—the conquerors of it. The Jews, however, changed their ideas, and in time came to think such men only great if they appeared among themselves, or in their behalf said they were sent from heaven, and called them prophets, Messiahs, Redeemers, after God's own heart, as David, and from God, as Cyrus. They did not give them material and divine paternity. They thought themselves the chosen people, and all the children or the sons of God. They were averse to blend the man and God, as doing away with God. The idea of the Christian and Materialist meet—that man is God, and God is man in the divinity of Jesus. In the endeavour to make a God, and make God man, they have done no other than make man God or no God. Amongst the Gentiles there were many individuals, not only mythological, but in later times supposed to be born of the Gods; and, therefore, the Christian dogma of the incarnation is taken literally from them. The endeavour of the dogma to separate God and

man sexually, and their mystic language that the word was made flesh, would throw doubts upon any actual existence ever having been intended from the birth to the cross, as some of the early Christians—the Gnostics—pretended. However, popularly and literally, Jesus Christ was thought to be direct from God. As Eve had said, so the Virgin Mary is made to say, ‘I have gotten a man through or from the Lord.’ It may be asked, why should not have God created his own Son as he created the first man? Therefore, it may be said, the creation is more philosophical than the nativity. To ascribe the birth of a being to a First Cause, whether meant as a sign of ignorance or as nature, shows higher thought; as the other does the more popular opinion, that a human being was either generated from heaven, or begotten only through the woman by some divine means. As Adam produced Eve, so here it was reversed, and the woman Mary produced the man Jesus. But if the first creation in Genesis is philosophical, the second is a story, and if a story of Adam and Eve, so a story of Mary and Jesus. Why, it may be asked, was the suspicious medium of a woman required when a Joseph, as well as Adam, was in attendance to contradict the literal idea, that a man was got from the Lord? When Anne is said to have produced immaculately the Virgin to make her equal with the man, it may be asked, why not have created Christ as Eve was out of man, and of the rib of a man, as that would have been supernatural? It is said to be the madness of a noble lord that he will in this manner produce a child. But there were no women born of God—only men, and the completion of the idea was in the nineteenth century. Man at last wanted the frailest and weakest of humanity, whom he had originally depicted as the occasion of his fall, as his God. In the Pagan mythology, indeed, Minerva was born out of the head of Jupiter, which, it is easy to see, represented wisdom. But the Mary of the Christians was not wisdom; she represented suffering humanity even more effectually than the crucified man. Mary, who was a mother, and whose heart was pierced, was a sacrifice, and made atonement for man with God; a mother, she knew human wants better, and had more experience than man. She was the one on whom the curse of suffering had fallen in childbirth, and which was thought to be taken away by Christ. But to be a God the woman must be immaculate as well as the man, the Virgin Mary must be born of the Virgin Anne; though it is difficult to see how, from the preceding parentage, the progeny could ever be immaculate, unless resort was had to the origin of men and women from the earth, or to Adam from the earth, and Eve out of the man. But the religious idea of mythology and Christianity especially, never cared about contradictions. Everything is possible with God. The immaculate conception of the Virgin, proclaimed in the nineteenth century by the Pope, is better proof than a Strauss or a Jowett could give, that an idea can become an historical fact. We have here before our eyes the interpretation

of mythology by Muller, what Grote and Sir G. C. Lewis said took place in Greek and Roman history. According to the Christian dogma, God could make man, but he could not make himself, except through the instrumentality of man. Man only could make God. The alleged realisation of a God, the second revelation, the inverted of the first, is very inferior to it, when more was wanted in the last, and would have been evidence of the first instead of against it. The people have a higher idea of revelation in what they say will be, and what is past, which were much more direct manifestation to man, and, therefore, declare against later and actual revelations, or succeeding dispensations.

For instance, we mean to say that the origin of the world, and the end of it, in the Apocalypse, are much more wonderful than the narrations in the New Testament, which are only half miracles. The people do not want any cause at all, as the old woman answered when she was asked why she expected a prize in the lottery without having a ticket. Everything, she said, is possible with God. Here both parties might better rest; the religious in his God, who does everything without a cause, or end, and not in the order of nature; and the Materialist in his unknown cause. But the religious will have the two—the possible and the impossible—that the impossible is possible with God. The Materialist says the impossible and possible cannot be joined; that the impossible is not possible with God. The possible and impossible being only known by the nature of things.

The religious will say, We know nothing about the ways of God. We must take them as we find them—that is, as they are assumed, and given to us by religion. But the Materialists had made the same assertion before the incomprehensible dogmas were put in their place. They said they only knew what is, that nature is, they could not account for it, they did not know the origin and causes of all things. The religious said they did know the first and final causes, and all the intermediate steps in the scheme of God. They undertook to explain nature; and then said their explanation was incomprehensible; therefore, the Materialist and the religious meet—where the Materialist begins the religious end. The religious take the side of the Materialist; and are inconsistent with themselves—a charge which they often try to make against the Materialist. They both try to establish themselves upon a principle, which, if good in the end, was better in the beginning; and would have saved all trouble. The principle—good—for the Materialist is destructive of the religious. All religions have been founded upon the assumption, that they could explain what was incomprehensible. When the Materialist says nature is incomprehensible, or only comprehensible on natural principles, the religious say it is not; taunt the Materialists with not being able to account for it, with their natural principles being good for nothing, their wisdom as folly, and their facts as falsehoods. If the Materialists say they know what is, the religious

say they believe quite the contrary—what is not. They say they have inspiration and revelation to contradict all the senses. If the religious have said their explanation was incomprehensible, much more must the thing attempted to be explained be incomprehensible. They will even admit that nature is incomprehensible; at the same time adhering to their belief as an explanation of it, though allowed by them to be equally incomprehensible. The incomprehensible and probable of this world seem much better than the incomprehensible and improbable of another world; and imaginary existences. The supernatural much worse than the natural incomprehensible. The imagination of men in religion has been compared to the union of a horse and man in a centaur. All these notions necessarily embracing two things on earth which have no relation. But each is better—the horse and the man—than the centaur: so it is with everything of this world in comparison with the things of another. The whole idea of God, as it has been often said, is taken from man: two incompatible associations have been joined together. The whole scheme of religion, or salvation, as it has been called, has been taken from the history of man. God is painted in the Old and New Testaments, and by Christ himself, as a king who is offended with his subjects, as a father with his children, or a landholder with the tenants of his estate. Thence evil and death are thought to come into the world as a punishment; his justice cannot be satisfied without it. They are represented to reject his overtures, kill those who are sent, kill his son, kill him if possible, and which is made possible. He revenges it, which is the idea in the Old Testament, and equally in the New; and is conveyed in the plain words of Jesus Christ, and in the epistles. An idea quite opposite to the atonement. There is no idea of atonement till after Christ; and only the present idea long after Christ, when the idea had to correspond with fact, that he did not come to revenge, or to judgment; and, therefore, his death was atonement for sin: the sin of Adam, or the sin of man against man, of Cain against Abel, of the powers against the people, of the Jews and Romans against Christ, to be operative in another world. The religious idea had to answer objections to a God, angry, revengeful, and not just and merciful towards men, not infinite in his attributes, and a God dying, or his Son. There is the impossibility of man satisfying him, either in the way of removing their punishments, or appeasing him by sacrifices, or anything they can do—religious or moral. They fancy God could only become, what they imagine they must have been once, only doing good, and, therefore, innocent; and the only sacrifice worthy of him is himself; for, though Abel's sacrifice is said to have found respect in his eyes, yet the religious world have gone the round of sacrifices, and yet not found the desired respect from him. In a metaphysical and moral sense, therefore, the good can only balance the evil. If he be infinite, himself must be himself. He must be heaven and earth,

God and man, good and evil. But they could have arrived at this, if they had begun with the Materialist, and seen it in nature.

The Dr. Thompson, who obtained the last Burnett prize, says Materialism is superficial. It may be first replied that superficial is here used in opposition to supernaturalism; and that superficial is, therefore, more reasonable and natural. The next reply is, that the supernatural which is put in opposition to the superficial, is imagination opposed to reason. There is much greater amount of intellect displayed in reducing the imagination to reason, than ever was displayed in the imagination of the supernatural. There was more intellect in David Hume than in Dr. Thompson. David Hume said the use of metaphysics was to subject the metaphysics of supernaturalism to reason. David Hume, according to Dr. Thompson, was a superficial Materialist, because, by metaphysics, he brought Dr. Thompson's dogmas of the imagination down to Materialism. Besides, Dr. Thompson, and other religionists, only copy their dogmas the one from the other. They cannot even claim the invention of that which sets them above Materialism they called superficial. These dogmas have been taught the Materialist, and he has the credit of having dissipated them by his reason, while Dr. Thompson retains his prejudices, and defends them by endeavouring to confound human reason.

As a person, the idea of Deity is founded, not on the virtues, but the vices and passions of mankind. All that can be said of him is, he is the hero of his own crimes, makes atonement himself for his own offences, which we should call suicide. The Christian scheme, as well as all the religions which used human sacrifices, considered God, not as a good, but a vindictive and passionate, man. The only way of making a God out of a person was, to give him, if good, also evil in excess. The infinity of a person could only be by swelling in proportion the human attributes. Religions, therefore, have assigned to God revenge in excess. Not only was the punishment to be infinite in comparison with the offence given—death to all mankind for a mistake of our parents—but, as in the case of the highest degree of revenge in man, the innocent must be sacrificed as well as the guilty. The most innocent and pure—the lamb, the animal, and the babe, the human sacrifice, the first-born, the only child, even himself, could only satisfy a God. This may be called divine justice, but in its principle it is human revenge. It is not the prevention, but punishment: it is not an equality with the offence, but exceeding all proportion. The dogma has no element of human justice, except the wild justice of revenge—blind passion. But the occasion did not call for revenge; and the revenge so far exceeded any human revenge, that it was a wanton exercise of cruelty and power. The name of justice given to God, can only be said to exist in nature, where good and evil are made one, and atone for each other, and the one may be said to equal the other. As they have

given it the name of justice, so they have given it the name of love. Justice and love must be commensurate with the injustice and hatred; and, therefore, could only be satisfied on itself. So in the scheme of salvation: they are alternately rendering to each good and evil until they become one. Evil is swallowed up in good, death in victory, represented in God crucified for the sins of man, or the evils of the earth, and resurrection from death, or creation out of destruction. Dogmas are added to dogmas, partake of themselves, and lose the original ideas on which they are founded, and become more and more difficult to be explained naturally.

God was one idea before the event—a hope of the future—Christ is another idea of the event—a suffering Messiah, and the hope again referred to the future. The good suffer, the Messiahs suffer, therefore, with the will of God, and it must be for some purpose. What man thinks of himself he transfers to God, who is accordingly crucified. The origin of the atonement, therefore, is taken from our ideas of justice. Our usual correct and most natural ideas of justice are, that the punishment should be in proportion to the offence committed against society. But in the idea of God, the offence is made relative to the person offended, and there is no proportion to the punishment. Death also is the greatest of all punishments; and, therefore, it is argued the offence must have been in proportion.

The idea of justice in society is, that every man paying the penalty of his offence, makes himself at one with society, or society at one with him. Or society is at one with itself when it feels that it is made secure by punishing the offences against it. The atonement, therefore, is a perfectly human idea. But in society, there is often an abuse of justice. Punishments are disproportioned in magnitude to the offence, as happened in England during the last century. To make everyone at one with it, society often plays the Draco and the Moloch. If, in less than a century, ideas change to the opposite extreme, and from death being the punishment for stealing to the amount of five shillings, or taking a sheep, to all deaths being done away with, except for murder, and that being laboured to be taken away by the same extreme idea, we can easily account for the reaction of ideas in the course of many centuries. An eye for an eye was as near the correct medium as language could express the principle of justice, by which to shape our practice. But Christianity is made to say that good should be returned for evil. Thereby God is made still more irreconcilable with himself and the human idea. For if the punishments of the human race, and the requirements to make it at one with the Divinity, went beyond justice, and were out of all proportion to the offence, when they went far beyond the ideas of justice given by God to the Jews, and condemned by Christ, so much more was the whole theory of atonement, or the justice of God, condemned by Christ. The death of mankind, his own sufferings and death were condemned by Christ, if they were an atonement, and the

justice of God required it. If God were Christ, and Christ God, they were in contradiction with each other; and Christ was in contradiction with himself, according to the Christian dogmas of the atonement. It will be said, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,' that God may, and we may not, exercise it. We argue, that is the idea mankind have of God; that his justice is revenge, and our vices become his virtues. The dogma of Christianity in the atonement, is completely opposed to the morality of Christianity, though Christ said God was alike to the good and the bad. The morality was for the occasion, say the Christians, because they have never practised it, except when, as in the origin of Christianity, they were obliged.

The universal ideas so much paraded by the defenders of the dogmas of Christianity, are, therefore, human ideas; and not fixed, but fluctuating, human ideas, which have been conceived from time to time of the Divinity. It is a question whether we ought to take from our human ideas those partial and condemned by us, our ideas of Divinity. The universality of the atonement, and its divinity and truth, is preached by Dr. Thompson, in his 'Bampton Lectures on the Atonement,' because of the distorted views of justice entertained by man in his relations to God. Men have had animal and human sacrifices, says Dr. Thompson and others, showing the universality of the idea; and that it could be only coming from God as the truth of the idea; that he, or Christ, was to be the sacrifice and atonement to him. Dr. Thompson forgets that human sacrifices were forbidden. Out of the very act of being forbidden by God to Abraham, they would take evidence of the atonement in the sacrifice of Christ, so often do they argue an affirmative from a negative of their dogma. Human sacrifices are an exception, and not universal; and when they do occur, arise from immoral views of Divinity, which are condemned as immoral by the Rev. Dr. Thompson and others, in man; and still more by the morality of his own religion. Even if universal, and vices are as well as virtues, evil as well as good, though not preponderating over them, the ideas of atonement are taken from our vices. The ideas of atonement, we say, should not be taken from our vices. The Rev. Mr. Jowett, of the same University, professor of Greek, where the other has been Bampton Lecturer, and is now the head of Queen's, says that the idea of atonement was not held by Paul as it is by us; and is directly contrary to all ideas of morality. But, if immoral in itself, it cannot be defended by the immoral ideas of mankind, which the head of Queen's has used to support the doctrine. The Rev. Mr. Jowett says the atonement is incompatible with the ideas of justice; therefore, it is compatible with the ideas of revenge, because the idea of atonement is certainly founded on the ideas of justice; and Mr. Jowett says it is a mistaken idea of justice. The right, or the wrong, of justice, or injustice, can only be known by human ideas of morality, to which must ever be the ultimate appeal.

The Christian dogma gives the idea in God of a man vacillating and repentant, making atonement by his end for his career, either in his sufferings and death, or else dying in the attempt to make reparation to society by doing it good. As we have said, it is nature ever doing good and evil; doing good, and appearing to repent of it; doing evil, and appearing to repent of it. Nature is impersonated by man, and becomes the history of man. The imagination of man puts his God in every conceivable situation; sometimes as Maker, sometimes as made, sometimes a God in heaven, sometimes the lowest of the low, or suffering humanity on earth. We must also say that the attempt of incarnation, separate from cause, instead of proving a God, would destroy the link, and make no God.

Transubstantiation is to prove a God in us by the commonest means—eating and drinking. It will never do to go the other way, and say he was not in us, and through us, by the propagation of the species. The death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, only tells a natural story. We must die to be God, or the whole. All dogma is symbolic of nature. The religious worship the symbol, as the fetish worshipper is said to worship the stone instead of what it represents.

What appears to us good and evil, may be solved by unity, as we say might is right: the benevolence of God, or nature, is lost in his omnipotence.

The dogmas of Christianity are not to be found in the Bible—the ideas are. The Bible is to explain nature and man, the objective and subjective, and the objective by the subjective. The dogmas established have recourse to the Bible, to nature, human ideas, and acts, to support their dogmas, though the dogmas, literally believed, are the furthest removed from their prototypes; and, explained naturally, cease to be dogmas of religion.

Nature not only forgives us our trespasses, as we ought to forgive those who trespass against us, but may be said to suffer from us; and return good for evil. Whatever we do in the way of destruction, though nature really does it, she may be said, with much more reason, to repair and create afresh. She is merciful, long suffering, patient of injuries, and forgives evil done to her. Yet, according to the literal phase of Christianity, God would not forgive man for eating the forbidden fruit, but he would for putting him to death.

God is made responsible for Cain when he is said to have sent him into the world. Here we have a choice between predestination, or the nature of things. Has not God a right to do what he will with his own, make one a vessel of wrath, and one of good? But if sent into the world, under those conditions, Cain had no free-will, and God was responsible for the consequences.

Cain did not turn out a very good character, did no honour to God; and the 'righteous Abel' is not said to have been gotten from the Lord, which

is a proof that a God had nothing to do with either. If he had, from the consequences involved in Cain and Abel, there would have been a greater failure of design in the commencement of our second nature, than there was said to have been before it, or in the creation; or the dreadful dilemma would be that God made everything bad, or had no care for the good. *God was much worse as a Providence than he was as a First Cause.*

If God had design or predestination, the conclusion cannot be escaped, that the fall of man was intended by him. The design argument for the being of a God cannot stand together with the fall. The arguer of design would show God's benevolence, the purpose or end in his works; but, according to the fall, he did not make man for good, but for evil. Revelation contradicts natural religion. The same may be said of nature as to the argument of design, for it equally proves that a thing is made for what we should call a bad purpose as a good. According to the design argument, and religion, Cain was made to fall as well as his parents. God was the author or nature of good and evil. If God was not mind before matter, or matter before mind, he was both at the same time; he is Pantheised or Atheised, and there is no conceivable individuality or impersonation left. If God was good and evil at the same time, he was equally Pantheised or Atheised. We cannot conceive good and evil separate any more than mind or matter. God cannot be a mere agent of either, as he is represented in the Bible, and not even that, as things are done in spite of him, or without him. As an agent he is lost—a mere copy taken by man from nature, represented in his person, and relatively to him.

The question of precedence, or union in mind and matter, good and evil, may be said to be at the foundation of all religious ideas, and of all their differences.

The religious would say it is a question between religion and no religion; but the man who thinks matter precedes mind, matter the cause and mind the effect, matter the cause and God the effect, and matter the cause and good and evil the effects, and that they are all infinitely combined, has a dogma as well as he who thinks mind precedes matter. The Materialist may, therefore, be said to have a religion and a belief, and he would think a more substantial one than his opponents.

The religious will speak with pity and contempt of poor human reason, as they do of the ways of God, that they are past finding out. These ways are their ways—the ways of religion. If reason, therefore, made a God, or we should say imagination, reason can equally unmake one. All these religions, or attempts to account for God, may be said to be denials of God. Man has the idea of God in his infancy taken from himself; but he does not see how God could have acted, when he begins to reflect; he, therefore, would deny God. But, as in the law, fictions are imagined, which man calls revelations or inspirations to reconcile his imagination with his

reason, which must be believed, however contradictions may be involved. The ascendancy of reason, or the confession of ignorance, comes last; but may be said to be equally universal, and to be in operation from beginning to end, and would probably be in the ascendant, if force was not used to have supernaturalism believed—evil in support of evil.

The same terms are applied to Cain which are used in the case of other divinely-begotten persons, not excepting Jesus Christ. This shows how general the idea and the words were, as they occur on the birth of Cain. Out of the idea and the words, how easily a story might be formed. All the Jews were the sons of God. Hence we have the formation of the present Christian idea. Jesus only said generally and Pantheistically, or materially or Jewishly, that he was the Son of God and Son of Man; he never mentioned the nativity, which was afterwards ascribed to him. He rejected it; for he said all mankind were his brothers; therefore, they were equally the sons of God and of man.

As long as there is a God, there cannot be free-will under any conceivable circumstance. There being no God, man has the will of his own nature; he is confined to the circle of his own existence, and there is no other existence interfering with it. Man, therefore, is a cause in nature, physically and morally; he has apparent agency and free-will, but the cause before him and above him, he gives to nature or to God, which may be the philosophy and religion of the first verse of the fourth chapter of Genesis. Anything to be inferred as to our origin, beyond the broad facts in the discoveries of philosophy or dogmas of religion, is probably equally impossible—is supernatural and superhuman—a knowledge above us. The history of man is begun; he is divided into professions, antagonistic, and not mutually helping each other. On reflection, he must have thought man was originally instituted for that purpose, and that was his good, as all the parts of the creation were mutually to assist each other. Wherefore, it was also said, the rest of the animals were put in subjection to him, and were made to be helpers to him; and, lastly, woman of his own kind to serve the same purpose.

There are many ideas in making Cain a tiller of the ground, and Abel a keeper of sheep. In the first place, it may be supposed that tilling the ground was the earlier profession than the keeping sheep. As every other hypothesis of the beginning, it may be open to doubt which was the first. But it appears probable that man, as in the description of him in the first and second creation, should apply primarily to the fruits to satisfy his hunger. Thence everything became depicted, men's desires and their satisfaction—good and evil—under the figure of fruits. Men would not have eat fruit unless they were acquainted with evil (hunger), which impelled them to the good. To say that food was not a necessity, and, therefore, was not proceeding from evil, and to remedy evil, is to say that man would

not eat at all, which he would not do, if it did not give him pleasure, if he did not require it, and it did not relieve him from pain.

Cain was, therefore, heir to his father Adam, to the first man in original virtue rather than original sin. Abel inherited the sin, because he put the lambs to death, found a pleasure in it, and thought it gave pleasure to God or evil.

Man is made to till the ground in Paradise—the consequence of a knowledge of good and evil, and the effect of it. He would turn his attention to the ways and means of propagating those productions of the soil which gave him so much pleasure, and did not altogether, and for ever, proceed out of the earth spontaneously, else he would not have been under the command or necessity to dress and keep the garden. The same injunction would apply to killing weeds. Dress and keep the garden was equivalent to subdue the earth in the first creation. The animals were next given to him as helps and companions, reversed in the second creation. Both the animals and the fowl were said to be out of the ground, the fowl before having been made out of the water. We cannot well see how they could have been a help to man, unless he had used the feathers of the fowls, and the hides of the animals to clothe him, or their flesh to eat. As companions he might treat them, and Adam must have been more to them than they were to him, if they did not help him by working for him. Otherwise, they could only have been there to consume the fruits of the earth. But it must have been summer, when all might live. Winter was coming, and a knowledge of good of evil, when it would be necessary to provide clothing against the cold, and other food, than on the trees or in the earth. The death of animals would be life to man. Labour was the blessing in the first creation and in Paradise; idleness the blessing at the fall, as labour was the curse. The fruits were no longer acceptable to God out of his garden, but dead animals. But it is not God that changes, but nature and man. Man next, the second man, or the younger brother, all types of man in the aggregate would turn his attention to the animals which clothed him, and which he very soon found would give him food.

The spectacle to man in the winter, when there was a want of food, would probably be of animals eating each other, and perhaps man himself. The lesson would not be lost upon man. Either man must have been in numbers, or animals did not eat flesh in the beginning, as supposed in the Bible, to account for the non-absorption of the human race in the stomachs of the animals. For which purpose, to save the human race from being devoured, other legends than the Scripture story have been invented in the East. In order, therefore, to account for the preservation of man, God was introduced to do what man did himself, and killing was thought agreeable to God, as in Abel, in the second stage of men's existence. Cain was the man in summer; Abel was the man in winter, who had meat to

eat, and lamb's wool for clothing. One was a sacrifice to the good, and the other to the evil, but they were so united, that good came out of the evil. Tilling the soil would be thought more than ever hard work in winter, and under a curse, when there was nothing produced. Killing animals, on the contrary, would be thought a blessing. When it was discovered animals—such as sheep, goats, and cows—could be rendered inoffensive and submissive to the human race—would afford him the best of clothing and food without so much toil as tilling the soil, man would think the shepherd's life one more of ease, and a nobler profession. Much more being as the Gods. Many of the Pagan Gods were once shepherds. The Jews dated their origin from shepherd kings; therefore they esteemed the shepherd more than the tiller of the soil; or esteeming the shepherd more, they referred their origin to him. Their forefathers, they said, were patriarchal herdsmen, more favoured by God than the stationary tillers of the soil, or the inhabitants of the city. Though they afterwards affirmed a right to the soil and the cities from having wandered over it and amongst them, and having been promised by God, and having made an agreement with God at the time, that the land should be theirs in the future. The Jews were shepherds in Egypt. There was a tradition there were shepherd kings, who conquered Egypt; by some supposed to have been the Israelites. They might have been the Arabs, to whom the Jews belonged. The Arabs have ever held the wandering life with herds and flocks—the most noble and worthy of man, the tiller of the soil, a slave—and ever esteemed him and the citizen to be objects of pillage.

However many phases the Jews may have taken in their history, we know their earliest, according to their own account, as a nomade tribe, and we know them now as wanderers about the world living upon the labour of others. Cain was also the eldest brother, and the name meant possession. Canaan also meant the same thing, a nation of traders and dealers, cultivators of the soil, and inhabitants of the city. Cain, therefore, gave the idea of the earliest possessors of Palestine, where a stationary people had cultivated lands and great cities, and the younger, the landless, were the more favoured, and dispossessed them. Abel was the name of *sorrow*, and represented another idea of the Jews, that they were a persecuted people, and they attached a crime to the Canaanite, Egyptian, and Gentile, as a sort of justification of their conduct to them. In conformity with this side of the Messianic idea, Jesus Christ dates himself from the 'righteous Abel.' Good was always to come out of evil.

Vico, in his 'Philosophy of History,' and Schiller, both refer the story of Cain and Abel to the antagonism between the nomade and the stationary man. Their occupations would be necessarily conflicting. The animals which a man keeps, and the produce of the earth grown by another, come into conflict, the one destroys the labour of the other, whether the animals

are in a savage or domestic state let loose, which occasions a quarrel between men, as prefigured by the brothers. Those who told the story would say God had respect to them.

What is, therefore, ascribed to God, may be assigned to man's philosophical, political, religious, and moral ideas. Nothing can be plainer than the Bible is man's history, ascribed to a God, and the natural events are made to be brought about in a supernatural manner. Man says we are made in the image of God, and everything which happens to man is reflected in God. What was an idea is made into a fact, and in course of time must be received as having actually happened; what was human is called divine, and said to have been reported from heaven itself. Men say they would have known nothing, if they had not been inspired with it, or it had been revealed to them. They are only telling to themselves their own ideas. The idea, as the religious say, makes the certainty or the truth of it. All religion has no other foundation. Religion has no facts, but only the idea. The idea does imagine its own facts. Their facts can never get beyond ideas; they must be subjects of faith and consciousness; they can never be made into objective facts.

Recourse is had to revelation, inspiration, universal ideas, faith, consciousness, miracles, types, prophecies and martyrdoms, which are not evidences, and in their application are opposed, and destructive of each other, and show there is nothing corresponding to the idea. The falsehood, rather than the truth of the idea being shown, about which everybody disagrees, however universally it may be entertained. The *Quarterly Review* says all the infidels are agreed, even if they take different titles and theories; and even those who are professionally religious and in the church, in spite of themselves, agree with the Materialists. What a universal idea must Materialism then be, to which all must come, learned or unlearned.

It is scarcely worth reasoning with those who build the doctrine of the atonement on the preference given by God to the animal sacrifice of Abel over the fruits of Cain. As usual, they find their dogma in the letter, and involve themselves in the moral difficulties of it; that their God had more regard to bloody sacrifices, death to life, the firstlings of the flock to fruits, the emblems of innocence and purity, the opposites to crime. In the animal God is made to prefer as a sacrifice the innocence of infancy, which in humanity we are told forms the kingdom of heaven. If God showed such a taste in the beginning, he logically preferred human sacrifices, and was accessory to the murder of Cain. God having respect to the offering of Abel, and not to that of Cain, is a difficulty we know that commentators have not found it easy to reconcile with God; and, therefore, they have made the best of it, and cheerfully accepted it, as the foundation of their religion, the atonement. Not satisfied with the animal sacrifice, they have made the righteous Abel a human sacrifice, still more acceptable to God.

Abel, according to Christ, was his type. The murder, therefore, of Abel by Cain, according to the dogma of Christianity, was the most acceptable sacrifice to God, and made Cain, or man, at one with God. Christianity seeks the origin of its dogmas in human sacrifice and Moloch worship.

The Bible and God is made to defend all atrocities, instead of pointing them out as the follies of religion. The respect said to be shown to the sacrifice of Abel, and not to that of Cain, is the idea of man, not of God; the history of the progress of man from vegetable to animal diet. Man preferred the offering or food of the second to that of the eldest, meat and fat to the fruit and roots of the ground. The priests who have put themselves in the place of Gods, but who here speak the general consensus of mankind, as the interpreters of Gods, would, of course, say that meat and fat were a much more acceptable offering to them, or the Gods, than roots, vegetables, or fruits. They would, of course, say what they believed, and were conscious of themselves, that 'the Lord smelled a sweet savour' in roast meat rather than in the perfume of flowers. This is not the only time they take care to tell the story. After the fall, the reconciliation of God to man by means of roast meat seems thrust in, and does not agree with the rest of the story. After the deluge, the event is told by itself; and the first thing Noah does after coming out of the ark, is to take 'of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.' God then definitely settled the creation, gave man permission to eat animal food. At the same time, as if he acquiesced in their longing for animal food, God is made to forbid human sacrifice, as if he looked to the sin of Cain. Noah also invented wine, which came in well after animal sacrifice, and formed part of it, as it did of the diet of man. Wine was required to wash down animal food.

It is said, not by God himself, but by the relator, that the Lord had respect to Abel's offering, and not to Cain's. When God speaks, he says nothing of the kind, but the contrary; he has no regard to faith but to good works. Abel's idea that his offering was accepted, was a delusion of hope or faith. Cain was not of such a sanguine temperament, and thought God or nature was not as he said he was, the same to all. Cain was more of a melancholy disposition, and, therefore, he had recourse to human sacrifices in spite of his reason. There were many Cains: Cain before the offering, and after the offering, when the innocent, through religion, took the place of the guilty, and offered a human sacrifice. And there was Cain who, after the murder, built cities. Cain was no more an individual than Adam was; they were in their histories the several phases of humanity. They were myths, representatives of the idea.

Contradictions are never considered in mythologies, and by the religious

they are denied to be, or are found quite reconcileable with their idea of divinity and immutability. Perpetual natural change there is, but not incessant revolution, which the religious would have in their God and nature. The natural change of the same things, and the elements returning in the same forms, always occur, but not the world and man entirely altering, or man individually dissolving and uniting the same. God blessed the herbs and the animals, and gave the herbs for food to animals. It is quite at variance, therefore, with the same God, to make him have respect for the offering of Abel, and not of Cain. God had to follow nature, good and evil. God was the march of events. God was time; was man.

The desire to be as the Gods was to be above the beast. Thence flowed the enmity between man and beast. God, in the first and second creation, put the man and the animal on an equality. They were both said to be made out of the same earth. The fall of man was occasioned by his endeavour to separate himself from the animal. He would endeavour, perhaps, to throw the blame on the animal, and justify his having to share the fall of man by representing the serpent as the seducer of Eve, as she said he was. Paul says the same. But if the animals had no share in it, it was unfair that their condition should be changed for the fault of man; and it would be very unfair if they were in the same state as man before the fall, and fell through him, that they should not be reinstated as well as man by the atonement. They are as much entitled by precedent and legal title to a future state and immortality of the soul, as human beings are.

The desire to be as the Gods prompts man not only to be above the beast, but every one to be above the other, and make the differences between classes.

Men above think they are as Gods in comparison with those below them; and men above are regarded by those below them as the Gods. Thence it is both by themselves and others, Gods are looked upon as kings, and kings are thought to be as the Gods, dispensers of good and evil. The same idea that God made man in his image, makes man make kings in the image of God. Man makes God from himself; he gives his own varieties to God. There would be no God, if man was not. Even Christ represented God as a king, and the world his subjects; and Paul is made to say that God and the king are much the same thing. There was all the difference in the world between men in Dives and Lazarus. Yet Dives does not appear to have been a bad man, nor Lazarus a good man. Jesus, therefore, must have meant that there was a sin in such extremes; that there should be more equality between men, and it was a sin in itself to be as the Gods in comparison with other men. Jesus Christ said it should be reversed in another world. Mankind, however, carry out the distinctions after death. The king is embalmed and placed in a mausoleum. Is their clay to mix with common clay? Are they no better than the beast? As

it strikes some men comparing themselves with the animal, so it strikes the superior in comparison with the inferior mortal. Every effort is made to give the rich and the great man an immortality in his remains, which they expect ought to take place in another life, where they ought to be as the Gods, and live for ever.

The higher kind of life is more likely to give such a faith than the lower, and gives an *à priori* assurance that man is not dust; he is not as others are. These artificial distinctions will be as persuasive as natural ones, particularly between men. If the animal suffers, is it not said, it is because he has no soul? and it is probably argued that he has no soul because he suffers. Else what distinction can there be between putting a man and an animal to death. It is for our good, it may be said; and that applies to one man putting another to death—capital punishments.

We resemble the animal in more respects than we differ, as far as nature is concerned, which answers the argument for another life, based on our fancied superiority. As we resemble more than we differ, we go to the same end. A greater difference cannot be imagined hereafter from a less here, but an equality in death with the animal, which is the fact.

Original virtue could not be original sin. He who made life a virtue, could not give death as a punishment for life. Man must have had to choose between life and death. The Jews looked upon long life, and a multitude of children, as the greatest blessing from God, and it was made the reward of virtue. Long life is the only reward in the Ten Commandments. The Roman Catholics look upon life as original sin, as they lay such stress upon the immaculate conception, and without it believe there was sin; and no one, except through immaculate conception, could have gone to heaven in the body, the assumption of the Virgin. So they argue from one fiction to another, as all the religious do, against facts and nature.

The fall must be the desire to be as the Gods, the punishment having to work, and if we do not, death is the consequence. We see such a result in nations and individuals. Morally, what God told them was true—if they became as the Gods, they would die. What the Devil told them was equally false; they did not become as the Gods, and they did die. From the day they tasted of the tree they began to die. It was the ordinary life and death which then came into the world, acted upon by circumstances. The tree was different from the tree of life, which was entire freedom from natural death, the everlasting life after death of the imagination. The tree of life resulted from the pride of eating the fruit of the first tree, and was not, therefore, forbidden in the beginning, but only as coming after, or the consequence of the first fall. One tree followed another, the two states of religion in time and pretensions.

Not only the origin of food of man, but that of sacrifice and of its use as supplying the necessities of man, is probably indicated in the story of

the offerings of Cain and Abel. Bread, wine, oil, the fruits, all the productions of the earth, were received as sacrifices, as well as the animals that inhabited it. The former, however, were considered as inferior offerings to the latter. One was the sign of poverty and the other of riches; one therefore might show a niggardly, and the other a generous disposition. But who was God that preferred gifts of meat, the firstlings, and the fat, all the plenty, to the indigenous productions of the earth? It was man who, as usual, made God after his own image, in making himself after God's image; man who would that should be given to God, which was considered best by those who possessed it, and God should not be put off as the poor of the earth with the worst. We think the origin of sacrifices to God was not merely to feed priests, but was a feast in which the rich were made to give of their abundance and their wealth, which was of the earth, to feed those who were not in the same circumstances. Hence the sacrifices to Jupiter were called the tables of the hospitable Jove. In antiquity, sacred and profane, we find the celebration of sacrifices, a time of feasting, and every enjoyment. What was given to God symbolically, was in reality given to man. God becomes man, and man becomes God. We in God, and God in us, must always result from God being said to have made us in his image. This was the utilitarian truth of the idea in sacrifices. There was also another truth to the idea of God being in us and we in God. We are a part of nature, therefore we are in nature, and nature in us as a whole. The finite in the infinite, and the infinite in the finite. This may be said to be a metaphysical, but it is also a physical idea. We are made of the same matter as nature; what we eat returns to the same earth, and again gives forth food to be eaten, which becomes a part of us and it, and we return again to the earth. We eat ourselves, and nature eats us; we eat our father, and our father eats us; we eat our God, and our God eats us; there is a perfect transubstantiation in the whole, in time and matter. Miss Goldsmith, in her translation of 'Philipson's Development of the Religious Idea,' says that the sacrifices of the Jews stood in the place of our poor laws in giving food to the poor. We learn in the origin of religion that thanksgiving came first, and that thanksgiving was not to God, but to man. The Jews primarily allowed that the sacrifice was made everywhere; the patriarchs wandered from place to place, and as occasion called for it, made merry with themselves and their family over their abundance, which Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, said was the true religion. Afterwards, when men lived as nations, they had sacrifices and feasts, which administered to the wants of the poor, and preserved a social equality among all ranks. But when man would be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil, and live for ever, they more and more separated from the good on earth, and thought the good in heaven, was in being dis severed from all its relations to the earth. First, the rich not

only gave the sacrifices, but they were the priests, the butchers, and cooks, who thought it an honour to be servant to the rest, as Christ taught his disciples. The frequent exhortation of Christ to be as servants, his own example of it, washing the disciple's feet, his parables, where those are to be entertained and served who can make no return, must have pointed at the priests, who did all they did for a reward. Among the Jews, priests got established as a paid and separate class, and they did not give, but appropriated a principal share of the sacrifices to themselves. Not only did the Jews make a class monopoly of the sacrifices, but as they became a nation, and had a capital, they established a local monopoly, and said all the sacrifices were to be made through them in one city or on one altar. All the world was to contribute to the one nation of the Jews, and not only to one nation, but to one city. Very curious ideas must they have had of the size of the world, which could allow its inhabitants to attend the feasts of the Jews. Such an idea as it was, was impossible, and brought with it its own ruin. The Jews did not like the trouble of going up to Jerusalem, and devoting their time, their sacrifices, and their means, to one class of people and to one place. The idea became general, that salvation and the benefits of religion were to all mankind, not only to the Jews of Jerusalem, but out of Jerusalem, and to all the world. Sacrifices were, therefore, held in disrepute by the prophets; and, lastly, by Christ, the redemption and reformation idea. Jerusalem, the altar, and the tabernacle, were everywhere, and sacrifices meant something more than the mere observance. They would return to the primitive idea of them, and make them on a more extended scale from the same intentions. Man was God, and every man should sacrifice to his fellow-man. Therefore, perhaps, Christ is represented as driving the dealers in sacrifices and the money changers out of the temple, and he designated the priests as thieves. Priests always become the great robbers of mankind when they make of religion a profession. They should be the voluntary and unpaid means of distributing the good of one man to another. Every man should be a priest, one to another. They make an advantage to themselves. They cannot be otherwise than thieves. They take what is not theirs, and apply it to themselves. The Jewish was a scheme of enriching themselves at the expense of all mankind. They would be priests to all the world; therefore, their temple was destroyed, which had become, not the house of God, but a den of thieves. All the nations of the world were blessed in their dispersion, more than they were in having to come up to Jerusalem to worship God. God and Christ were wherever man was. The idea was from Gallilee, in opposition to Bethlehem, which was the Davidical idea, and confined the salvation of mankind to Jerusalem and the Jews. Already had Samaria revolted from the Davidical Messianic idea. Christ, the idea, esteemed the Samaritans as much as the priests and the Levites. But Christ, the idea, left a sacrifice, which was to be observed. Mankind were

to meet together, and eat meat and bread and drink wine, without distinction of time and place, nation and rank. He commanded that they should always do it in remembrance of him. They were to eat and drink whatever they had in common, which was generally represented by bread and wine. God was made common to all under a symbol—daily bread—and a fact—eating it, of daily and universal practice. In the food taken by man, more than in anything else, the whole becomes the part. Food is the most objective state in which nature is represented to our senses. We eat God or nature, and we live.

Hence were instituted the agape, or love feasts of the Christians, wherever they were. Paul makes mention of them, and never does of the supper of the Lord, except as the origin of the feast. In these love feasts, the principle of sacrifice was restored to its origin, and being fully and primitively restored was abused, as probably all sacrifices were in their character of feasts. Paul and Jude both complain of the excesses committed at the love feasts. Their complaint seemed confined to abuse in eating and drinking. Both sexes met, which might or might not be the only foundation for the charges made against them by the heathens, that they not only ate and drank, but otherwise indulged in their feasts, as in their own idolatrous celebrations. Idolatry seemed to consist in bringing the idea of the Divinity or nature on a level with the senses of mankind. Eating and drinking was nature sacrificed to man, and concupiscence was also life. Agape, or love feasts, were also an equivocal title, and might become confounded in the conceptions of the Pagans, who did not understand Christian love. Paul, however, did not say the sacrifices or the feasts were not to be kept, but only said they were not to be abused. Moderation was prescribed, as it should be at every meal. All eating should not be forbidden, because liable to excess. With this view of aboriginal sacrifices, Patriarchal, Pagan, Jewish and Christian, we may turn to the present observance in their place. Now, the priests are given everything, and return nothing, but words and good offices in another world. They pray for you, but they do not work; they eat for you, but do not give you to eat; they will neither give material nor mental food; they are to possess the knowledge, and others are not to partake. They are negations as to others, not to themselves; and to others they recommend negations as to this world; it is all to be made up in another; it is to become affirmative as much as this is negative. The idea of salvation, or the Messianic idea; the idea of life and of health, and not death, was founded on food. Thence bread and wine symbolically represented not only God, but everlasting life. I am the life, eat me, said Christ, and you will have everlasting life. Salus, or salvation, is health or life. Instead of the Pagan and Jewish sacrifices, and the Christian love feasts, where there was abundance, there is the Roman Catholic sacrament, where eating is symbolised in a wafer, and the

drinking is entirely taken away from the people. The Roman Catholics allow wine was primitively given in such quantities, and so unrestricted, that the communicants got drunk. After such an admission, it may be asked, how they can have the assurance to say that food was only taken for the purpose of being metamorphosed into the body and blood of Christ, when a little was as good as much, or none at all, as in the case with the wine? As it was merely symbolic, the act of eating as well as drinking might be represented by the priest. He could do it for the people. They would bear witness to the truth, if they gave the people to eat and drink as originally established, as what they ate and drank would really become part of their body and blood, and be enough to give them life—would rise again from death to life in them. As it is, it is a mockery of sacrifice, of the original institution, of man, of matter, of God, and of nature. It is spiritualised to the extent that there is no matter, but only idea. If men cannot live by bread alone, they cannot live on ideas alone.

A thing being taken by another is the same as being taken by yourself—is symbolical of the whole of religion. Religion, originally from the people, is wholly transferred to the priest. Such is the result of transferring the idea of sacrifice to God, and another life, future and supernatural. We may say the last spiritual and religious evanescence of a material and moral idea. 'Thou shalt not live by bread alone,' might have been necessary to check the wholly material religion of the Jews, which by some is said to have wholly consisted for the present, and in the Messianic idea of the future, of eating and drinking. But Christ having tampered with the idea of eating and drinking, it has wholly gone out of his religion; and if sacrifice, eating, and drinking has gone out when it was commended, and an example was said to be given at the last moment; if something so real was judged to be ideal; if the Roman Catholics make Jesus Christ so entirely an idea, can Jesus Christ be said ever to have really existed?

The Protestants equally depart from the institution—are as bad as the Roman Catholics in giving a small bit of bread and a sip of wine to communicants, saying that it is symbolic, an 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace;' and they actually quote Christ for it, 'given unto us, and ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.' We should say this was a mockery of mind at any time of life, but this is actually taught to the children of England in the nineteenth century. Christ said, 'This do in remembrance of me,' at a supper of bread, meat, and wine, which was observed in the same fashion by his immediate followers. If it was symbolic of anything, it was symbolic of the natural fact, that in eating bread and wine, we eat our own body. The food went to form flesh and blood; and described the union of earth and man, of God and man. We may say there is as much a miracle in the assimilation of food to the body, as there

is in the origin of mankind, and the propagation of the species. Yet, Christians would do away with all these miracles in their Messianic state and heavenly kingdom. Protestants, at the same time, depart in essence from Christianity, and from 'the true faith of a Christian;' as charity, or love, is a moral quality, but its reality is shown by giving to eat and to drink, which we were to do in remembrance of Christ and his supper. Man becomes God, or nature, when he supplies the wants of others.

The Protestants give up the Roman Catholic idea of transubstantiation, while they acknowledge the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is necessary to salvation, eating and drinking to the life of man, and deny it to him, telling him to rest content with the idea instead of the fact. At the Reformation, the Protestants should have returned to the supper and the sacrifice; but they put the new wine into the old bottles, patched up the old clothes with new cloth, and made both worse. The Roman Catholics have pursued a more consistent course of religion. They have made everything supernatural from the incarnation of Christ in a Virgin, the metamorphose of a meal into a God, down to the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary by the mother Anne.

Bread represents all food—is the produce of the earth; the earth in it seems more conveyed to us than in animal food. So that, in the sacrament of the bread, Christians may be said to have returned to the sacrifice of Cain, and given up the righteous Abel and his offering. God, as the earth, in bread becomes us; we return it together with ourselves to earth in life and death. God passes into us; and we are perpetually reuniting ourselves with God.

Cain, in bread, represented God, or nature, the sacrifice to life, the sacrament of the last supper. Abel, in the slaughtered animal, represented the crucified Christ—God in death.

The Roman Catholic priest says, 'He is God, because he makes God; and the Protestant priest thinks he stands in Christ's place. But both are very far from God, as nature dispensing her bounties, or from doing as Christ did, in imitation of her. He made wine out of water: what was good in nature, he made very good through man: when they were well drunk, he made them better drunk: he made many loaves and fishes out of few, and distributed them to the multitude; and bequeathed an eternal banquet of man to man, as the only institution to be kept in memory of him. He had said to those who would be his followers, much more to those who would be his priests, they should give away their own goods, then they would become Gods and Christs, and give to God and Christ. He said, Give all that you have to the poor, then you will be perfect, then you will believe in me, then you will have faith. They would be priests of Christ, when they presided at a good table, as Jesus Christ did, and not, as now, dispensed the blessed elements, as they called them, but the 'beggary elements'

of what was the supper of the Lord. Are they in his image who sat at the marriage feast of Cana in Gallilee, as the union of all mankind, at the loaves and fishes, and the last supper?

The sacrament of the other kind—the sacrament of wine—does not date its origin from the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. If it were only bread that Christ gave, and not meat, the offering of Christ would have only resembled the offering of Cain. But Christ did not take animal sacrifices from Abel, but from Noah, who, at the same time, introduced meat and wine to God and man.

Wine takes its origin from the deluge. There may be some idea, or mystic meaning, in the wine succeeding the water—the sacrament of the supper, or the wine succeeding the sacrament of baptism, or water. As the water was the curse, so the water, changed into wine, may have been the blessing; and, after all the trouble and anxiety of Noah, or man, may have been sent to assuage his cares. But God did as Christ at the marriage feast: he changed the water into wine. God made another marriage with mankind. He gave meat and wine to mankind, as Christ did at the last supper. Loaves and fishes had come out of the few in the ark.

The sacrament of baptism, in sprinkling a few drops of water over a person, has as much symbolically disappeared as the sacrifice and supper in the wafer, or bread and wine. Baptism, therefore, must have departed considerably from its origin, if the few drops of water now used in baptism, may be dated from the deluge, which was the first purification of the world by water. Noah was the Elias and John the Baptist; the ark was the Messiah, and the rainbow, the promise of the reign of God upon earth—the hope of the future—the end of all religion and belief.

Baptism—the outward washing, and the inward element of the wine—attending the sacrifices of Noah, may be said to have gone together, and so meant the same. Baptism—which was to cleanse—was, at the same time, to kill, and sweep the world off in a deluge before it gave ‘rest’ in Noah. Such contrary signs have ever attended, and are to attend, the Messianic idea. Jesus Christ is made to say that he came to baptise in fire and blood. The idea may be taken from passing human sacrifices through the fire. Men have imagined, for themselves, three ordeals to pass through to the fulfilment of the Messianic idea—water, fire, blood. The brethren of the craft, and the spectators of Mozart’s magic flute, are let into the secret of this mystic idea, which, therefore, is by no means universal, as the followers of religion would endeavour to make out. The fact is, that the idea of religion, so far from being universal, has died out, and has to be revived by the students of the idea, or the myth.

The washing outwardly was emblem of purification inwardly; and, as washing outwardly is necessary to the health, or salvation, it has, therefore, been greatly insisted upon by all Eastern religions. Taking inwardly

liquids, as well as solids, have also been necessary to the life of man. Men may have drunk blood at first—as conceived to have life—and the best liquid as representative of life, or blood, or even Divinity, may have been wine.

The original institution of sacrifice seems to have been thanksgiving, and not prayer. Cain and Abel did not pray; and prayer is said to have come some time after them. Neither did Christ pray at the last supper; but he and his apostles seemed to have looked more to the refreshment of the body, by the bread and wine, than to any act of dogmatic religion. We, therefore, should be thankful for every meal we take, every meal having the nature of a sacrament; and being originally a sacrifice. We think there are very few who have not this natural religion in them without expressing it. The hungry are not insensible to the satisfaction of the appetite; and they are the true worshippers of God—not the Dives, who have lost the natural sense of good, and are only sensible to evil. In the spirit of the Christian communion, as the food spreads through the individual body, so we should wish that everybody should be partakers of the same food. As we have food from nature, we should return it to nature, or life. If sacrifice, or sacrament, be a duty to God, it is a duty to man. Our duty to God, we are told, is our duty to man. We are to be thankful to man who produces our food, as well as nature—man as well as God. Man is the secondary cause of food, while God, or nature, may be the first. Man produces, kills, cooks the food we eat, and waits upon us. Christ made himself an example of the duty of man to man, which was the duty of man to God. In our common grace, at table, we really do thank man as well as God, or nature, for the meal. We thank God through Jesus Christ, which is the same as to say we thank God through man, who has equally provided what we eat with nature, and Christ being the representative of humanity, as God is of nature. When man turns eating and drinking into a symbol, he only thinks of a God, saying, We have it from God, and through God; and totally loses the thought of man, for whom it was made. Jowett says that the Jewish idea was, that God really partook of the sacrifice, which Christ endeavoured to spiritualise, or materialise, into nature, and make of service to man. As Christ said the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so sacrifice to God was made for man, not man to make a sacrifice for God. God was made for man, not man for God. The whole of which is, that nature serves man, and man of necessity serves nature.

Another dogma also arose from sacrifices—killing animals, and eating them. It was thought necessary that the animal should die, in order that man should live; that the sacrifice of life should be the redemption of life; and death should be the means of life. Thence the doctrine of the atonement, and the consequence of it, that we are to eat the body, and drink

the blood, of Christ, or of nature, which is as well represented by bread and wine, Ceres and Bacchus, as by the flesh and blood of animals. All the dogmas of religion have their foundation in the perversion of nature, and of the practices of man; and have given rise to the thought of a divine sacrifice for man. What was necessary to his salvation, or life, or health in life, was necessary to his eternal salvation. There are two things necessary to salvation—baptism and the supper of the world, eating and drinking, and also washing.

It is not, as alleged by believers in the dogma of the atonement, that sacrifice was instituted as a type of their idea. The dogma has been taken from a most matter of fact occurrence in nature and humanity. It is a question which takes precedence—the fact or the idea—whether the idea followed the fact, or the fact followed the idea, in the beginning of things. Was all nature made after man's imagination, and no declaration to that effect in the beginning? Was all left to the changing humour and extravagance of men? Were they to take up and lay down these ideas as they liked? It may be thought very degrading to man to refer his religious ideas and practices to butchering and cooking, eating and drinking. Man had regard to utility and life contained in the commandment of God, or nature, to him in Genesis, when the duty of man was prescribed in his relations to himself, and the earth, and not to God.

In the story of Cain and Abel, sacrifices have the same end; and are not referred by God to himself, or a future life. The means of salvation upon earth, are distinctly said by God not to consist in sacrifices to him, but in our duty towards each other.

Man has made himself the type of everything. He has impersonated everything. All religion, therefore, is derived from him. When man has invented religion, he says nature, or God, was the type of his religion. All things are sacrifices to man; and God made the first sacrifice to man when he gave to the man clothes from the beast. Our ideas are not only the experience of the individual, but of the man and his history. All our ideas are derived from sensations. From our sensations, they are transferred to religion; and then it is said, by the opposite school, we have our ideas from religion, or God.

Transubstantiation is not only in our eating and drinking, is not only in ourselves, but in all nature. That which we eat and receive from nature, as a sacrifice—the food of the earth—becomes part of us, is returned to nature, and again returns to us in the form of fresh food. The Thibetians have carried out to the greatest extent the dogmas of Christianity. They have the incarnation perpetually in their high priest, who is God-made man. They do not incarnate once, and then, by a figure, make the Pope God, as a successor of Christ. They do not have priests to make God daily. The Lama is ever present in person. It is now disputed that the

Thibetians carried to the extent, which was once stated, the idea of transubstantiation, making up in wafers, for eating, the excrements of the Lama, or the God. However ridiculous, or disgusting, is the aping, or mimicking, of nature by man in religion, there is a real beauty, truth, and goodness, in the order of nature, which we should not look upon with disgust, but admiration; and not thwart, as we do, but try, in every way, to second.

There was another liquid in the East, which, like wine, does not belong to the North, and yet has become a type of a religion which pretends to be universal. Oil was not only an article of food, which mingled with every other food, but taken internally, or externally, was supposed to give life, and form its appearance outside the person—the lustre of divinity. In the New Testament, more than in the Old, it appears to have been the only cure of Christians. The Samaritan poured oil into the wounds of the man; and Paul would have no other remedy applied to the sick. The Mormons, who follow out the Old and New Testament literally, take no other prescription. Oil made the coronation of a king, thence the name of Messiah, or Christus, Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, or the saving oil, and our name—Christians. Outwardly, ‘the true faith of a Christian’ is, in being oiled. A man is a Christian, etymologically, symbolically, and by derivation of practices, if he is oiled over. Oil became in the end, what water was in the beginning. Christ was baptised by John, but he was anointed by Mary Magdalene. There was a schism between him and the baptist, which continued after his death. The Essenes only used water; and thought themselves polluted by oil. In the same manner, the sacrament of the wine has been rejected by the Mahommedans—only allowed to the priests by the Roman Catholics. It is not allowed to anyone by the Roman Catholics. Both, no doubt, forbid wine from the same reasons. There is no doubt but the ancients thought there was something very beneficial and curative in oil.

The Roman Catholics have preserved the idea in the symbol; and made extreme unction one of their sacraments—the baptism before death, and at the end of life. But, like the sprinkling of water, it is confined to a few touches of oil. Oil, water, and wine, mingle in all the Roman Catholic ceremonies.

All the useful institutions of mankind—eating, drinking, washing, marriage, health, and the preservation of life, everything which tends to the physical and moral well-being of man, should be sacrifices, sacraments, sacred, and devoted to good, to God, and to man, and need not be confined to two or seven sacraments—the mystic numbers the Roman Catholics and Protestants think necessary to salvation. Not that salvation can be so easily acquired by Roman Catholics, or Protestants. There are Thirty-nine Articles, besides the two sacraments. There are creeds and dogmas, differences about jots and tittles, known to Anglicans, and to Roman

Catholics. The way of salvation is lost amongst the multiplicity of roads to be taken. The Roman Catholic, however, says to man, he must submit to be led blindfolded, without thinking where he is going; and whether the blind may not be leading the blind.

In the transference, or transubstantiation from the real to the ideal, in sacrifice—the origin of religion—all duty became transferred, not only from man to God, but from this to a future life, and to their self-nominated agents in this world—the priests. The sacrifice which was to man, became a sacrifice to them; and to man's hopes of futurity. Sprinkling a few drops of oil over a person—the sacrament of baptism and of unction—have as much been made actually to disappear in symbols, as the sacrifice and real supper, and the wafer and the bread and wine. The march of religious dogmas is to put nothing in the place of something—in ideas and in facts. The idea of God, or the fact, belonged to man. The person now becomes the spirit—another being, objective and subjective, divine and human; another world, God, an immortal soul, and a future state, make up religion. All sacraments are sacrifices derived from making things sacred to God, or man. Sacraments now stand in the place of sacrifices, which really meant some good to man. So, in all the sentiments of religion, every one of them stands in the place of something more efficacious—as thanksgiving to God instead of doing good to man; and prayer instead of labour.

As the circle of existence is transubstantiation, so man, nature, God, is a Trinity—God being the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Kingsley is right in saying there is no other but a personal God. Man can have no other. It is not possible: it is not in the power of the finite. But, if man is a personal God, it is the same as to say man is God, and God is man. Nature and the objective is left out. Mr. Kingsley, therefore, rightly says any other God is no God at all. There is no God. Man is the beginning, the middle, and the end. He is the First Cause. God is subjective. Man must put himself in the place of the Deity. Idolatry is objective when the object becomes a God. No worship is allowed but man. The personal God is admitted when it is said man is made in his image. Man, therefore, makes God make everything in his image, be a person, and act as a person. All the ideas of man are given to God, and all his ideas are said to come from God. All man's acts are given to God, and are said to come from God. As man's person is supposed to have come out of the hands of the Creator—made after him—so everything which proceeded from man, proceeded from God. The ideas and the acts of men change. The history of the present is very different from the history of the past—man. God follows man's history. The man in one place is very different to the man in another place; and God is the same—follows the situation. Whenever, therefore, change of time and place takes place in man, a change is said to have taken place in the Deity.

God is said to have made covenant with man, or his people. Man is said to be under a new dispensation of Providence, when he enters into fresh circumstances. Man is depicted in the Bible, not only as made in the image of God, personally, in the beginning; he makes God make the world according to his ideas, but he is perpetually striving to be in the image of God afterwards, to be as the Gods, have a knowledge of good and evil, and live for ever. This is the perpetually recurring temptation and fall of man. It was easy enough for man to make God make the world according to his ideas, and make it good in the past. The difficulty was how to account for the world not being good in the present, according to the ideas of man. The fall of God, therefore, as well as man, was involved in the human idea. But the fact was established; man desires good—good in his God. All things were simply and naturally good in the beginning. Man errs and falls in seeking after supernatural good, and in the choice of natural good. With this principle before our eyes—that God is man, and man is God, and that we are reading about the same—the Scriptures are full of instruction. The knowledge of good and evil are the two principles perpetually operating in the history of man, and in the Bible, from the beginning to the end. It governs man's ideas of the future, as it does of the past. If it was good, it will be good.

As man is changed in Cain and Abel from the first creation, so God is said to be changed. Man or God had formerly made all things good. All things were made in his image. He was good, and he said all things were good. It was not good for the animal to be put to death. After the fall the animal is sacrificed to the good of the man. God, who had made everything good, men and animals, to multiply, and increase, and replenish the earth, who had said they were only to eat of the fruits of the earth and the herbs, and whose first care was to place man in a garden, in the story of Cain and Abel, is said to have had respect unto the offering of Abel, and none unto that of Cain. The laws assigned to God were no doubt those which men thought were necessary towards the fulfilment of the commandment to increase. Yet before such an end could be attained, the system is reversed by God, who kills animals, and accepts the offering of Cain. God is made to prefer the food which he had denied to man, and death to life. The divine character is totally reversed to suit the history of humanity. After good there must come evil, though good had been made out of evil, darkness, chaos, and death. Not only the difference in the food of men is denoted, from the very good, paradasiacal state of the garden, and the aboriginal diet to animal food, but the consequent change in religion and belief, that bloody sacrifices and death were thought more acceptable to God than any other offering. The offering before was in the life of man—life in general, and the labour of the earth. The divine preference in sacrifice cannot be denied, because it is admitted by divines as the founda-

tion dogma of the Christian religion. They have made the idea of divinity stand for the fact of humanity, and said that animal sacrifices were not enough; that a perfect Deity could only be satisfied with perfect God, and man as a sacrifice. Mr. Jowett says, such an idea cannot be reasoned upon as a fact. The Roman Catholics have made the dogma purely ideal, in the sacrifice of the mass; we, therefore, must conclude the whole to be an idea, from beginning to end, not facts of history. Creation and destruction are the two principles of the whole, good and evil, life and death, thence the idea may come that death is acceptable to God, as well as life, evil as well as good, and the offering of death or evil. Life is made the object of creation and the good, death and evil the adversary of creation and the good. God is changed to suit the other side of nature, so puzzling to man is the God that he has made. Nature is immutable, but the personal God cannot be. Death had come through God, and then death through Abel; death, therefore, was thought more agreeable to God. Man can see no further than that life comes into the world, and death succeeds; it is the beginning and end of his and all other life. God, therefore, being made good, and a person, becomes a murderer, and to put him at one with himself, restitution of life after death is imagined. God dying and suffering for man, is an admission that the whole of nature dies as well as every part. But the idea comes from the ways of nature being referred to a person that death is acceptable to God; the practice follows the idea; the offering of death is made instead of that which is supposed not to have life or animal life in it, which from the beginning had been allowed to man and animals, and been given up to destruction. Death is pleasing to man in the shape of animal food; death, therefore, may be thought pleasing to God in the shape of man. Man eats animals, God does man, and certainly nature consumes each alike. Hence, human sacrifices were made to God. But the death of his rival, his enemy, if the person in his way, is pleasing to the man. If God, therefore, is supposed not to be pleased, he is angry, and it is thought he may be appeased by death. God, therefore, was not pleased with Abel's offering, but Abel, or the younger man, thought he was. God was not displeased with Cain's offering, but Cain, or the older man, thought he was. These have ever been the twin ideas of religion, that there was a God acting as a God of love, and a God acting as an angry God towards us. First, the world by goodness was made good, and then through hatred of God, or through evil, was made bad. The Messianic idea first followed the idea of creation—good out of evil, and then reversed the idea. First, there was to be great evil upon the world, and then the kingdom of heaven. The dogma of Christ now established, exactly follows the creation and the fall of man. Christ comes in good, a light to lighten the darkness, and he departs angry with mankind, because they rejected him. God announces to man in the beginning glad tidings of great joy,

that the world was formed good, man and all living things were blessed, and commanded to live. From God himself, and not from the lips of others, comes a hymn of peace, and good-will upon earth, glory to God in the highest. Such is the expression of nature interpreted by the ideas of man, and as man wished it to be. In his progress he finds things not as he would have them, and he thinks God frowns at him, curses instead of blesses. Thus nature is interpreted before he makes offerings to God; they are the consequences of his ideas, and the offerings are atonement, and attempts at reconciliation with God or nature. The birth of Christ follows the same course as the beginning of the world. Angels announce what God had done to the world, sent peace and good-will upon earth, glory to God in the highest. When God announced the world, he also announced the sacrifice, grass to animals, fruits to man. The offering was to man, not of man to God, and so it always was; but in time man thinks the offering should be to God, and not to himself. The Bible says man so thought—it does not say that God told him. It is the religious idea which turns from man to God, instead of, as in the beginning, directing it to himself, God to him. The religious idea is making God after himself. Man inverts the order of things, and makes the part the whole, instead of including the part in the whole. Hence the idea of the Deity is reversed—he brings evil into the world instead of good, and, as Jesus said, of the religious idea, in spite of the promises made in his name by his godfathers and godmothers, and those who stood for him, ‘I came not to bring peace, but a sword into the world.’ John the Baptist may have baptised the world with water; but Christ was going to baptise it with fire, before he granted remission of sins and the kingdom of heaven. In spite of the civilisation said to be introduced by Christianity, we may be said to have passed, and are still passing through such a baptism of fire, to arrive at the fulfilment of progress or the Messianic idea.

*The thoughts of Cain and Abel were as the differences of opinion in man about religion. Both were equally deceived in thinking his religion the right; and that whatever consequences followed, his sacrifices, offerings, and devotion to God, were the signs that his offerings were accepted or rejected, that he was favoured or afflicted by God. Perhaps Cain’s harvests were unfortunate, and he would think God was the occasion of the calamity, or Abel’s ewes might yield more lambs, and he would think it occurred through God having turned his attention to his offering. Nature, or God, seemed to frown at the one and smile at the other; and, in proportion, the countenance of the one was depressed and the other elevated. Man had not yet learnt the casuistry, ‘Those whom God loveth he chasteneth.’ No signs were mentioned to have been given in the Bible. It was signified, therefore, that God being with man or against him, on account of his religion, was purely in the imagination of man. The commentators on the

Bible have seen this omission in the letter, which would destroy their inference. The Douay Bible has, therefore, supplied it, and says, 'God had respect, as we may suppose, by some visible token, such as sending fire on Abel's offerings.' In that case, we must give God the credit of being the inventor of fire. He has not taken the credit to himself. No man more than the Jewish God hopelessly stands by, and man does all. We argue from this there is no God meant, but only man. All miracles are supposed, as in the Douay Bible. Here we may see how a myth in the course of time may increase. There has, however, been but slight tampering with the original. There is but the embryo in the religious formation. Or it is only, as we say, the fabular form of relation, which assigns to God what man feels. Had the inference of religion been really added, the moral of the story would not have been more difficult to see; either an interpolation might have been made in the interests of superstition, or, in good faith, the myth was added to give the origin of fire and cooking to God. God is not made to act or speak in approval or disapproval of the offerings. He does come upon the scene, and speaks for himself, and gives the moral after the actions, and the thoughts and errors of mankind. Never came from the lips of man a more total disavowal of religion, of God, and a future state. As man had thought God made the world, and is reminded that he made it; as man thought to be as the Gods, have a knowledge of good and evil, and everlasting life, and is reminded that he is man, so here the same attempt is passed over in silence as vain, by religion and sacrifices to be as the Gods, and have a knowledge of good and evil. Man is told his duties are confined to himself, the present life, and this earth, and the consequences flow from his actions, not from anything which he does towards God, imaginary services towards imaginary objects. It will be kept in mind that God is made to appear before the full effects of religion have worked upon Cain; and God is no other than reason or conscience, speaking in man. No God accepted Abel's offerings, and prevented him being murdered; no God attempts to prevent the crime of Cain by telling him he will be punished, if not in this life, at least hereafter. It is God in person saying there is no God. Man is left to his free-will; nothing is anticipated, good and evil is set before him in its simplest relations to man. God does not even say evil is offensive to him, that good is his pleasure. Here is the high priest of all priests. No words of comfort and consolation are applied to the agitated and dejected sinner. No hopes are held out to him. He is neither to be rewarded for good, nor punished for evil. He is not asked by confession to pour out his griefs into the bosom of his Creator. God does not come down from heaven, the effect of prayer in man. Cain does not appear to have offered any prayer. It was, therefore, the conscience, or God within him, who remonstrated. Providence might have been exercised to protect Abel, but there was no interference except in the

conscience of Cain, and in the consequences of sin. Man in God has what he may call stern, unbending, inexorable, cold, blind, immutable nature before him. The speech, the cry of nature to man is, If you will do good, do it, but do it for its own sake, and for your own sake. If you will not, let it alone; it concerns yourself more than anybody else; if you will do evil, you must, and the consequences may be the worse for you. Do not expect beyond good or evil. The good is probably good to you—if not, it is good to the whole; good is eternal and infinite. If evil does not meet with its punishment, if evil prospers, there is good to the whole; the whole is eternal and infinite; God is great and good. There is good and evil set before you, and you must choose yourself. Morality is an affair between men. Right is right, and wrong is wrong. There is the satisfaction you may have in the nature of good and evil, and the satisfaction in yourself, the approval and disapproval of your own conscience and reason. Man is not told to pray against evil and for good, not to be led into temptation, but to be delivered from evil. Intentions are not looked to, but solely the commission. Man requires to be rewarded for good—not only in this life, but in the world to come for ever and ever. Man cannot follow virtue or good for its own sake. But it would be much better to teach man that it would be best to follow virtue for its own sake; and this is the teaching of God to Cain, and of the true Christ to man.

Whatever we do, good or evil returns into the system of the universe, as creation and destruction; it is nothing to God or nature. It is the same to God or nature whether we do good or evil. Man thinks he binds the Deity by his own moral law, and the Deity must act as man thinks fit. If the Deity does not, man thinks the Deity has committed an immense wrong towards him, and nature should be inverted; instead of creation and destruction, change, variety, good, and evil, there should be existence hereafter for ever the same, which it would be easy to prove could be none at all. The God of religion, from beginning to end, from not making the world good, being crucified on the cross, and having to prepare a different future for mankind, is a God tried by man's morality, the proof that there is no God and no morality in the universe.

The conscience of Cain in the first instance does not seem to have been more than a case of profit and loss, and a sense of injustice he was labouring under, if there was something he construed into a favouring of Abel and dislike of himself. He, therefore, settles it with his conscience by killing Cain, making him an atonement. Christ, therefore, as following the righteous Abel, was put to death as a victim to justice, if he were God; and the Christians say he was an atonement to justice. God was an atonement to the offended conscience of the world.

God declared no future life, but Moses saw a future life in the consequences of sin. He made God declare that the consequences should

descend on the children from generation to generation, and he made the reward of virtue long life in this world.

It is often said there is no morality without religion. The saying should be, there is no religion without morality. Religion should be tried by morality, not morality by religion. Religion was consequent on the morality, and not the morality on the religion. So God said to Cain, Christ said the same, when he said your love to God was your love to your neighbour. How could you love God you had not seen, if you did not love man whom you had seen? This was in the spirit of the first chapter of Genesis, that man was made in the image of God; that you know nothing about God, except man, and your duty is to him. The prophets said there were no sacrifices wanted, only charity to man; and Christ said of the last judgment, sacrifices of faith were not required, but acts of charity. Another popular religious saying is, you should serve God rather than man, which is utterly at variance with God and Christ in the Bible, and destructive of morality. No dependence can be placed upon a man, who has an unknown something as his rule of conduct which is placed above morality. Christ said his disciples should be known by their love to one another, which is not religion, any dogma, or hope, but morality without religion. Christ said, Love one another as I have loved you—that is, he came into the world as an example of love among men, not of any other faith. As the Father was, so was the Son, an example of love. As God was, so was man to be to man, and so man became God, or good, or perfect, as the father in heaven is perfect. But morality is applied by God to Cain without any religion. Morality is given as a remedy to the evil effects which had been produced by religion. It may be said, that man was not cured of his passions by the moral law. Nor was he by religion, if God himself is religion, and God could not prevent Cain from committing murder. On the other hand, the passions of Cain were excited by religion, and he set at defiance every moral restraint, as is the case with man under these circumstances. Every person put to death for religion is an Abel, and every person concerned in it by intention or action is a Cain. 'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' (Matt., chap. xxxiii., 35.) 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.' According, therefore, to Christ, the Jews were descended from Cain. They were notorious for human sacrifices, could not be weaned from them; and the consequence would be in the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews. Paul gave the idea that sin and death entered into the world through Adam. Jesus Christ never mentioned the name. It would appear from the following verse that Paul considered the blood of Abel to have been an offering to

God, and to have been replaced by the blood of Christ. The offering of Christ was accepted; therefore, the offering up of Abel must have been, though both Cain and the Jews were to suffer the punishment of murderers. Paul says, 'And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' (Romans xii., 24.) There was a difference of idea between Cain and Abel both as to what was to be offered, and the question as to the reception of their offerings, which was the true religion embittered the difference. The sequel proved, as an example to all quarrels about religion, there was no religion. It is a proof that there is no truth in it, *that it is not*, about which people are ever divided. Abel said his was 'the true faith,' and Cain's was not; and if Abel used any priestcraft, according to the Douay Bible, as a sign that his sacrifice was better received, either turning to account an accident of nature, or else using some artifice to persuade Cain that the animal offering was preferred, there were the usual reasons and religious motives to produce war between the brothers.

'But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' (Hebrews xiii., 2.) Cain might argue that the fruits of the earth were a befitting offering to the Deity. If he had been brought up in the sentiments of religion, or had been acquainted with the previous history of his parents and of God, he could not have thought otherwise. He would think blood and death were opposed to the character of the Divinity, particularly the sacrifice of the first-born of life, when God made life such an especial recommendation to his creatures. Influenced by the good principles of the beginning, he would think it was much better to eat of the fruits of the earth, than to inflict death for the purpose, and feed off the torn limbs, blood, and fat of animals. We do not see how it could have come into the head of man to offer animal sacrifices to a God, and to think it was agreeable to him, unless man had first satisfied his appetite with them, and thought God was susceptible of the same sensations. If Abel did not eat flesh, and thought God was pleased with it, he must have had a bad idea of God—that he was pleased with wanton cruelty. The idea of sacrifice must have arisen from the fact of food.

Man, we should think, would turn aside with disgust and abhorrence at the first spectacle of a deed of butchery in a brother man. The countenance of Cain did fall, and he was very angry. Not only were the moral laws and the laws of nature apparently violated, but a bloody prospect was held out to man that the means of propitiating the Deity were in slaughter and death. Cain might think the sooner the evil was eradicated, and in the beginning, the better; and that he who introduced such ideas and acts into society, should be removed, and that he who inflicted death ought to receive death. Such is the language of those who have put to death others for difference in religious opinion, where there were no result such as Cain

saw, none of the facts on which Cain went. The executioner of his brother, for difference in religious opinion, has ever justified the act by the poison said to be propagated in the doctrines of the person put to death. By a lesser evil a greater was stayed, and one died for many. The modern Cain has said, if contrary doctrines to mine were to prevail, myself and others would be deprived of the advantages which we derive from our doctrines being true, and gaining us rewards in life from heaven. But he has said more—the contrary doctrines to mine would deprive me not only of the regards of heaven upon earth, but of life hereafter. On such grounds, Dr. Johnson said, toleration of it had been practised in antiquity where there was no future state depending upon religion; could not be permitted in Christianity where such great interests were at stake. Modern religion has made a lucrative profession of it in this life, as well as having a future after it. The priests and their families would lose the means of living, and those out of the priesthood look to it as livelihood. It is a vested interest in mankind, and they find the best support of it, the idea of a future state after death. We believe people might be easily convinced that religion was not true or for their interests, but the delusion or the hope of living for ever, they are unwilling to give up.

It is still a question whether a religion should be allowed that commits murder, robbery, and has not only no morality, but practises every immorality. Yet every worship may, as Christianity does, allege the intolerance shown to them, the injury and injustice done to them, in not permitting them to practise crimes in favour of their religion, satisfaction of their belief, and support of the truth. As we do not hear, in the case of Cain and Abel, that there was any more sacrifice until after the deluge, the moral of the story may be that the evil was nipped in the bud, and returned again when man was in a worse state, and further removed from Paradise, or supposed primitive innocence. As there is no morality without religion, according to religion, religion can do without morality, and it is a question whether every religion ought not to be put down as having given evidence, and giving daily evidence of contravening the laws of morality, and the interests of humanity in this world.

The perpetrators of human sacrifice, surrendering their children to the fiery embrace of Moloch, putting themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut, and burning widows, might represent the Cains and Abels; and they might say, We believe that God has respect unto our offering. Our sacrifice is really a sacrifice, and loss upon our parts. Yours is comparatively of no value, and shows a selfish disposition. We may be said truly to take up our cross in following our God. We could give examples of the favour of the Deity, which has resulted from the sacrifices we have made for him. We, at least, believe it; and do not deprive us of the belief—make us think those sacrifices, which we have made of the dearest to us, have gone for

nothing. They might put to death those who would deprive them of their religion, and justify it on the above reasons, which are common to all persecutors—believers in their religion. They say to the infidels, What have you to give us in the place of religion? Do not destroy, before you have built up, a system to supply the void. But God, in his declaration to Cain, gives nothing in the place of religion; nothing but the moral law. He does not acknowledge religion. There was the moral law—always had been, and would be, morality without religion. God was an infidel to Cain, as he had been to Adam and Eve. The serpent was the believer; and made man believe. In the case of Cain, God had no religion; and, therefore, the religious would say that God had no morality.

The truth, or the fact, seems to be, man began in a savage state. The world out of chaos was good—the Messianic idea. It was good by comparison. Good was the end and design of God. It was not good before God began. Therefore, there was the always to be good. God was life; matter, or death, was superior to God. It is not said that God made it. Man has confounded the good of the universe—the good of the whole, and the type of progress—with moral, positive, and human good; and the good and life of the part. Life is itself but a part. The other part may be greater; and certainly the whole—life and death—is greater than the part; and the part—life—cannot become the whole, either as God, or immortal soul. The world was made good in another sense. It was made agreeable to itself in the way of order and progress, so as everything should conduce to its benefit and good, even evil and death, to life and goodness. It is, therefore, afterwards said in the Bible, that the world was not made by goodness, but by wisdom.

Cain might reason, a combat à l'outrance, would decide the question of religion. Supposing a God, there can be nothing more natural than to think he exercises his influence in realities, protects those he likes, and punishes those he dislikes. It would be supposed that God would demonstrate those feelings and actions in the way in which human agents manifest them. 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' (Amos iii., 6.) On this account, in a truly religious age, the decision was left to God, of guilty, or not guilty, by trial of duel. Cain might say, If I kill Abel, surely this will show by a fact, and not leave it to a mere idea, which offering has found respect in the eyes of God. But Gods, man's reason, or conscience, told him it was not so. Whatever happens to us in this world is not a result coming from heaven; it is purely the result of circumstances and causes upon earth. Yet, amongst many men, every misfortune a man meets with is ascribed to God. Such was the reasoning of the friends of Job, which might certainly try a Job's patience. The disciples of Christ were disposed to think the same. He told them that God had nothing to do with the misfortunes of men, or their punishment.

Men, who met with misfortunes, were no worse than other men. Neither did God deny prosperity to the wicked. The sun shone alike upon all, which was saying there was no God.

Both Cain and Abel had strong religious feelings. We have in them a history of religion, or the effects of religion. The human desire of good excited them to gain the favours of heaven, as in the temptation and the fall. They placed themselves in opposition, and in heart, were enemies before the issue of their sacrifices was known. They were no longer brothers—the first pair of men. Each desired for himself; they had nothing in common; and the one aimed to have at the expense of the other. Though they did not pray, yet they did the same thing. They both looked to heaven and to their offerings to obtain the object of their wishes. When they offered sacrifices, or prayed, they ceased to labour. To labour is to pray; prayer and sacrifice are the contrary of labour. Abel, in employing animal sacrifice, as the means to the end, did not scruple at that which was offensive to the prejudices of Cain. Therefore, the consequences which happened are ascribable to religion in spite of morality. God and morality did interfere, but were impotent to prevent the ulterior crime to which religion would proceed. One or the other must die in a quarrel where religion was concerned.

If men desire *to have*, one at the expense of the other, and the one gains, and the other loses, the process is to wrest by violence one from the other; and open robbery and murder succeeds. All these passions are equally concerned in the affairs of religion—the desire to have, the contentions about having, and the disposition to keep. If they have looked to their vices to obtain, they have looked to religion to secure, possession. The passions of men are more violent in religion, because let loose from the restraint of morality. And, if they succeed, as Louis Napoleon says, surely God had regard unto their offering.

Roman Catholicism, says Whately, is founded on human principles, yet you would not have supposed it would have succeeded. Therefore, it might be said of Roman Catholicism, as it is said of the origin of Christianity—it must be miraculous. Religion is founded upon the passions, vices, and feebleness of mankind, more than the virtues. The question is, with such writers as Macaulay and even Hume, which shall have the ascendancy? If religion is founded upon our vices, it is a vice. As it was founded in Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Christ, so it has continued in history a vice. The Christian and the unbeliever give the origin to religion—both ascribe it to the evil in the beginning of things. The Christian worships the evil—the Satan, the Moloch—for hitherto his religion, that was to save the world, has always ended in the fall of man. Religion worships the fall in the crucifixion of Christ.

Nothing creates such a difference between mankind as religion. There

often would be nothing but love between individuals, arising from their natural disposition, if they were not severed by religion. As there is said to be no morality without religion, unbelievers are treated as having no morality; and the believers are absolved from morality towards them. We believe there can be no morality with religion.

As between individuals, so between nations, there is no greater demarcation than religion. Mountains, rivers, seas, languages, never created such a Babel dissension and permanent division between mankind as religion.

As the story of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, of the sons of God and the deluge, are only repetitions of the temptation and fall, and the division between mankind on account of the fall; so it is easy to see the Tower of Babel is another version of the same story. The quarrel of Cain and Abel was between individuals, or representatives of humanity. The quarrel between the giants, those who derived their origin from the Gods, and looked down upon the sons of men, was between individuals of the same race and nation. Men, in constructing the Tower of Babel, again aspired to the heavens, and again they suffered a fall. They were dispersed; and, as the origin, so the nature of the course was the same. They differed for ever after more in the way of getting up to heaven than they ever did in language. The diversity of religions became a Babel, or confusion.

Nothing raises the nations into such fury against each other as religion, or the thought that their dogma, worship, or offering, has acceptance with the Deity, and that another has no respect in his eyes. It either makes wars between nations, or is always employed as a secondary cause of provocation, even in the nineteenth century.

What is more curious, in his appeal to religion, man wants no evidence in his favour. The evidence of facts against him—a succession of reverses—does not dissuade him from believing that God is with him. If prosperity or success be claimed as a sign of God's favour on the one hand, on the other hand, it is said God chastens those whom he loves. There is always room for self-congratulation and hatred of others in religion. There is always the idea, I am accepted, and he is rejected. There is always the salvation and the hell hereafter to come in this world, or the other. The Jews always thought the enemies who oppressed them would take their places; and a time would come when they would wreak their vengeance upon them. Individuals of the same nation thought the rich would be poor, and the poor rich; the joyous made to weep, the happy miserable; the full hungry, and the hungry full. There was a good time coming, when all situations would be reversed by the right and might of religion. Christianity came: it was to be a fact which would happen immediately; if it did not in this world, it would in another. But, as a climax to the incongruity of man, the miserable fall to which religion has subjected him, if he sees the reverse of all the promises of heaven before him, he even courts them, and

thinks to possess the crown of martyrdom, when, in the eyes of reason, and in the nature of things, he is the martyr, or witness, that God, or heaven, or nature, has had no respect for his offering, or religion.

According to Christ in the gospels, Abel was the first martyr. Cain and Abel were, therefore, the alternations of persecution and martyrdom, which were to succeed each other, from the death of Abel to the death of Christ. The blood of Christ cried unto the Lord yet more than the blood of Abel; and the Christian religion has been bathed in the blood of martyrdoms and persecutions. Abel gave the first proof that God had respect unto his offering by suffering martyrdom; and Cain gave the first proof of persecution that God had no respect unto Abel's offering, when he put him to death. The history of Christianity has been to show that God had the most respect to the offering of Cain in his brother Abel. God said a flaming sword, or sword and fire, should guard religion. The supposed respect which God had to Abel's offering immediately put a sword, or an instrument of death, into Cain's hand, some think a flaming brand, in imitation of the fiery sword of the angels, caught up from the altar, or one of the bones which, across another, is symbolic of the sword, the cross, and of death, or a branch of a tree, which would be emblematic of the wooden cross, or of the sword upon which Christ suffered. The origin of human sacrifices has been, that men would outbid each other in the value of their sacrifices. It is the same idea which made the Christians think God had given up his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice. God was thought to be under the same influence as man. The love of God to man is appealed to in the New Testament, giving up his only Son to death, or the love of God in giving himself. It would, therefore, be the love of man towards God to do the same. A man giving up his own life at the recommendation of Christ, would equally be an act of martyrdom, or a human sacrifice.

Christ was true to the declaration of his Father, and true to the first experience of man in religion. He said he came not to bring peace, but fire and sword into the world. These were the consequences of his religion, which it required no very great prophetic vision to foresee. The phrases, however, put into the mouth of Christ, probably meant no more originally than the idea of what Christians would have to undergo in upsetting the Jewish religion and the Roman Empire. The Son of Man was crucified between these two thieves. It was an afterthought of Christianity to make one of them be promised that he should that night be with Christ in Paradise; and expect the fulfilment of Christianity in heaven. The Messianic idea never contemplated a struggle of dogmas for a kingdom not of this world.

The Messianic idea certainly meant both a temporal and moral kingdom, but of this world, and never a mere state of dogma in this world, and a kingdom not of this world, but in heaven. The words of Christ, 'I am

come to send fire on the earth, and what *will I*, if it be *already kindled*? The immediate doom of every tree that did not bring forth good fruit, that it should be cast into the fire; the baptising with Holy Ghost and with fire; the idea of the disciples that they had fire from heaven at their command, to descend upon earth; the words of Paul, that all works and all buildings should be tried by fire; that there was to be a revelation of fire, that even the good, as well as the bad, might be burnt, but the good would be saved.' (1 Cor., iii.) The warning held out to their persecutors, seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you, who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven with his mighty angels, 'In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that *know* not God, that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (2 Thess., i.) The words of Peter to those who were complaining of the delay in the coming of the Lord, that as there had been a deluge of water, so there should be a deluge of fire; and the heavens and the earth were kept in store—'reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' (2 Peter iii.) Sodom and Gomorrah, set forth by Jude as examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; and a very suspicious passage, telling those to whom he addressed his epistle, to have compassion on some Christian heretics, but to be so afraid of others that they were either to *save* them through fire, or leave them in the fire as an absolution of their sins. To our comprehension, these mysterious words and ideas were ominous of politics; and Christ said any body who pretended to know the weather, ought to know the times. Soon after Rome was burnt. Tacitus said it was ascribed to the Christians. The historian said there was no doubt they were ready for anything. But he seemed to have thought Nero as bad, or to have hated him as much as the Christians. Josephus said Nero was maligned by the historians, as thought Erasmus and Cardan, and a *Quarterly Reviewer*, of December, 1855. There are even suspicions that he was a Jew, or Christian himself. Josephus and Paul claimed Jews and Christians in his court; and, probably, they were the same. There is even some similiarity between Josephus and Paul, and even Christ, showing at least a common stock of materials on which to write history. Some did think Nero was Jesus Christ; and that he rose again from the dead.

The hatred of Tacitus to Nero partly arose from his being the first slave abolitionist—the precursor of Wilberforce. If the matter of us is turned to vile uses after death, surely the moral of us undergoes extraordinary changes; and a Nero and a Wilberforce take alternate pages of history with different accounts of themselves, and held in different estimation.

We have lately met with a work by a religious man, and orthodox Christian, Jones on 'Josephus,' who says that Rome was burnt down by

heretic and Gnostic Christians, particularly by those alluded to in Jude. However, these heretics and Gnostics might have returned the compliment, and said it was the orthodox burnt down Rome. It does appear suspicious that Christian writers were silent on the subject. Why, if they were martyrs, did they not mention it? But fire in the gospels and epistles, and then silence, as if it had missed fire. Certainly, if London was burnt down, and a person was represented to have had followers, whom he lead to expect it immediately; and it was proved that he or they used the language we have given, we think we should look to them as the incendiaries. When the historian on inquiry should find out that they said they were the followers of one Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, as a malefactor, for words and conduct at Jerusalem, of a piece with those at Rome, he would think it was more likely they were capable of the fire of Rome. If Nero did burn down Rome, he knew on whom suspicion would attach, which could not be without any reason, or because they had preached nothing but peace, or good-will towards mankind, or a variety of apparently absurd dogmas, which would be laughed at at Rome, as they were at Athens. The present Christian morality, ever professed but never practised, seems never to have existed, though it might have been useful sometimes in preparing a martyr.

The political substance of the Christian doctrines, we are inclined to think, must have excited the hatred of the high and conservative Roman. Another historical notice, showing that Christ was not a real personage, and that to him and his followers were attributed, or to persons who took the name of Christians, political movement, is to be found in Suetonius, Claudius 25—‘He expelled from Rome the Jews who were continually making disturbances, having *Chrestus* for their instigator.’ Both Justin Martyr and Tertullian acknowledge the title of Chrestianus, as if taken from Chrestus, or Chrestos—the good instead of the oiled. (See the Rev. Dr. Giles’s ‘Heathen Records,’ page 99.) The above not only makes us suspect the person of Christ, but the time which is given to him, as how could the Christians have become so numerous at Rome, in the time of Claudius? The Christians must have existed before Christ, looking out for his coming. It is also probable that the Christians were burnt, as Juvenal is supposed to mention them in some men undergoing that punishment for libel, from themselves threatening that end to their adversaries, as well as from a suspicion of their having set fire to Rome.

It will be recollected that Jesus was accused, by his enemies, before Pilate, of foretelling the destruction of the temple; and it was represented to be figurative by his friends. But it shows that it was thought to be rather more than a figure; and it happened that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed about forty years afterwards. All the figures under which Christ appeared at Jerusalem—and we cannot treat them as facts—

show that the Messianic idea was as much political as spiritual, and likely to have brought fire and sword into the world.

It is mentioned by Josephus that immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, there was a fire at Antioch, which was attributed to the Christians. There were even some Jews who accused their fellow-countrymen of the design, a son his father. Jones, on 'Josephus,' thinks they must have been Christians. There were also, at the same time, incendiarisms at Alexandria; afterwards in Africa; and disturbances of fire and sword in every city and country where the Jews dwelt.

The fulfilment of Christ's words, and the presence of fire and sword all over the world, preclude us from thinking there was any reality intended for them in another world. Christ did come speedily in judgment on the world, and consigned those who believed in religion to the sword, and to the flames; whilst those who attended to mere acts of charity, were saved. As the Lord said to Cain, 'If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted: if thou doest ill, sin lieth at the door,' so Paul said to the Romans, 'under Nero, and which would give the lie to the idea, that he wrongfully put to death the Christians—'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, *for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God.*' Is not this making God the maker of evil, and in the instance of Nero? In the verse before Paul had told them, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good;' and next we are told why, because the evil comes from God. Paul continues, 'Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves everlasting damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a *revenger* to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.' So that Nero was the Christ come to judgment.

Christ had said to the Jews, Love God, but that the love of God was the love of man. In the same chapter we have been quoting, Paul makes no mention of God, but otherwise uses the same words as Christ, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying—namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.' The reason he gives is that salvation is even nearer than they believed. (Romans, chap. xiii.) Nobody punishes morality, says Paul, therefore those in power punished immorality. Religion, therefore—

Christianity—was immorality. Nero executed the law and punished criminals. He made martyrs of offenders against the law.

Peter is equally a commentary on the speech made by God to Cain, and the story of Cain and Abel is a commentary on the meaning of the Lord construed by Peter. 'For he that will *love life*, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? (1 Peter, chap. iii.) The religion of Abel was, therefore, the evil which lost him his life; and the Christians would not have been martyrs if they had been followers of that which is good. The Lord was, as he was to Cain and Abel, and must be interpreted as events happened to them, which were no otherwise than the general course of nature. We must suppose that Abel had not a guard upon his thoughts or tongue, and did not seek peace. We must suppose that God was the same to the Christians under Nero. We must allow that Peter contradicts himself in the next verse; and in the next chapter says, 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.For the time is come that the judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' (1 Peter, i., v.) The August number of the *North British* of the present year, commencing an article on Christian Missions, says that Christ recommended proselytism, and spoke contemptuously of it. The Reviewer says the contrariety adapts Christianity to human nature. A man or system is sure to be right that can take both sides of a question, 'all things to all men.' The existence of Christianity seems founded on never being. No one can say what is Christianity dogmatically and morally. But while contradictions are allowed to be beauties in the divine teacher, they are not permitted to those who oppose him and the letter of the Scripture. An infidel is required to see straight through the past, and have but one way of accounting for everything. That man, as a whole, is a variety in himself, is denied to the infidel.

But it is impossible to believe that such a conglomeration of contradictions could have ever existed in one individual, though they may in men and in ideas. Therefore, we do not believe there ever were such individuals as Jesus Christ or Peter, and we suspect Paul. Supposing them to have been myths, seems the only method of reconciling these contradictions. As myths, they were formed from many persons, many facts and ideas. Jesus was made to satirise and condemn religion in the terrific prognostications of its effects upon society, as well as to foretel the probable way of exit for mankind from the dominion of the Romans, the death and resurrection

of those opposed to it, until the conquered finally sat in judgment on the conquerors. Such Christianity, or following the cross, has unfortunately been too true of mankind and of progress. It was not Christianity of the oil of a glad countenance, but Christianity of a crown of thorns, and the cross, to end perhaps in extreme unction.

Cain was justified by Paul, Pilate was justified by Paul, in their acts of putting Abel and Christ to death; and martyrdoms, according to the apostle, proved not only the magistrate, but that God inflicted punishment for their sins upon those who suffered. Could Paul believe that Jesus Christ existed, and was crucified by Herod and Pontius Pilate, and afterwards declare that all who were executed by those who sat in the seat of judgment were put to death by God himself?

If Paul, in fact, paraphrases what God said to Cain, Pilate, when he condemned Christ to death, may be said to have done the same. He asked Jesus what was truth. It is said, moreover, that he and Herod were willing that Christ should extricate himself by any display of supernatural power, but, having nothing to show, he was left to the natural course of the laws. There is yet another example of God on the judgment seat in Gallio, who, on Paul being brought before him said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be question of *words* and *names*, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters.'

So in the case of God, he was not going to interfere in the contentions of men about nothing; but 'if it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness,' then he must decide between them. Gallio, it is said, 'cared for none of these things,' when it did proceed to blows between Jews and Greeks, on quarrels of doctrine raised by Paul. If it had come to murder, he would probably have interfered as God did. So tolerant were the Romans, yet the Christians were not satisfied with them in the case of Christ or his followers.

'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.' Man aims at good to himself. He says it is my belief that such a thing did or will happen, founded on those hopes. Such was the belief of Abel that God had shown some respect to his offering, and that the consequences would be to his advantage in the future. But a man has hit upon other evidence besides faith—the evidence of martyrdom which Abel also gave. The only real evidence, as the Bible says, is not faith, but knowledge and facts. The only evidence the religious give of their belief is their belief.

God saying that Cain would be accepted, if he did well, and was chargeable with the consequences if he did ill, was really pointing to a future state on earth, and the rewards and punishments for crime. There is no doubt a man is responsible, if he falls upon a stone and breaks his head, and the stone is responsible to him, if he kicks it out of his way. The

man, if he dies, is responsible to the law of nature. The man, if he commits crime, is responsible to the law which inflicts the punishment, or even if he escapes punishment, he will find himself entangled in some inextricable mesh of responsibility. Responsibility seems to us the strongest necessity. Also in the future, in the event, the propriety of an action will be decided; if you have done well, there will be nothing done to you; but if you have done evil, the responsibility will attach to the door. And it appears that Cain did not wait for a summons to answer for his sin at his door, but fled his home—emigrated.

Conybeare attacks the necessitarians, or those who acknowledge the all-powerful laws of nature, by saying that they inculcate immorality. But the fact is, the only real necessitarian who leads to such practical consequences is the religious, who says everything is done by God, and must believe it, if he believes in a God, or in two Gods. Thus, Dove said after his sentence, it was all for the glory of God—the murder and his execution; ‘God’s will be done.’

Martyr is a Greek word for witness. It came to mean in Christianity, the evidence a man gives of his belief by his sufferings and death. Martyrdom is not the evidenee of a fact, but of an opinion, and is the most extraordinary evidence for an opinion, if martyrdom can be called evidence at all. Belief would be shut out of a court of justice; knowledge is wanted, and martyrdom would be pronounced an aberration of reason in the person who offered it for evidence. In any speculative argument, opinion must be substantiated, and martyrdom would not be admitted as proof. To force your opinion upon a man by penalty of death, or to convince others by dying yourself, is no proof, though certainly the first is the most striking of the two, and the *argumentum ad hominem*. If I force a man to believe, the end is arrived at. Probably more than half of the Christians, or of the followers of any religion, were made in this manner. But if I do not make a man believe, but burn him to death with fire, or cut him to pieces with the sword, it is a convincing argument, as far as religious truth is concerned, that I am in the right and he is in the wrong. For why have I had the will and the power to put him to death; and why has he been suffered to be put to a cruel death in consequence of his creed?

It would seem that religious truth admits of no other demonstration, and in consequence of the demonstration, we might admit there is no religious truth. They are only such mischievous monkeys as men can have anything to do with proving a thing, or having anything to prove by killing each other. Men say religion is the proof of the truth that is in them, and of their superiority to the beast that perishes. There are no religious differences between animals, no persecutions and martyrdoms for nothing at all, for a life after death, or for a shadow instead of the substance. All the animals are maligned in order to raise the man—the mischievous

monkey, and the beast, who is charged with being drunk as a man. Some ancient author has said no one is prouder, no one is meaner than man; his reason elevates him, and depresses him in the scale of nature. So said Shakspeare in 'Hamlet.' In war, religion, and other vices, man bears no favourable comparison with the want of reason in the animal. The ways of man are satisfactory demonstration to the reasonable there is no God and no religion, no heaven and no hell, except as mad copies of himself. When Pilate asked—jestingly, as Bacon says—What is truth? and Christ did not answer, we may suppose Pilate meant it will be seen by the event. So, said the Pharisee, the event will prove whether the religion is of God or of man—that is necessity. The event will decide whether our religion is doomed to fall, and another will take its place. Pilate, however, demonstrated the truth for the moment by putting Christ to death. In the same way, all miracles and all the evidences of religion must be tried, whether prophecies, miracles, all the boasted regard of heaven to man, or respect to his offering, did these supernatural occurrences attain their end? did they give life? did they save from death? This is the *ultima ratio*. In this manner, the celebrated E. Littré, a French writer, says spirit-rapping must be tried, and all supernatural manifestations. *Cui bono*. Do they come to any good? do they answer any purpose, or the 'purpose for which they are said to have been performed? The miracles of Christ were to give life, and to save us from the cross on which nature had stretched us, though Peter turned them to a killing account when he had power in his hands. But for what end were the miracles of Christ, when he himself gave the contrary evidence to miracles, by suffering death on the cross? Miracles would prove salvation, but martyrdom, crucifixion, and death, would prove damnation. Hanging on the gallows is generally a proof of having committed a crime, and coming by your death unnaturally, is generally proof of having offended against the laws of man or of nature.

Every evidence of Christianity is a *reductio ad absurdum*. For the sake of the argument, let the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures be granted. God, therefore, failed, as the author of a book more than any man would have done. God, therefore, is inferior to a man. The religious, therefore, if they like, may be credited with such a God; or, it may be said, that such a God is totally incompatible with any idea of a God. The Bible, therefore, was not the inspiration of a God. The Bible being human, was the work of man. The miracles, the mediums, and the table-tapping, as the means, and the evidence would be sufficient of themselves to disprove the communication of spirits with men. If there are spirits, they ought appear openly to all men, and not make themselves ridiculous by making such an appearance in a parlour at the bidding of a witch of Endor to any Saul for half a sovereign. All the spirits raised as the representatives of Newton, Franklin, and other great men; God, angels, and devils, do not

rise to them, but sink to the dead level of the medium. They do not tell us anything of the past or future—nothing we did not know before. They are certainly not superior spirits, for they are inferior to man. Without, therefore, being able to account how it is done, we come to the conclusion that it is an imposition upon our senses. Every miracle, prophecy, martyrdom, as a demonstration of Divinity, is a *reductio ad absurdum*; for he ought to have accomplished his will.

In the alternations of Christianity, martyrdoms, and persecutions, have been the commonest arguments in practice. They seem mutually to answer and destroy each other. The Christianity established on the evidence of martyrdom, would seek in the martyrdom of another, the proof of an opinion contrary to its own. Martyrdoms and persecutions may be supported by the same reasons. If I am indifferent to death, the Christian may say, in order to save my own soul, can I think life worth preserving in another at the loss of his soul? Christ is made to say it is better to lose your life than your soul, which might be applied to others as well as yourself—do as you would be done unto in religion, and become the foundation of persecution. The history of Christianity has given unhappy experience of having been under such influence, and having denaturalised morality. When Christ was made to say that he came to bring fire and sword upon the world; when he paraphrased Deuteronomy, xiii., 6, and said to follow the cross was not only to *hate* your nearest and dearest relations, but you must also lose your own life, the letter gave countenance alike to persecutions and martyrdoms. When they were encouraged to death by the belief of a full revenge on their enemies, which was immediately to take place in reversal of their situations, there was already martyrdom and persecution in belief, and the belief gave rise to the practice; for in the same man, though not in the same individual, with a change of power, was a reversal of their positions. Christ was come to judge the quick and the dead. He was come to avenge the dead, and judge the living. Revenge was the Messianic idea of Cain. Persecution and hell have the larger share than love and heaven, in the principles of professional Christianity. The fulfilment of the Messianic idea, and Christ come to judgment in persecution, might be expected from the words of Paul, who said revenge upon their enemies was but righteousness in God. The blood of Christ, and of martyrs, by which may have been meant the blood of Christ, cried for vengeance to heaven, and unfortunately did not cry in vain. But, as in Abel's case, punishment did not fall upon the guilty, but upon those who were innocent of the blood, not in a deluge and quick extinction of water, but in the slow baptism of fire. What a benevolent moral aspect has religion given to God—alternate clouds and lightnings of heaven! 'God is a consuming fire,' as the apostle says; he bares the arm, he draws the sword, he shoots his arrows, he passes by in a whirlwind,

he sends his destroying angels upon earth—the sword, pestilence, famine, and fire. Poetry! ‘*Vinum demonum!*’ the intoxication of devils, as St. Augustine says.

Is it not more pleasant to believe in the Providence of nature, good and evil as material, mysterious though it be, than in the revelations and miraculous interference past, present, and to come, of a God. If there has been a great heat, as in the West Indies, up springs a whirlwind, and destroys everything before it—men, animals, buildings, and the fruits of the earth; if a ship comes across it, the vessel sinks, and the unfortunate souls are lost, or the fire, driven by the wind, consumes the prairie and the wood. Good and evil re-assert their balance. But if the wind had not come, it is certain there would have been equal or greater evil in the heat, so as to have rendered impossible the situation for existing life. The reader may turn to a useful little book on ‘Natural Philosophy,’ by the Rev. Dr. Giles, p. 15, 16. ‘Query. Of what use are the winds?—Answer. They purify the air, dry up damp, and are of great service to sailors in wafting ships across the sea.’

It is the same through all the administration of the events of nature; she is adjusting her balance, which sometimes is disturbed by man, if we are to believe in the causes ascribed to the flood in France. In removing the forests, it was said all delay was done away with in the melting of the snow. Whatever were the causes, it is better to think nature wanted water, than it was sent to destroy the present generation, as some French Roman Catholics said, because the Sabbath was not sufficiently observed; and as less work was wanted by heaven on earth, so more occasion to work was given. The vine disease was attributed, not to a fault in the cultivation of the plant, but was said to be a declaration in favour of Protestantism against the sacrifice of the mass. The potatoe disease was equally said to be the punishment for granting Catholic emancipation, not on those who had given it, but on those who had received it. What would be the justice of heaven in the hands of men. It would happen, as it was said, if the prayers of all were granted. Mutual destruction would ensue. As there is a natural, so there is probably a moral balance kept up in the affairs of men, though regardless of the individual, and only taking place in the action and reaction of centuries. The divine justice of religion would be even human injustice. Had the vengeance of God immediately taken place, as Paul said it would—if God were just—there might have been what we call moral and legal justice in it. But when vengeance falls upon those who did not commit the crime, it destroys all our ideas of moral government. Those are punished who were not guilty, and those receive the benefit who were not the injured. The parties who receive the benefit have not the least to do with those for whom the injured suffered and died. Such are the politics or the philosophy of religion and martyrdom.

The Jews thought adversity and prosperity, persecutions, and suffering

martyrdoms, were proofs in turn of the truth of their religion. Good and evil were the proofs of nature, which they figured under a God. Evil did not become personified by the Devil until the Apocrypha and Christianity. The Christians inherited both ideas—of good and evil—from the Old Testament, and the personality of the Devil from the Apocrypha. They anticipated success; they welcomed death and defeat as an augury of final triumph. The Rev. Mr. Conybeare, in his 'Perversion,' allows circumstances have gone more against the dogmas of Christianity than ever at the end of near two thousand years, which is proof to him of the final triumph of his belief in Christianity. Others declare corporeal struggles and mental sufferings before death, to be sure proofs of the immortality of the soul. But what signifies? With some people all disproof is proof. They live because they die, as St. Paul said. However Christians, of whatever sect, as long as they have possession, have truly what they say is a grand argument. We have to account, they say, for their present condition and existence; as long as that remains their faith is supported, and they may look with confidence to the future from the memory of the past. They may laugh at the infidels who have not yet ousted them from their position, or even gone out from them. The Christian in possession may, therefore, appeal to the martyr who put him in possession as evidence, though the martyr was evidence against his own religion at the time, and the possessor of the faith is evidence against it by being no martyr. The martyr is witness to the punishment of his belief; and the appeal to heaven for the truth is not answered by any interposition in his favour. What can be the conclusion? No other but that the belief is not from heaven. The evidence of the foundation of religion is reversed in its subsequent career. The New Testament Christians looked forward to no establishment, no permanence, but the end of the world. Therefore the present Christianity exists by virtue of the failure of original Christianity. Christianity was not, therefore; there was no end of the world. The religion of present Christianity must be different from the religion of primitive Christianity. The present Christianity neither has its martyrs nor the purpose of them. Directly Christianity came into power, martyrdom was no longer an immediate passport to heaven, to return with double power of retaliation. It was received as evidence of the truth of the past, while it became, as before, evidence of present guilt and falsehood. According to Paul, Christ was to come to make martyrs of those who had made them martyrs. Both, then, would have been true martyrs. As he did not come, it may be supposed that they were not martyrs, and did not testify to a true religion, but were evidence against themselves. Tacitus said if the Christians were not guilty of the fire of Rome, they were guilty of other things as bad, and therefore by their death were martyrs to their own crimes and to their own fortunes; for it did, says Tacitus, what persecution often does, excited sym-

pathy for them. This may be the whole secret of Christianity; it may have begun as a secret political society all over the empire, as it originally was a popular and national one amongst the Jews. They might not have had the best objects in view, or the best means of carrying them out, and these were political, rather than moral and spiritual. But when they suffered they began to be respected, and shaped their own religion by it, said sufferings were the terms of success—'patience is the badge of all our tribe'—imagined a resurrection, a Jesus Christ in their own history, one of the many anointed saviours who were to redeem them. There were many such types in their own history, many of the name of Jesus, still more who took the title of Christ, represented not to have been the best of characters by those who triumphed over the fallen, or by those who succeeded in being right. Some of these Jesus Christs to be found in Josephus were democratic leaders, robbers, and assassins. One Jesus, the son of Sirach, wrote all the morality of the gospels to be found in the Apocrypha before Jesus Christ said it. Taylor, of Norwich, used to say he did not believe any other Jesus Christ had ever existed. He thought the Jesus Christ of the gospels had existed some hundreds of years before. Another was a prophet, patient and suffering, and predicting woes: he became a martyr and a victim to them in his own person at the siege of Jerusalem. Finally, after many metamorphoses, Christians became what they are now, and made a dogmatic religion out of the materials of their history and ideas. Which religion, as it is in time, so in the nature of things, is it the farthest removed from facts and the truth. It was logical to suppose that if God was a being or a person, and a superintending Providence, that he interposed in the affairs of men. Ordeal, and trial by combat, were allowed on the idea of the martyrdom of the guilty. God was supposed to have found guilty, and to have punished with death, the defendant or combatant who died. Trial by ordeal was practised by the Jews, but not trial by combat. Both were practised by the Christians. The idea man has of justice gives him the idea of justice in God. Divine arbitration was, therefore, accepted by those fresh from the religious idea, and only abandoned when frequent experience proved that God had nothing to do with justice, virtue, or vice. Morality was, as God is, made to tell Cain between men, they must determine their affairs between themselves by the study of the laws of nature and their own good. The idea that God punished the wicked and rewarded the good, an idea of much controversy in the Old Testament, the idea on which ordeal and trial by combat were founded, was contrary to Christ, who said the laws of nature were the same to all. The Romans had no ordeals or trials by combat. They were remarkable for their administration of justice and the laws. It cannot, therefore, be adduced as evidence of civilisation introduced by Christianity, that ordeals and trials by combat—divine justice took the place of human and Roman. Our present laws and

justice were a return to the Roman. The age of miracles, the kingdom of Christ, spread over the world, after a full trial had proved a failure. In whatever shape it can be taken, Christianity has proved a failure, whether before or after the death of Christ, in this our life or the life to come, in its adversity or in its prosperity. If Christianity has failed in its catholicity, can it be expected to succeed in its promulgation by sects, each seeking a fresh trial of Christianity? The righteous Abel suffered death; Cain was not punished with death. This has been used as an argument against capital punishments. But if there was a God, he sanctioned murder or capital punishments by allowing Abel to be killed when he was aware of the intentions of Cain. Christ saw that the vulgar looked to the death of persons as evidence that they were in the wrong, and perhaps thought it would be a conclusion they would come to about him, and, therefore, had better be removed. He said they were not to think God had anything to do with it. He said the martyrs of his time, who were put to death by Pilate, were not worse than other people, and there was no question, then, about their having been better. If these had been the feasts, and loaves, and fishes first served out, nobody would have followed Christ. When the cross was put up, they fled. The Jews afterwards looked to God, in Patriarchal and Mosaical times, to defend them from death, and inflict it on their enemies. In questions of religion, Moses is made to lay it down as a law, that it was not what a prophet said or did, but what eventually happened was to guide them as to the reality of his pretensions, whether he really came from God. He was, however, to be put to death, in spite of miracles, if he preached any other God. Miracles and martyrdom, therefore, were considered conclusive evidence against him. All the evidences of religion were to prove a thing immediately; if they did not, they were adjudged to be false, and the religion. Another God, or a God, could only be proved by the event, the miracle of an accomplished fact. But there were always those who would not believe either in miracles or the facts accomplished. Really there is no evidence of religion, because there is no religion. History was written according to the issue favourable or unfavourable to the event. Saul was not, and David and Solomon were according to God's own heart. Even the prophecy of God, which promised the kingdom to the posterity of kings, proved of no avail, when the event happened otherwise. Then it was he had disobeyed the voice of God, and was made a martyr of. If misfortunes overtook a good king; if he suffered death, as in the case of Josiah, there was ever the resource he had disobeyed the voice of God in a prophet, not on a question of morality, religion, or politics, but, in the case of Josiah, on a question of military tactics. They never thought of, or cared for, the reflection that it was not justice to punish a man with death for such an error, and give the triumph to the Egyptians, the enemies of God, as well as of the king and of the nation. It

was sufficient God had declared against the king by his death, and he was a martyr or witness that he had done wrong.

Contrary to the evidence of Christian martyrdom, and as the only evidence capable of appealing to the reason and experience of man, was the trial of the prophets. The true God was to be proved by the fire from heaven, which should alight on the offering to him. The sacrifice to Jehovah was burnt, and the *ultima ratio* followed—the prophets of the false God—some hundreds were all massacred by the prophets of Jehovah. The true nature of martyrdom, and the most exact parallels to Christian martyrdoms, except in their issue, were shown when Daniel was cast into the den of lions, and was not touched by them; when Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego passed through a fiery furnace unharmed; when the Jews were on the eve of being destroyed, had not Esther made the execution fall on thousands of their enemies, the king's subjects. Esther is a romance, not moral or decent, yet is preserved in the canon of the inspired volume. But the festival in honour of her is kept more religiously than any other by the Jews. It is a national idea, and faith more than any other among them—a Messianic idea; and on this occasion they are said to indulge themselves to the full with thoughts of vengeance on their enemies.

The Christians say the Jews were a chosen people, and ever under trial, as the evidence of God against all prevailing superstitions and surrounding idolatries. Yet the Christians will not allow this argument to be good against themselves. Among Christians, the same argument for them is never against them. The above are two instances where their own evidence tells against them. A third instance is the argument of the universal idea, and the existence of Christianity in favour of it. In the Old Testament, and in the New, the proof of the truth is in its not being universal, but in the fewness of its followers. In the Bible it is revelation *versus* natural religion. In Christianity the appeal is more to natural religion.

None, according to themselves, have been more constant in martyrdom than the Jews. They have accepted martyrdoms as punishments for being wrong, and as proofs of being right. The martyrdoms of Christianity are nothing to their martyrdoms. The length of their persistence to their religion before Christianity may be judged by the length of their persistence to it after Christianity. They are both proofs against Christianity. There is certainly more moral right in the martyrdoms of the Jews as evidence against Christianity. Their martyrdoms have never been doubted as those of Christianity. Their martyrdoms may almost be said to have been seen, and to be yet seen. However, the martyrdoms of the Jews are the stock arguments for Christianity.

Christianity has endeavoured to give instances of Christian Daniels—lions in the arena having crouched at the feet of saints. But such examples would support our argument—that facts, successful events, sal-

vation, and redemption, would be witnesses to the truth of religion; and that the dying for it is proof of its falsehood and failure. This would be absolutely proved, if it was acknowledged that God had exercised his power to save some. Christianity, in its founder, should have been established on the sound principle laid down by Moses—that the event would prove the prophet, and that it was not to be in the distant future, but immediate, the prophet was to die, if he did not speak true. Such was, no doubt, the original idea of Christianity. Christ made his appearance to be successful. The attempt was a failure. Amends were supposed to be made in his showing himself after his death, and promising immediately to return, and fulfil the Messianic conditions and ideas. The resurrection was only a sign to reassure his followers, who, for the moment, thought all was lost. The resurrection was an evidence, and gave a hope which has had its time, and expired. The redemption of mankind was not completed. It is therefore, an absurdity now to believe in the deposition of the resurrection as to something which did not occur. The resurrection of Christ had its evidence in the future, as well as gave its evidence of the future. The resurrection gave its evidence to an immediate future; and the immediate future should have been evidence of the resurrection. The idea appealed to a fact which never occurred. The failure has now been made the dogma of religion. The essence of Christianity was, as Jowett says, in the immediate coming of Christ. No one, therefore, who now believes in the resurrection and ascension, has the true faith of a Christian. The true faith of a Christian is gone. It is impossible to have it. The religion was originally never more than a hope of the future; and when the hope was gone, was elevated into a faith of the past. The heretics, in the Epistle of Peter, who did not believe in the immediate coming on earth, are now the orthodox. They are worshippers of the pure idea—an idea which can never be shown by the fact.

Miracles, prophecies, martyrdoms—the evidences of Christianity—were all changed from what they were in the Old Testament. They were the evidences of the immediate. Christianity now believes only in the evidences—the evidences which have been disproved in the result. Miracles were performed by Moses before Pharaoh. The Jews could refer to the exodus out of Egypt, their preservation through the wilderness, their subsequent possession of the Holy Land, as proof of the testimony and the promised event. Moses suffered; he was a type of Christ, but he was a real atonement for the Jews. The fifty-third of Isaiah has been referred to him; and his history would bear out every verse. The majority of the verses do not agree in the letter with Jesus Christ; and the whole of them in spirit do not agree with him. The Messianic idea in the fifty-third of Isaiah does not consist so much in the details and signs, as being fully carried out in final triumph and ascendancy. The history of Jesus Christ only agrees

in some unimportant details with the alleged prophecy, which details are only the reverses, the martyrdoms of a Messianic idea. They were equally experienced by Moses first; and, therefore, the description was endeavoured to be fulfilled by the prophet who wished to come after him, as next to him, and greater than him. All resemblance was lost in the conclusion between them, much to the disadvantage of Christ. The fifty-third of Isaiah, though called a prophecy, is not, in the modern sense of prophecy. It does not speak of the future, but the past. It is all the same to Christians. The prophecies of Christ, of the gospels, and of Christianity, are clearly not in favour of him, but against him. If such a character appeared as a prophet, he was to be put to death. The Christians appeal to the very part of the Old Testament which speaks of the prophets which should come and succeed Moses; and which teaches the Jews how to distinguish between the true and the false prophets for the future, as a prediction of the Christ who was to come. The law is a prophecy, which says a thief, or a murderer, shall meet with punishment when he commits a crime. In no other sense, except as instructions to deal with religious pretenders, prophets, and Christs, can Deut. xiii. and xviii. be taken as prophetic of Jesus Christ and other offenders against the laws. There were many other laws Jesus Christ offended against, such as witchcraft, necromancy, raising the dead, for which he was liable to be put to death. There was no law against keeping himself in life. Could Paul mean that Christ came to satisfy the law by fulfilling it? for so do criminals fulfil the law by breaking it, and receiving punishment. As Moses forewarned the Jews of Christ, so equally Christ forewarned them of all other Christs. He said, as Moses said, all their miracles were good for nothing. Those were to be saved who paid no attention to them. There was but one Christ; we think we know him; but are not all religions false Christs? and therefore, none can say upon the true faith of a Christian, because the true faith is to have none.

The promised land has been compared as a type with the kingdom of heaven held out by Christ. There is the difference: the promised land was made over in possession to the Jews: the kingdom of heaven on earth was never realised by the Christians. The signs and the facts were fulfilled by a greater fact in the Old Testament, and were again to be replaced in the Messianic ideas of the Jews. The things hoped for and evidenced were to make way for the substance. The facts, as the supposed evidence of Christianity, and the idea, however changing, never made way for the fact. Christianity had two sets of evidences which equally failed—the evidence that Christ gave of his having come, and the evidence he gave he would come again when he had gone. The Jews had, therefore, two evidences against Christ—that Christ did not come, the Messianic idea, or reign—in the alleged life of Christ. No semblance of them came after his death, or the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews were abused for

believing that the promises of God were ever meant to be kept, or that there was any reality in the Messianic idea. The ideas became facts in the Old Testament, and the facts became ideas in the New; and ended not in fresh facts, but in the dogmas of Christianity applied to the past and the future in another world

Again, miracles were performed before the Kings of Babylon, and in public, under untoward circumstances, and before the public who disbelieved in them. They were the trials of witnesses, and ended in triumphant acquittals—verdicts in favour of the Jews. They were not a modern army of martyrs, who continually do cry in heaven. Every Christian falls foul of some of the evidences in turn. Paley went upon the miracles, but he discountenanced the prophecies. Mr. Conybeare, who writes more against the clergy of the church than against infidels, cannot help ridiculing prophecy, by introducing a popular schoolmaster as having obtained his celebrity by publishing a book on ‘Unfulfilled Prophecies.’ The very words are contradictions. Prophecies are not when unfulfilled. We are to believe words are sent not to be fulfilled. They are to float for ever through the world, and find a *meaning*. What an idea of prophecy among the religious public! No wonder it excites the ridicule of the more reasonable among the clergy. Nor did prophecies require an unlimited time of application. They were to meet with fulfilment in the life-time of the prophets, or his contemporaries, or they were general and true to all time. If they were precise in particulars, and represented to have been made any length of time before the thing could have been known by natural means—such as the advent of the Persians under their king, Cyrus—nearly one hundred years before, they were believed to have been written after the events, and inserted in the prophecies. Christians will not take a direct prophecy. It is better for them if it is indirect and unfulfilled. Isaiah, for having mentioned Cyrus by name, is divided off as the true and the false Isaiah, true as having made no prophecies, and false as having made one. The Apocrypha gives evidence throughout of Jesus Christ, therefore, it is separated from the rest—called Apocryphal, general, or false, and not given in the English Bible. Nothing, says the article, is to be proved from them, because they prove too much. The second Esdras is named after him, who is supposed to have lived four hundred years before Christ, and to have completed the Old Testament, if it be as old. He mentions Jesus Christ by name, as a person who will appear after four hundred years. The commentators in Mant’s Bible say, of course, this is a forgery; and must have been written after the event. Prophecies, therefore, are more evidence against Christianity than for it. Besides, once allow there are forgeries—writings after the event, and pretending to be before, and actually inserted in the Bible as four hundred years before, when the Old Testament was closed; (in the Protestant Bibles, the Apocryphal books

are put along with the canonical; in the Roman Catholic, they are said to be equally canonical); what guarantee have we for the credibility of any part of the Bible? The Bible confesses to be a compilation of admitted forgeries; asserted and contested authenticities.

Martyrdoms, or failures, were never produced as evidence of the truth till after Christ. Martyrdoms of old were sometimes acknowledged to be the punishment of faults, and terms of reconciliation with heaven, or were to be resented by heaven; and compensation was to be made in this world. The punishment and advantage of martyrdom was to accrue to the Jews. The followers of the true prophet, or the world, were to receive the benefit. Those who put to death the prophets, and made martyrs of the Jews, were to be punished, if not now, in their posterity.

Jesus Christ might foretel the approaching misfortunes of the Jews in retaliation of the blood shed from Abels until his own. It was not usual with the Jews, or with humanity, or with the idea of Divinity, to extend retribution over such a space, particularly as the Jews, divided by Noah and the flood from the antediluvian, were not, according to the Bible, the descendants of Cain. A stranger doctrine of imputation this would be—that the sin of Cain should be imputed to the Jews, than the sin of Adam should be imputed to all mankind—which Christ did not originate. The Jews descended from Seth—actually stood in the place of Abel, so they were to be punished for being murdered in their ancestor; and take the consequences of their own murder by Cain.

As the gospels were written after the destruction of Jerusalem, nothing could be easier than to suppose he foretold the consequences of rejecting him would be the same as having rejected the other prophets, misfortune having come upon misfortune, and no Messianic reign having succeeded. In the time of Pontius Pilate, the destruction of the Jews was already happening under the eye of whoever lived in the Holy Land. No governor had been more cruel to the Jews than Pontius Pilate, which gives reason to suppose the period of his rule might have been chosen for the sufferings of Christ preceding his crucifixion, in the destruction of Jerusalem. The historical evidence of the cruel character of Pontius Pilate, proceeding from Jew and Gentile, is testimony against the probability of the conduct towards Jesus Christ in the gospels. It is much more probable if, as Bacon said, he spoke in jest, that he acted in jest, and to spite the Jews, when he crowned him, and had him crucified as 'King of the Jews.' He would have seen no fault in him if there had been a Jesus Christ to have raised an insurrection. That was what all the Roman governors of Judea, and particularly Pontius Pilate, was accused of—any pretext to pillage the Jews. The departure from the verisimilitude of history is proof that Jesus Christ was a fictitious personage; and it shows not much Jewish nationality in the compilers of the gospel, to make the Jews odious for the death of

Christ, as if it was for a religious reason; and Pilate to be preferred, when it is evident that when brought before Pilate, Jesus Christ was condemned for a political offence against the Romans. We have the evidence of Tacitus as to that. Vengeance, however, was all that Jesus Christ could foretel. The sacrifice made by him, the atonement and reconciliation that was to come after his death, and their death, were as illusive as the peace and good-will towards mankind, promised by angels in his name at his birth.

The dogmas of Christianity fall to the ground if the atonement was no atonement; if, as the evidence of it, and of the promised fruits of the sacrifice, Christ did not immediately come again; if there was no fulfilment of the Messianic idea in the alteration of the world, and of humanity. Any person may make himself a sacrifice, and, as often happens, without any avail; but he is no atonement if the result for which he was made a sacrifice does not arrive. The sacrifice and atonement in the case of Christ, was as resultless as the animals offered up by Abel, and the death of Abel, unless in the Messianic idea of modern civilisation achieved by Cain. No civilisation could proceed, no progress could be made, as long as people were quarreling about religion. We may say of other dogmas, the bare facts of Christ's life and death, and the non-fulfilment afterwards, formed no trinity in unity. There was the contrary shown to all union, which, by some, is supposed to mean religion, either between heaven and earth, between earth and men, or between mankind. Such unity of the many in the one is only to be seen in nature; and there was no supernatural, miraculous, or religious evidence given of it in Christ. He brought the sword into the world as the victim to it; and there was no unity of religion to be found in it; and, therefore, not in the religion of Christianity.

Even in the late war, we may see how the martyrdom of misfortune and success was alternately appealed to in the same affair. The Russian General—Mouravieff—declared that the city of Kars had been delivered up to him by God, through the means of famine, God having first inflicted on his army a murderous repulse. The Deity is accused of delighting in death, and obtaining his desire on both parties by sword, pestilence, and famine; when the moral is that both nations are punished by offending against the laws of nature, and their own good; and should not have gone to war. Death by the hands of each other, and by pestilence and famine, being the certain result of war. We may see in the proclamation of Mouravieff to his soldiers, how a sacred history may be written. The Russians alternately die as martyrs to the truth, or *live* triumphant and successful witnesses of it. All appeal to God before the issue, and after, whether good or bad. What truth, or what evidence can there be of God in these events of the world, except that he had nothing to do with them, and that he is not? It has been said that wars are the greatest proofs there is no

God; and yet never is he so much in requisition as on those occasions. The affairs of heaven, the justice of God on earth, and on man, are said to be carried on by wars. '*Te Deum Laudamus*—we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.'

Wars and religions are the greatest proofs of the folly of mankind. As the greater portion of the history of mankind is filled up with them, it may be said that vice and folly are predominant. Christians ascribe it to a God; Materialists to the nature of things, and good and evil adjusting the balance. One has succeeded by the other—war by religion, and religion by war. It is war between mankind, whether inflicting persecution, or suffering martyrdom. The religious say triumphantly, none of the undertakings of men succeed without religion. Men will not combine in common action, at once obedient and energetic, without religion. It is the truth of nature, that you cannot get on so well in the world with simple morality, as by enlisting the vices and passions of mankind. There is the zeal Christ speaks of, and which is demanded by religion, and willingly given, regardless of morality. Look at the exertions of Christian missions against each other. Christians say Christianity has succeeded in consequence, in spite of their differences. It has, however, been a long time in doing it, whatever it is it has done and established. Christ said martyrdoms had been from the righteous Abel down to his death—six thousand years—and yet they had not introduced the true religion upon earth. There have been many martyrs and religions of Christianity since his death; but it is the question whether any of the religions established be the one for which they died; whether, in the present religions, there be any of the past. It is certain, as Mr. Jowett says, that the present Christianity is not the religion for which Christ died on the cross. The only moral, or *rationale* of martyrdom is, that others may come after it and reap the fruits. Then those who have made the sacrifices become the atonements. But it is questionable whether, in following such policy, the light is not altogether extinguished; the darkness knew it not, as happens in many cases. Men may think there must be something in that for which men will die. Men will die for anything; and there were ample motives for Christians to die. For mere opinion, as many have died, against one as for one. Few, if any, reasonable people have ever laid down their lives for a reasonable object. It may be generally argued, that neither the object nor the people was reasonable. The persecutor triumphs over the martyr who has nothing but his pity or blessing to give in exchange.

When a man has been ready to lay down his life for anything, it is general proof that he has no other evidence to give for it. He would even be very glad to give the contrary evidence, and convince his enemies by making martyrs of them; and we have had instances in the life-times of the same persons of being martyrs, and making martyrs; making martyrs, and

becoming martyrs; begin by one, and end by the other, or take several courses of both.

However, it is true in history, that if people can be persuaded to die, they may establish the wrong over the right. They will prevail over those who cannot be persuaded to die in resistance of the wrong, or to make martyrs of the aggressors when they have had them in their power. The history of martyrdoms have been the triumphs of intolerance. Many have been martyrs because they would not suffer other religions.

There have been many martyrs, and many successes in religion, so that they equally prove against each other. The martyrs are against the martyrs; the events on one side are against the events on the other. So that the martyrs give proof against the species of evidence; and the events give proof that the events prove nothing. Prophecies, miracles, martyrdoms, prove nothing if the event is not made to correspond with them. We say is made to correspond, because we do not believe the prophecies, miracles, martyrdoms ever did correspond with the religion—with the Christianity they are said to have proved. Martyrdoms come to prove a thing at the time; and if not proved at the time, they prove nothing afterwards. Christianity ought to have been proved at the time of Christ. He ought to have proved that he did not die to those who sentenced and put him to death. Ever afterwards, he should have been a living witness. But his dying for it, supposing he ever lived or died, cannot prove a thing two thousand years afterwards, because it cannot be proved to be the thing he came to prove. We are quite in the dark what he came to be a witness to. Some say the resurrection; but just as many say the atonement; the religion having prevailed, not by martyrdom, but the contrary of it. Worldly ascendancy, or preservation, the contrary of martyrdom, the event is equally accepted, as evidence in favour of the religion. No miracles, or martyrdom prove anything of themselves. They are said to come to prove a thing; therefore, according to divine design, and according to reason, that would be the truest religion—the real religion, which succeeds only in the event, without miracles and martyrdoms. This is said to have been the case with Mahommedanism. Mahommedanism, therefore, is the true religion.

Martyrdom is brute force in those who give it or accept it. The thing is proved by how much physical power a person can sustain exercised over him. On the other hand, persecution proves a thing by the quantity of force employed which can produce persuasion.

Some say Prometheus was a type—the precedent idea of Christ. Christ, or progress, or mind, or Providence, which is progress chained to a rock, and crucified, where he foretels Jupiter will fall, cannot stop his father, or progress. Prometheus is chained to the rock by two representatives of physical force—violence and strength, by might over right. It was not

the martyrdom, but the idea, which finally conquered in ages afterwards. Prometheus and Christ—the idea—prevailed. Both prevailed over God in favour of man, as long as it was the idea, or good of man, against heaven. Infidelity in Christ, and not religion, has been really nailed to the cross. The martyr is always in opposition to the existing religion. Religion only uses the martyr afterwards, as she swindles everything. She would always persuade mankind that she suffered, as the Church; that it was for the Church as she is, that Christ, and the martyrs of the Reformation, died. Martyrdom ends in the Church of Rome, or with Anglicanism; but those men could not have died to promote the worldly establishment of those who say they have inherited what the holy army of martyrs left them. If they are the successors of the martyrs, and if martyrdom proves anything, they should continue always martyrs—suffering living witnesses before the world. If they are in the line of the apostles, they should live as the apostles are said to have lived. Instead of which, the contrary of martyrdom is given in the Church, as proof of religion, or they show both Lazarus, or the poor curate, is made to be the martyr. There is Dives and Lazarus, and a gulph between them. The fact is sufficient in this world. We would rather not have it in another world, though Dives and Lazarus would have to change places. Their positions should not be as they are in this world. Christ anticipated their change in the Roman empire. His parable, probably, meant no more than revolution. Our bishops have sent all the parables to another world. How convenient for them and for this world! The greatest cheats in this world have imagined another. The morality of this world should be fulfilled in this world. Future rewards and punishments are most immoral substitutes. Yet, the deluded by those who have an interest in religion, say they do themselves no harm by believing in religion.

There are plenty of martyrs to be had cheap. Soldiers will die for a shilling a day without proving the right of the cause in which they are engaged. There are martyrs to die. Thieves and robbers do not lead a very pleasant life—one that would be chosen generally. They are liable to torture and death.

Virtue has its own reward. Christians have a pleasure in believing amidst their misfortunes, they say, denied to the sinner and unbeliever. Christ came to save sinners; the criminals, therefore, ought to be those who should meet with reward in another world. They have been martyrs in this—martyrs to the misery of vice—which is the martyrdom of nature, and of morality. Christians ought particularly to love infidels, and give up their places to them as their greatest enemies. But when will the infidel ever be tried to be convinced by such evidence? Christians have no enemies to bless but unbelievers. No one can do them any harm.

Martyrdom was the evidence to a man's belief. Belief in what? Religiously—that he would be much better off than he was before. It was not,

therefore, a disinterested belief. The infidel, therefore, is the only true martyr, because, to him, it is a loss of everything in this world; and, in spite of the hopes and the fears of another world.

Soldiers die as a matter of business for next to nothing; and have established successive dominions over the world. It is even said that the Romans met death for an idea that their posterity would be masters of the world. Yet, what they did so easily from mere human motives, Christians think very much of when they say they were supported by the divine will and power. One sort of courage was exchanged for another. When the primary courage of the conqueror of the world failed, he changed it for the courage which rushed upon death in martyrdom, as a means of conquering; and finally, the former conquerors of the world had to accept conversion, or death, from their Christian conquerors. They could not defend their ancient Gods with whom they had the ancient idea.

There is a Latin poet to be found in the collection of Dr. Giles's 'Heathen Records,' who, confounding Jews and Christians together, says it was an ill-fated day when the Romans ever had anything to do with them, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The conquered, and dispersed, and the martyrs had conquered those who had meddled with them; and the more he said the Romans persecuted them, the more the power of the Jewish nation and belief spread, and the greater their eventual triumph.

The Romans affixed the world to the cross, and were finally put upon it themselves. The cross conquered them. The original idea of conquest was the Messiahship, the kingdom of heaven to the old Romans. When it was fulfilled, their descendants became sick of it. In the same manner, the Christians, who succeeded the Romans, and established unity of religion and dominion of Christ over the world, were wearied, or wearied the world in their success. The Romans and the Catholics, in their place, were, as a body, what thieves and robbers are as individuals. They all suffered martyrdom to gain the same ends—the dominion of the world—or to make the rest of the world a prey. The world now suffers from the pertinacity of rival martyrdoms. It is that which makes the Roman Catholic dangerous to the state. When Christ said they were thieves and robbers who went before him, the idea may have been—on such principles has the world hitherto been governed. Parties allied to all sorts of Gods, Messiahs, and religions have been trying, and are ever trying, to obtain supremacy over the world. As long as any man has dominion over the other in matters of religion, so long as any one enjoys any temporal advantage over another by his religion, so long is he a thief and a robber, and the Christ has not come foretold by the prophets, when no one shall attempt to teach his brother, and knowledge shall flow over the land. Not the past, but the present, Christians are the impostors.

Jews and Christians at the last moment of their lives looked to a reversal

of their martyrdoms, as our criminals sentenced to death do to a reprieve. Such is the natural hope and faith of man. The dying martyr thought a reprieve would come from heaven. He was taught it had come in some instances. Angels had delivered the prisoner, withdrew the victim from death, or made the animals and executioners miscarry before the Christian. If dead, they were taught from St. Stephen that the heavens opened, and the angels descended to convey the body and spirit of the martyr up to heaven. Christ was the example of what was to happen to every martyr in his own case. Martyrs of those times proved their belief in something else than mere belief, and the reverse of the present theory of martyrdom, that it is only evidence of opinion.

As it really stands, the evidence of the martyr is, he proved his belief, and proved there was no truth in it; it produced no immediate and practical effect; it did him no good, but brought upon him the greatest of all evils and punishments—death. The courage of the martyr is really excited by much greater rewards than the courage of him who suffers death in war, or in any other cause; it is only he who puts him to death, who cannot conceive why he dies, and is, therefore, liable to be persuaded by it, thinking there may be sufficient cause for the effect.

It may be said that the person who suffers death for the dogmas of religion, himself declares war upon society, and departs from the principles of peace and charity. Nobody is put to death for merely doing good. As Paul says, the dogma is not essential, and has in it something provocative of hatred, exclusion, and division in man. If it did not present itself as moral, and claim morality to support it, it knows itself that it could not exist, however much it may violate morality on the strength of it, and by confusion of men's ideas about religion and morality, God and man. The animosity of one religion against another, which says it is damnation in persons or society who hold an opinion, and damnation even to those who pay it any respect, is unjustifiable. If martyrs provoke their being put to death by those who are thus injured by them, the guilt appears to be the greatest in the martyr. The one defends society against injuries, the other expects his reward in committing them. It may be said that the martyr is guilty of murder or suicide, for he has done that for which there was no necessity, and which has brought upon him death. There should be toleration; but it is difficult to conceive the case in which a man should die for an opinion. If there be one, it is an exception to the rule. Persons may endure suffering, not in order to get it, but to break down persecution by throwing discredit upon it. He would not be justified in incurring death for it, or even suffering, if there were no chance of getting the persecution removed. We may judge of those who have suffered martyrdom for mere opinion: by-the-way, those of the same opinion have acted towards others when they had the power.

It has been observed in society and politics, and has been proved on a large scale in religion, that those out of power preach against the doctrine and practice of those in power; and no sooner are they in power than they adopt the principles and practices they condemned, and by which they gained their position. Thus, at the Reformation, the Protestants proclaimed free inquiry and deprecated persecution; when their turn of power came, they forbid free inquiry, and persecuted to the death those who adhered to the old opinion, and those who carried out their own differences of dogma further than themselves. All which proves how man is entirely governed by circumstances, and shapes his ideas and conduct accordingly. Liberty, the religious say, is given to follow the truth, which is always in those who have the power and the way of illustrating the saying, and giving the proof that 'great is truth and will prevail,' by persecuting those who are said to follow falsehood, and who are those who are out of power. Liberty of conscience in religion, they say, would give liberty of practice in immorality; and they pronounce authoritatively that holding some dogmas of religion, or wanting others, have produced immoral consequences, or been dangerous to society, when they are more open to such inferences from a knowledge of their practice, as well as their opinions. What they object to has only been injurious to themselves. The Christian martyr will preach against persecution, proclaim liberty of inquiry and of action, even talk of loving his enemies, blessing them that curse him, and declare them to be the principles and practice of Christianity, when he is in want of the practice of these virtues towards himself. But immediately his circumstances are reversed, he does as he was done unto. Man in the aggregate is naturally a swindler, and he likes to profit by the false pretences of being what another might honestly have been. So they may be said, in the language of the religious, to put Christ upon the cross again. Man represents himself as one thing, and gains the day by it; and the man who succeeds him says it was intended for the times and the circumstances in which he had been. A different policy must be now pursued; times are now changed. Even in morals and common life, few individually can resist circumstances. The philosopher poor will not be one rich. How few of the rich can take up the cross, or enter into the kingdom of heaven; as long as they are poor, they may follow, take up, and profess the cross.

If one thing follows another, we say it is the effect of the cause, even if it might be supposed that the cause would not produce such an effect. It has been experienced that Christianity has produced persecution more than any other religion, though it might be imagined from its commencement, professions, and propagation, that it was incapable of such a result. It is strictly in human nature, though you may expel it for a time, it will return, that if you are injured you will resent it. The intolerance of Christianity has been more especially excited by the dogma of a life after death. Infi-

delity to the doctrine has become next to taking away a man's life, and inflicting death, the one thing which is most prized, and the other which is most feared. So said the great Dr. Johnson.

It is, therefore, manifest from one's nature, and the facts of experience, that if you suffer, you will make retribution upon those who have inflicted it. In the spirit of martyrdom, therefore, is the spirit of persecution, and it is sure to attend it. Man must be judged, not by the life of one, or lives of a set of men, but by his whole history, as in any other science, by as an extended knowledge of facts as possible. In all the prophets there are just the same exhortations to martyrdom, patience under suffering as was delivered by Christ; in Jeremiah the very words of Christ are given, that if struck on one cheek you present the other, and that you are to pray for your enemies. In these prophets, a time is held out when the Jews may expect vengeance on their enemies, but not in their lives. According to the Bible, it was the same to the Jews, if promises of rewards or of vengeance on their enemies were fulfilled some hundred years afterwards. The same people who were never to resent injuries, and were to pray for the good of their enemies, are also in the Old Testament made to look forward to a time when they may dash the heads of the children of those same enemies—the Babylonians—against the stones. It does not signify, therefore, if a man, or set of men, preach martyrdom, if they look forward to vengeance; the same sufferings or punishment of their enemies after their lives, in this, or even in another world. According to the Prophets, Jews, and Christians, God takes vengeance a long time afterwards, and frowns on the land and on a people, who were not the same people as those who injured his people, and when he is at the same time employed in punishing his own people for offences against him. And this is made the great evidence of prophecy and evidence of Christianity, by Dr. Keith. Paley and Dr. Arnold revolted against such evidence; and every reasonable man deserts, more or less, the army of martyrs, the witnesses to the evidences of Christianity. Such prophecies may be said to be only an interpretation of nature, that the earth and men of all nations will suffer, if they do not all adopt the ways of peace and goodness. Volney has pointed out the consequences of evil, the results of nature, in 'The Ruins of Empires.' He has, therefore, been claimed by writers on the 'Evidence of Prophecy.' We only wish he were read by their readers. When the religious interpret the course of nature and experience as the vengeance of heaven, they have an example, and they are not slow to follow it, though they really make God follow their own example. Christ said, in the commencement of his Sermon on the Mount, that all their enemies were to take their places. The woes given to him are no other than curses, as the verities are rather more than yea and nay. He did not specify any time, but his disciples thought it was to be immediate. They were for bringing down vengeance by fire from

heaven on a village that did not receive them; and though he could not execute their vengeance, yet he told them it should come. When he sent them forth, he said it should be worse for those cities who did not receive them, than for Sodom or Gomorrah. He said such should be the treatment of those cities who did not receive *him*. All the parables preach extermination and endless torture of their enemies. Everything goes to prove that it was in this life, in this world, they expected vengeance, atonement for their sufferings, to be at one with their enemies, which was the redemption and atonement they looked for; though, as it did not come, it was said afterwards to mean redemption from sin, from the world, and the eternal torments of hell, and another life and another world. Hating those whom you should love the most, was quite incompatible with patient endurance under suffering, doing good to those who did you evil, and blessing those who cursed you. Hating your father and mother, for no reason, but for an opinion, was carrying to the furthest extreme hatred in theory, if it could not be put in practice, and would quite justify what it did lead to—putting your relations and friends to death. A man or woman might leave them to be husband and wife, and to give fresh life, and take their parents' places as parents; but religion said they were not only to leave, but hate their parents, and their own life, for an opinion or belief. Mankind do not want being recommended to hate; and under such inculcation, being told to love is an hypocrisy, the extreme of love, coupled with such extremes of the contrary, can only mean that the one or the other may be used when it suits a purpose. Of such a nature, therefore, were the contrary declarations made of, and by Christ himself. Of similar import was the declaration of Christ on being led to execution, that if they had followed him, all would have been well with them, but as they had not, 'behold your house is left unto you desolate;' the coming destruction of Jerusalem was supposed to be foretold. We have seen it quoted as an instance of beauty. Newman does not like it. But the truth is, it is torn out of the text of 2nd Esdras. Such borrowings appear to us an infallible evidence of a fictitious character, and takes away any compassion we should feel, even if Jesus Christ was an impostor. We can see only an idea dressed up, and going to crucifixion, and not a person. Christ would not be a martyr if he could help it; and as he was compelled to be, atonement was to be made for it on the Jews. 'Father, forgive them!' is one of those contradictory traits given here, acting upon some other idea, and is nonsense in Christianity. If he must be crucified they must crucify him, and he knew what he had foretold must happen. We do not, of course, believe any person or God was acting such a piece of hypocrisy; but we see in it human nature and Christianity playing its usual game of self-contradiction and hypocrisy. Nothing can be stronger than the language which is used in one of the epistles, that vengeance will speedily arrive on all their enemies; they will have to suffer what they had

dealt, when the martyrs had become wearied of endurance, and of waiting for the time when they should triumph over all their enemies. From such principles, martyrdom and persecution, legitimately and conjointly flowed. You were told to provoke the first, and you gained by being persecuted; and a time would come when those who persecuted you would be the persecuted, and would be the martyrs. When the Christians came into power, or alternate sects of Christians, what could they see in it, but the time come when the prophecies and promises of their Lord were fulfilled, and they might execute their vengeance, or that of heaven, upon their enemies? Then when you hated your father or mother, and your own life for Christ, how could you better show it, and even love to them, than by roasting them? You were still a martyr for them. This is the real meaning of the words in the Christian vocabulary, and the inversion of morality occasioned by religion. You hated for Christ's sake, and their sake, when your natural feeling was love; you hated those whom you would otherwise have loved; and how more could you show your love for them than by persecuting them, in spite of what they felt, and of your own feelings, if by that means you saved your own, theirs, or even other souls? It is only shaping your own conduct by the whole theory of Christianity—that he showed his love so great for mankind; that he provoked death at their hands, at the same time that they are to be punished with speedy vengeance, and everlasting torments for rejecting him. He forgave injuries when he was consummating their ruin. How father and son could be one, or Christ one, has puzzled the Roman Catholics, when such differences prevailed between them. Persecution of man is the only possible duty to God.

When God defended religion by a flaming sword; when Cain and Abel threw such zeal into religion that could only be extinguished by the death of one; when Christ said he came to bring fire and sword into the world, and excite the most intense hatred between mankind; he said a truth, that persecution and martyrdom would always be the best means and principles for establishing and making religion. A religion that only preached morality and peace would soon die out. There must be penalties attendant upon it of death here, and death hereafter, and religion and rival creeds will flourish on the excitement. Thus Christianity and Paganism acted over the Cain and Abel to each other, until the younger overthrew the elder. After the establishment of Christianity over the empire, the new religion was kept alive by the divisions in itself, and fresh vigour was infused into it by the competition of Mahommedanism. Nor were there wanting Greek and Roman Cains and Abels, nor crusades of the Roman Catholic against the precocious Protestantism of the Albigenes. Some have said that Christianity appeared to them divine because it existed in spite of its crimes; but the reality is, it existed by favour of them, because it could stir up more than anything else the passions of mankind. Some

think Christianity would have died away in Roman Catholicism, when—luckily for it—the Reformation arose, and gave to religion the original power of its first parents—Cain and Abel—and fulfilled in it the prophecies of God, of the flaming sword, and the promises of Christ. It has become almost proverbial in consequence, that if you wish to fan into a flame a religious opinion or absurdity, you must persecute it. One would almost think Roman Catholicism knew so well that persecution and martyrdom were the secret of its existence, and only chance of salvation, that they did everything in their power in a free government to draw it down upon them. Even necessary misfortunes it turns to account, and in wars and revolutions it finds food for its existence. When religion was becoming again, not hot or cold, but rather lukewarm, both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism received fresh blood into its veins after the Revolution of 1793 and of 1848.

There is Louis Napoleon, a most religious monarch, appealing to miracles in his favour—and the Pope returns on the point of French bayonets with the dogma of the immaculate conception, or ‘Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Anne.’

Even the Roman Catholics allow they cannot be commonly moral without persecution. It is true of all rich religions. None can be kept commonly moral without the fire and sword, amputation and cauterization. ‘He whom he loveth he chasteneth’ is true of the religions, if not of all men. The Roman Catholics say the Reformation and the Revolution were in consequence of their crimes. The church had the teaching of the French people for more than 1,500 years. The French people were the eldest children of the church, and had the real truth of Christianity in transubstantiation, the mass, confession, and the worship of the Virgin. The consequence was that the sword had to be applied severely to them. The horrors of the French Revolution were not, as religion says, because the French people were without her—there she was established in the possession and practice of all her dogmas; but because they had had too much of her, and had no morality in her place, no direction of their reason. They proved there could be plenty of religion and no morality, instead of the saying, there is no morality without religion. Religion was the cause of the fire and the sword of the French Revolution, and not infidelity in the dogmas of religion. And if they used the extreme measures of Cain, they may be said to have borrowed them from the examples of the Roman Catholics, the victims their brother Abel slaughtered on the altar.

When these collisions take place between religion and the people, it is always on account of offended morality and sense of justice of the people. So far from there being no morality without religion, religion cannot get on without affecting morality. Though religion may for a long time—a longer time than any other evasion—defraud people of morality, yet the day of retribution does sometimes come, as in the French Revolution.

Though there may be no absolutely immorality in the bishops, and superior clergy of Great Britain and Ireland—they generally obey the laws, and preserve the respectabilities of life—yet they offend against the moral feelings of the people. When the people come more and more to understand that the clergy should never be paid; and that to be a Christian, according to Christ, was to give up all they had to the poor; was to be Lazarus, and that they were acting the part of Dives; that they were not Christians as long as they had their thousands a-year, their comfortable houses and furniture, their cooks, their servants, their wines, and their carriages, it would be no more than a sense of justice which should provoke them to the same retaliation which occurred at the French Revolution. Christ did himself the same as the French at the Revolution of 1793, when he said that those who prophesied, preached, and performed miracles in his name, should go to hell at the day of his judgment; and those who gave a cup of water to each other, and did the kind offices of the poor to the poor, should go to heaven. Such occasions as the French Revolution, can be no other than those days of judgments, when Christ comes to judge the quick and the dead, the past and the present. They were foretold under a figure. The voice of the people was the voice of God. Those who believe in religion can think no other than that the French Revolution was the judgments of God upon them. Certainly it was the only time which has borne a resemblance to Christ come in judgment. Christ believed that the kingdom of heaven should be on earth; God had already exercised several judgments. According to Revelations, several were to come; none were to be final. Every time for the better was to be preceded by a terrible time of punishment for the world. We see in it human nature and idea. Can, therefore, the figures of Christ and of the writers of the Old and New Testament, be taken in any other sense? Religion would sanction the atrocities of the French Revolution; it is only reason, knowledge, and morality, which are the same things, would prevent them. Had the people been taught morality on the principles laid down by God to Cain, would they not have been better? would they have committed the crimes laid to their charge? It is too much to call upon morality to take its place, when religion had been against it, and there was none. Morality is as much the result of progress, education, and hereditary transmission as anything else. It would be the same to say, Take away roads and canals from the Chinese, and tell them to travel by steam instead, and when there was no communication at all, to say how can you do without the old ways? How can a dogma stand in the place of a morality? Perhaps the dogma is founded on the organ of destruction—the sacrifice of Christ; how, then, can it take the place of benevolence? Or if the organs of wonder, and veneration, and fear have only been exercised and kept down the animal, when these are gone, where is love, which was never called out? It is the

same in England, denying all instruction to the people except religion, and then abusing them for their want of morality, and saying it is from want of religion. Every cause must answer for its own effect. If religion is taught, and people act badly, then religion must answer for it; if morality had only been taught, then morality would have had to answer for it. But morality has never been given an opportunity. It was the opinion of the late Sir William Molesworth, that religion would entirely go out before science. Feuerbach has expressed the same opinion, specifying all the modern material improvements as sure to extinguish it. What is this but to say it is the work of time, and that it is from the knowledge of what is good for us, and what is evil to us, that we may expect to be accepted? This is the morality delivered to Cain, as between him and Abel; and he, and of course man, had to experience it. But God did not say the light of reason or morality would prevent it; he merely stated the effects of good or evil: it was a lesson to learn, and was in no wise influenced by religion, else he would have stated the proper means in religion of obtaining a blessing and removing a curse, when the ordinary ones had been tried and failed. God did not declare then or ever the truth of any religion or of religion. God only spoke to the truth of morality. Here was the time for revelation of religion. Or if there had been a formal and direct avowal of it, we should have been told 'What is truth?' So in the French Revolution, religion had its trial, and when it failed, justice, and every virtue, which had not been cultivated by it, did not immediately occupy the vacancy; but the full retribution fell upon society for having had religion and no morality. Some will say religion is morality—that is, morality is morality. But to say religion is morality, is giving it a sense to which it has no right. When the religious say there is no morality without religion, they are made distinct by man as they were by God. It is clear they mean by saying there is no morality without religion, that they mean two different things, and that religion is a belief in dogmas. Cicero, Lucretius, and Horace use the word *religio* in the sense of superstition. Cicero says, as will be seen in the Rev. Dr. Giles's book on the 'Notices of Jews and Christians by Profane Authors,' that the religion of Jews and Romans was the worship of different Gods, and the religion of the Romans was the right, because they conquered the Jews, and performed the part of Cain to Abel. When someone speaks to Horace of observing the Jewish Sabbath, Horace says, 'I never had any religion,' showing it applied to ceremonies and observances. Everyone knows the line of Lucretius—'Religion which can persuade so many evils.' Lucretius uses no other word than *religio* throughout his poem, and it is always translated superstition. When the Apostle James says religion, pure and undefiled, is to do acts of charity, he means that religion was taken in another sense, as belief in dogmas and observance of ceremonies, and that he was against all religion. Religion is stated to be

the same by Christ and the prophets, and that they were against it, as practised by Jew or Gentile. Modern philosophers would prove that cannot be religion which outrages morality. But if religion were only morality, it would not be religion; religion is an affair between man and God, and morality only between men. Some tender-hearted liberals and Free-thinkers cannot give up the idea of their right to the title of being religious though they only mean they are not immoral. But a broader distinction cannot be made than between morality and religion; and to say, You are religious: I am moral. Religion and morality should keep their meanings, and not be confounded. Any superstitious and supernatural ideas are religious, and a man may be very religious who indulges in them, without believing in any received faith—*e.g.*, Robert Owen, Dr. Elliotson, the Mesmerists, and the Spirit Rappers. Men may have the organs of hope, wonder, and veneration largely developed—all the elements of religion—without belonging to any established religions; on the contrary, being open infidels to them. Robert Owen has shown all his life immense hope, veneration, wonder, with equal benevolence. Established religions may not be enough for them. They cannot satisfy their hope, their wonder, their veneration, much less their benevolence. The religions of the world must seem to them opposed to all their aspirations. It must be recollected that all *established* religions have lost, by the very fact, all the elements of religion which founded them. It is all fixed and established, therefore there is no hope. Miracles, it is taught, have ceased to be, therefore there is no exercise for wonder. There is to be no end of the world, which so greatly excited all these principles of the early Christians. Modern Christians are taught that the day of judgment will be after life, when they are dead. Modern religion is no longer a thing of hope, and of the future; it is entirely occupied with the past, the miracles, the prophecies, the martyrdoms, the personality of Christ, and religious observances in commemoration of the past. Christianity has lost the essence of itself, the Messianic idea, faith in the future, which was the reason of its success. Anything was better than the present, when religion arose pointing to a vague future, which has turned out very different to anticipation. The only moral Messianic idea now left is in the progress of the infidel.

Men are human and natural, acting under a vast variety of organisation and disorganisation. Some people, therefore, may be never moral until they are religious. A man may have the organ of destruction, which may impel him to murder, but he may not like to seek its gratification in his own person. He may have great fear, and wonder, and hope; and there is not only the gallows, but he may realise in his poetic imagination a heaven, where he may gratify his organs of hope and destruction by seeing the tortures of the damned in hell. Under these circumstances, a religious man may throw morality into the bargain, not as due to man, but

to God. A man kept good by the gallows, is as near literal religion as can be—the fear of the Lord. Sir James Mackintosh used to say Christianity was a gallows morality. It could only be under the influence of such a religion that a man was executed for stealing a sheep, five shillings; and girls and boys, according to Rogers, under the pious George III., for being found in a crowd.

A man to be a good man need not be a Christian, but a man. As Thomas Carlyle said, I am not a Roman Catholic or an Anglican Catholic, but a human Catholic.

We do not find that people who are more religious are better, or more moral, or that they are more energetic and industrious in their habits, have more virtues and fewer vices. It is the contrary in all the countries of the Roman Catholic religion. Virtue does not increase with the greater quantity of dogmas necessary for salvation; it seems to descend in the same ratio; dogmas ascend, morality descends. The greater number and frequency of the observances of religion take the place of morality. The Roman Catholics and the Mahomedans are much more religious than we are. In a Roman Catholic country—in Italy—the whole of life, of the year, and of the day, seems to be employed in religion.

The saying that there can be no morality without religion, seems to mean that if you have the one—religion—the other will follow; or you can do without it. If not expressed, it is understood; and religion serves to discount and compound sins. Such an idea equally presides over all religions, only carried out more to its consequences in Roman Catholic than in Protestant countries. There is no doubt by religion you may not only be what the religions will call moral, but you may destroy the passions and nature, which we think equally immoral. By fasting and prayer, and vigils, and physical destruction, your soul may be entirely in heaven and God, and out of yourself; but this we call a species of suicide. But we think it especially immoral, because it does take away man from man, and gives him over to God. It takes man away from all work, which is worship, and the proper exhaustion of nature, and subduer of our passions. It takes man away from increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth; subduing and having dominion over it. In this last is included dominion over the passions, over our earthly nature—the reign of morality amongst men. The education which should be given to morality, is exclusively applied to religion. There cannot be a doubt, if the same attention was paid to morality, which is given exclusively to religion, there would be a change for the better in the moral character of the high and low. As it is said there can be no morality without religion, so it is said there can be no education without the dogmas of religion; and each sect would say without his especial dogmas. It is said, or thought, or done, that if religion is given, morality will take care of itself. In consequence, there is not a

place of education in the United Kingdom, where the morals of the boys are ever regarded. Offences only against the laws, such as stealing, are visited with punishment, and then only between themselves. You may steal from everybody else; and it is highly honoured. The Christians practise what, in comparing Christianity with Paganism, they find fault with the Lacedæmonians for doing; and talk of there being no rule of morality. The Lacedæmonians rewarded in their children successful theft, not for the object gained, but for the ingenuity, courage, and hardship it showed it carrying out the design. In our public schools, the praise of robbery was for the thing gained, which was not, as in the case of the poor, to gratify hunger, but gluttony.

Morality should be pointed out to children: that it was good for them. If it was good for them, it would be easy to show that it was recommended to them from love of them. Children might then see in their advisers, guardians, and instructors, fathers and Gods. They would evince to them the sentiments said to be shown to God. What morality can be ascribed to a dogma of religion? The Trinity for example, the two sacraments, the creeds, or the evidences of religion. The love of mankind, one to another, is very plain, and increases by exercise. But is it intelligible—the love founded on the dogma, ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son?’ Mankind does not see any fruits from it. Mankind cannot understand how such an action on the part of a God could be compatible with love or justice. God calls upon man to show love and justice by his own want of it. Morality established on reasonable grounds—that it was a law of our nature, that it was a law of life, that it was our interest—would be much more likely to prevail than motives of moral conduct, drawn from incomprehensible dogmas. Examples of the good effects of morality in man, was the way, Horace says, his father taught him; and there are always instances, else morality would not be true; and evil would be better. These would have more effect than the doubtful examples and actions exhibited by supernatural agents of holy writ. These dogmas and these instances have made religion ridiculous to children, and not from natural depravity. They are not indifferent to prudential motives; and some have said they like work better than play, as play always begins as an imitation of work. The religious have endeavoured to found morality on a dogma—the existence of the God of the Bible—when the prophets and Christ have ever said that it was founded on love to mankind, and that was God and religion.

The love of God is said to be the love of mankind; and the love of God, that you have not seen, and, therefore, who is not, is ridiculed when it stands in the way of the love of man you have seen. The religion of the present day would make morality follow after if it could. If it did not, still there was the saving religion, while the true religion of Christ follows

upon morality; and it does not matter, as Christ says, whether you knew him, or possessed a single dogma.

Religion admits of sin as a condition of existence; and does not come in to prevent, but to pardon, the commission of crime. Such a presumption has an enervating moral effect upon man, who thinks he cannot resist evil, though there may be a way of escape from the consequences of it provided by religion. Hence his attention is taken away from the real consequences of sin. He even thinks compensation should be made him in heaven for the miseries which he has met with in consequence of his sins. Reformation of character is rewarded, as if there was not good in reformation itself. But in spite of acknowledged belief, most men doubt the consequences foretold by religion. Who would face hell who really believed it? or who would think to escape it, except by some subterfuge of dogma? As the punishment is monstrous, so are the terms of acquittal; and the rewards in heaven are, for equally unintelligible reasons, not to be found in the New Testament. Dogma is the substitute for morality in this world, because it is to take the place of morality in the next. Those who are unhappy enough really to believe in heaven and hell, show their faith by going mad; and, according to the religious, they are possessed by the Devil in this world. But if the religiously educated totally disbelieves, he has not been provided with the knowledge of the real consequences in nature, arising from immorality. He has not been taught the advantages of virtue. There is no faith in nature to balance his incredulity as to the punishments or consolations of religion. Whately says nobody appears to believe in hell.

Men are not offended with what is to their advantage being recommended to them, as all men would have good if they could get it. Man likes to be treated like a rational being, even youth as a man, and have, what are called worldly motives given to them, which, in their proper sense, should be the motives of their conduct. This world, and not a non-existing world, should be the object of their duties and worship. There is also something repugnant to the better feelings of man in the pusillanimity of those who are affected by unseen, unknown, and distant terrors, not to do ill. Equally selfish, and, therefore, contemptible, appear the hopes of the religious which are to make them good. The way, therefore, of the religious appears the least likely to have an effect upon mankind; and to act rather through the sense of evil than the good in man. The man and the sinner sees still more the selfishness of the religious when they withdraw from the world and unbelievers, as having no sympathy with sinners, and in order to secure their own salvation. Or else they provoke a contempt of their understanding, as well as their morals, when they show so little belief in their own dogmas that the least breath of doubt, or appearance of difference of opinion, may throw them down.

On the contrary, God is represented in the Bible as having nothing to

do with Abel, but immediately joining the sinner—Cain—who had not asked for God, or prayed to him. God urged upon Cain only prudential motives to avoid the commission of crime. God tells him—Cain—he will be accepted if he does well, by which we can only understand that it will be well for him in this world, that he is accepted by man, that he has made atonement, is at one with God and man. When he commits the crime, he is condemned and rejected by man. God not only holds out to Cain that evil is to be avoided by morality, but all the good possible in the nature of man is to be attained by it. God, far from telling Cain he is subject to sin, and providing a remedy for the commission of it, informs him of the plain state of the case, as it appears to man, that he may have an inclination to evil, but he also has *dominion* over it, such as he was told in the first chapter, that he had dominion over the earth. Such should be the morality constantly inculcated in man, not only that he may avoid committing murder, and being hanged, but that, in the most trifling circumstances of life, there is a good and evil. Judgment and reason should be exercised in every choice, and on all occasions. Of the same character as God, Christ is depicted, who came, not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. He kept the company of associates who gained him the reproach of the religious and respectable. The Magdalene was the type of the lost woman. She does not appear to have had any religion but the love of the Son of Man. When she *anointed* him and made him Christ, we may suppose it was to signify he was the Christ of the sinner, the sympathy of man for the woman, of the God for man. He ridiculed the idea that charity consisted in giving money to the poor. In the first place, money was likely to go to a Judas, who kept the bag; and represents a paid priesthood. In the second place, it was not only money the poor wanted, but sympathy, and love, and charity, which was exhibited in giving water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, lodging to the houseless, and clothes to the naked, and was typified in the *ointment*, or Christianity, which flowed over him from the hands of a woman. Of the same character of parable, is the Mary, who stays to converse with the Lord, instead of getting ready the dinner. We believe the poor would much rather the conversation of equality than they would the soup from the kitchen, and alms from the rich. A Dr. Garth Wilkinson, a physician, has written a book, in which he instances sympathy as a cure, as salvation, and calls it Christopathy. It is curious that the first book of the Fathers, which speaks of Christ, mentions him as the associate of thieves and robbers. Barnabas quotes Christ for the fact, that he came to save sinners and the sick. (See the Rev. Dr. Giles's 'Christian Records,' which received the prohibition of the present Bishop of Oxford, as containing the real revelation of the gospels, and of the church.)

The philanthropist and moralist must show sympathy with all mankind,

treat all men as brothers, and not have any circumstance attaching to him, which may confine his love, or a return of it. The greatest love is to die for men; but it must be seen that it is for men, not for self, or for God. Christ, if he were God, it may be supposed, did not die to gain heaven for himself, but it was held out as the reward of all future martyrdoms. Original martyrdom of Christ was for man, and not for God; the love of man and not of God. Now, martyrdom, or dying for religion, is from profound hatred of each other. If there was only morality, and no religion, there would be no martyrdoms. The one persists in doctrines which he thinks ensures his own salvation, and damnation for the rest; and another puts him to death for it. Not only the difference of dogma will damn the persecutor, the martyr believes, but the persecutor will also be sent to hell for the murder which the martyr has invited him to commit. In idea, if not in fact, the martyr is as bad as the persecutor.

Human love and sympathy must be such as God showed to Cain, and Christ to all men. God showered benefits on Cain; and would draw him from savagery to civilisation. '*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.*' Reason and benevolence, as God exhibited before and after the murder, and not religion, can only produce amelioration of morals, if not in the individual, at least in the human race, who Cain represents. In religion, it is said, few only can be saved; and, therefore, the attention of a man is directed to himself, and not to others, which gains the contempt and indignation of society, as it drew that of Cain upon Abel. God said it is what man does towards man, not towards him which signified. Abel found no real respect from God. God did not save or redeem him any more than he did the Jews. Nor did God promise Abel, or the Jews, a future state after life, to make up for it. He only promised a better future for their children if they behaved properly. Cain's posterity did not seem to gain by the act of their father. Their hereditary propensities were continued and punished by the deluge, as Christ said they would be in the destruction of Jerusalem. The historical inaccuracy in Christ, Cain the murderer, the father of the Jews, and his line, being destroyed by the deluge and therefore not the father of the Jews, shows how it was all treated as a fable—an idea, not a fact—and that the Jews were taunted with being descended from Cain, when they prided themselves on being descended from Abel, or his substitute—Seth. Of the same kind, was Christ's ridicule of the pedigree from Abraham. I lived before Abraham—that is, men were before you. There are other men as well as you. As the Greeks said, men lived before Agamemnon. *Homines vixerunt ante Agamemnonem.*

It is this constant salvation of religion before people's eyes in the past, present, and future compounds for their sins, and prevents them carrying a critical survey into the *minutiæ* of their conduct. Not content with

making out morality to be a dogma, the religious ridicule morality without it. They say morality is always changing, and never immutable. The story of Cain and Abel, and the speech of God, say the contrary; for directly religion begun, it had two strings to its bow—one offered the fruits of the earth, the other butchers' meat—and they each were unattended to. How many religions have there since been without any result. Whereas, God declares the general principle of morality to be immutable. The religious say the human reason is insufficient to guide man; but God said it was sufficient. Whatever Cain did, man was to have no other aid, whether he thought it sufficient or not. Religion would not effect what reason could not, either before or after; and both before and after crime, human reason does act, as God said, and was experienced. God's advice to Cain is really derided by the religious as the poor human reason.

Man is utterly helpless of himself, say the religious, unless supported by God, which God never told Cain, but the contrary, and which would entirely deprive man of all freedom of action, set him at variance with the necessity of nature. The logical consequence of religion is, that God does everything; man does nothing. Man becomes one of those praying machines, spoken of by Thomas Carlyle, as in use among the savages, to put in play the Lord Almighty. Certainly, if the advice of Christ be not satire, or put in by the priest, that we are to bore heaven to death, the best means of doing it would be by the machine of the savage. How many inventions of prayer have not the Catholics made? Yet Francis Newman, along with Conybeare and Martineau, stick to prayer. In the instance of Newman, prayer to nothing and nobody.

If there are few to be saved, according to the religious, little can depend upon ourselves to be amongst the few. The secret of salvation is disputed amongst all men, and there is a mere chance of being right; or else it is settled beforehand by God without our will. From the scarcity and difficulty of religious salvation, salvation in this world is neglected for considerations of salvation in another, which, not to be had, throws the man upon the world really without resources.

The blind lead the blind. Man relies upon authority what was before him, or the priest. Or there are those delightful religious dilemmas of election or reprobation, which absolve a man from all responsibility in this world. When God teaches Cain, he makes him responsible for everything he does to man. There is a feeling in society, and the practice is in conformity with it, that offences against morality may be excused if a man is religious, whilst offences against religion are visited severely. The consequence is, a lowering of the moral tone of society, as religion is set above morality. Could there be such difference in moral appreciation and politics if there was not religion to mystify them in the eyes of mankind? Could the Pope and the King of Naples be friends, whilst the king continues to outrage

all morality and mercy, if they were not of the same religion? Could the King of Naples be defended if there was not religion to justify him? What can make Mr. Gladstone—a religious man—with all the rest of the world, condemn the acts of the King of Naples, and a Mr. Bowyer, M.P., find no fault in them, except it be Mr. Bowyer's religion? Mr. Bowyer is the evidence of a convert to Roman Catholicism; that a sense of his religion destroys all sense of morality and justice; gives him a one-sided view of politics.

Louis Napoleon probably found in his own conscience religion to be a sufficient justification of his acts. It absolved him from all responsibility to man; and made him, as he said, the choice instrument of heaven. Lacordaire, the celebrated French preacher, said, after the *coup d'état*, the means did not justify the end; that morality ought to be one and the same. The preacher was banished; and we have religion and God appealed to by the Emperor, as sanctioning immorality in his instruments. I make evil; I set evil against evil—is acted upon by God's government, and man's government.

From the commencement of Christianity up to the present time, religion has made wars, and been an element in politics. There are now no religious wars; but religious reasons and passions are mixed up with wars. The Greek, the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, the Mahomedan, looked to their separate faiths in the issue of the last war. The bigot, probably, thought it was made for no other cause. When passions could be inflamed by religion, advantage was taken of it by Russia. Even some Christians objected to fighting for Mahomedans. Religion is, therefore, an element of discord, which should be left out of all moral and political calculations.

The theory of Christianity is, that man cannot live by morality, as God told him; therefore he must make sacrifices of animals, as Abel did; and Christ in person, or God in person, was the sacrifice for him. This is called the dogma of the atonement, which means, according to the word, to make *one person at one* with another, or one thing with another, by some act. Blood, they say, must wash out sins; whereas morality thinks blood rubs them in; and is very difficult to get out, according to Shakspeare's 'Lady Macbeth.' The story of Cain and Abel just teaches the contrary of there being any atonement by such means, either of beast, or man. Christians, however, date the atonement of Christ from the sacrifice of animals by Abel. They catch at one incident of the fable, and say sacrifice is shown to be required by it. One of the facts of the fable, not the moral of the fable, is the foundation of their dogma. But in another instance, they have founded the dogma on the direct reverse of the story. The story, which is evidently told against human sacrifices, is made to be a witness to the sacrifice of the person of Christ, and of the Son of God.

We allude to Genesis xxii., where a story is told of God having tempted

Abraham to offer his only son Isaac for a burnt offering. We should think Abraham, being *tempted* to offer a burnt offering, and it being rejected, was sufficient commentary upon Cain and Abel's offerings that they were of their own minds; and that Abel's offering did not, any more than Abraham's, find respect with God, except in human imagination. Abraham, being tempted by God, showed that he was listening to the evil imagination of his heart, and that evil proceeded equally from God, or nature, as well as good. Paul says (1 Cor., chap. x.), over and over again, speaking of the Old Testament, that the stories in them were 'figures,' 'types,' 'examples,' 'ensamples;' so we may judge of the degree of reality to be given to them. He even says, in this chapter, that Christ was 'the rock' in the wilderness that gave the Israelites water. He says the stories were all written, not as facts, but examples, for our admonition—that is, for the moral. 'Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth (on the letter or the atonement) take heed lest he fall.' And he says, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is *common* to man:' and he says there is a way to escape from it; and he says, 'therefore flee from idolatry;' as if he alluded to human and idolatrous sacrifices in the past, the temptation to Abraham, and, for the present, mentions the Lord's supper. He says, 'I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.' He then gives a material meaning to their feasts, for when they all eat of the same food, and drink of the same drink, they were one body, which is a symbol of fellowship between ourselves and with nature all over the world. But he seems to say, Ye are to understand it as wise men, and not to mix up any idolatry, and actually believe you are eating Christ, a person, or a God. We should not have referred to the chapter had it not been for the marginal references in the Oxford edition of the Bible. Hebrew ii. is also referred to; from which it appears that Abraham, in offering up his only-begotten son Isaac, believed in the resurrection of the body, and received therefore Jesus Christ in a figure. Where was the reality, Abraham and his offering, or Jesus Christ and his offering?—neither one nor the other. Both are figures of each other. Abraham is here said to have been a figure of Christ, and Christ of Abraham. In this same chapter it says Moses was a Christian. The next reference is to James, chap. i., where it says, 'Let no man say when he is *tempted*, I am *tempted* of God: for God cannot be *tempted with evil*, neither *tempteth* he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.' It, therefore, cannot mean that God did tempt Abraham, or that God could be tempted by a bad act; but that Abraham tempted himself to offer human sacrifice to Moloch—the eldest son, and the only son—who had opened the womb to Sarah.

The next reference is to 1 Peter, i., where it appears that the epistle is addressed to those who had never seen Christ, but are likened to the prophets, who had the spirit of Christ in them. They all have the living and

the dead; even the angels 'to hope for the *revelation* of Jesus Christ,' which had not yet come. They are to be moral, Peter says, 'and offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Thousands of years before, and nearly thousands of years after, the supposed birth and death of Christ, we should think would be enough to prove that Jesus Christ was a figure, and not a fact; never had been, and never would be.

Moriah, the mountain on which Abraham was said to have been tempted to sacrifice his son, is said to mean 'vision,' dream, idea, or imagination of his heart. It is enough to say that the story is evidently told against human sacrifices. The Devil is not introduced, but God himself performs the part of evil. They are here the same, though Mr. Conybeare exclaims against Mr. Jowett for saying so. God provides animal sacrifices instead of the human. God says human sacrifice is a sign of fear. God says he will bless the descendants of Abraham who worship him without human sacrifices more than those who worship him with. By doing away with idolatries—human sacrifices—they are to be a blessing to the human race. Yet the Christians turn this into meaning that not only the son of Abraham, who was not sacrificed, was to prefigure the son of God, who was put to death, but that the blessing was meant for Christ, as a descendant of Abraham, born to be crucified, and not redeemed. Yet the carrying out of the analogy would be, that the sacrifice of Christ was purely an idea—only meant spiritual sacrifice, not human or animal—was a sacrifice symbolic of morality for the future.

The religious say there must have been a cause, there must have been intelligence, there must have been superior beings, there must be design, there must be a plan, a beginning, and an end. Of all man's ideas of the unknown, it is not likely that one is true, or approaching to the truth. All these ideas are founded upon nature, and upon the possible in man. But the religious turn round and say, I believe in what is supernatural and miraculous. He no longer believss in his former ideas; he no longer believes in religion. He did believe in natural religion—that is, in a religion adapted to his nature—but now he believes in revealed religion, which is the opposite of natural religion. Of the natural ideas of religion, the farthest removed from human ideas are, probably, the most true. The greatest difference between the finite and infinite is, probably, the highest knowledge. So the unbeliever may say with the believer, 'I believe because it is impossible. I believe in the impossible; for I will not believe in the possible to man.' Natural religion is the possible to man. The revealed religion—Christianity and miracles—are the impossible to man. We refer the reader to Isaiah, lv., 8, 9.

It is perfectly absurd, say the religious, that the world was made without a cause, by chance, blind matter, fate, without intelligence, and man without plan. But, because it is absurd to man, I believe it. The Fathers

have said, '*Credo quia impossibile et absurdum est.*' 'I believe because it is impossible and absurd.' The difference between us would be, What do we mean by impossible and absurd? We have witnessed there is nothing too impossible and absurd for man to believe. 'Nothing is impossible with God' is more true of man, when he has made God after his own image. Probably, therefore, the foundation of the idea of the supernatural and God does what is impossible, is from the same idea as what is called Atheism; that there is nothing similar in religion and God to the thoughts and ideas of men. According to the Evangelical, everything is done by God, always for some purpose. We saw in the *Record*, of July, 1856, that God was sending all the silver out of the country; therefore, we were on the eve of some great manifestation. But, according to the *Record*, God did not send opium to the Chinese, but permitting it was one of his inscrutable decrees—his ways past finding out. So God meddles with the bullion, but not with the opium traffic. Who does not see that the *Record* is making a God after its own image?

If man could hit upon the truth as to the nature of things past, and the conduct of things present; or rather, if he could see how things were made, and how they were carried on, according to his own religious ideas, it would not be to his benefit. In the language of the Bible, such knowledge is forbidden fruit. Supposing there was a God, he did not mean us to know him, because it would prevent us knowing ourselves, which is the business of men upon earth. It would be the same with nature as God, if we knew exactly what she had done, and what she would do. But supposing there is no God—no plan—it is the same to us. We form a plan for ourselves from the nature of things, relatively to us, and say that it is good for us, and that it is evil. We suppose things will happen according to the laws of nature; and we act accordingly. We may see the past, the present, and the future, according to the laws of nature. There was no other moral in the temptation and in the fall than in the contrasts and the consequences of the two dispositions towards good and evil in the nature of man. Good and evil are the alternate salvation and damnation in the life of man.

Eating the fruit produces the curse in nations and individuals. There thorns and thistles grow; but as we cease to feed upon the forbidden fruit, the face of nature wears a different aspect; and the evils which afflict man may be alleviated, or removed. Good and evil were known to mankind from the beginning, and were before man was in the nature of things. Therefore, good and evil—the forbidden fruit—was the *Divine knowledge* evidenced by being allied to the attempt of being as the Gods, and the desire, which is in religion to escape from the common good and evil of this world; man therefore, is referred back to his state upon earth, to a knowledge of *that good and evil*, to a life upon earth, and not in heaven, which reconciles him to God, restores him to Paradise, which he had only depicted *as a well*

ordered garden kept by man, were there were no thorns and thistles; and the land was not under a curse as it appears in its natural state, before civilisation and cultivation commence. Man paints *as having been* from an idea of what he wishes to be; and calls that the beginning which endeavours to make the end. Man universally desires what is *good*—aims at perfection—however he may differ about what is good and evil; and would arrive at a state agreeable to himself upon this earth. It is this universal idea which is sometimes depicted as a Paradise upon earth; sometimes is said to be heaven; sometimes is a God. This is the Messianic idea, which finally takes the more complex shape of a Messiah, a person, or a God, or a kingdom, descending upon earth, and accomplishing man's wishes; fulfilling the law and the prophets. A future state, or another life, is by no means to be found universally entertained, nor even the notion of a God. But the love of good, and the fear of evil, may be said to be universally entertained. All these ideas, therefore, which are merely the preference of good to evil, are adduced as proofs of a God and a future state, and the evidence of the supernatural.

Cause and effect are seen in this world; and a cause cannot produce a totally different effect. The desire of good keeps us in our place, fulfils our destiny, accomplishes its object, but is not the realisation of a totally different effect. The desire makes us propagate life, and the love of it keeps us in this life, but does not prove us immortal.

The story of Cain and Abel is plainly told and distinctly marked. We have the history of religion and morality; and the difference between them through the mediums, which, in mythical, dramatic, and primitive expression, would present themselves. We are told Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. This is to tell us what we know to be true of human nature, that whatever profession of life man follows, he esteems that which he does follow, and despises that which he does not follow. No kindly feeling, but the reverse, is engendered between nations, and between people of the same nations pursuing opposite occupations. Of course, therefore, 'Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord: and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.' The things themselves were offerings to the Lord before ever they were said to be offered. They were produced out of nature by man, and for the good of man; and, therefore, were offerings to the Lord, whether man be thought to be the Lord, or the earth, which, except through man, does not appear to produce the fruit of the ground—the flock and the fat. In the same way it was said that Eve had gotten a man from the Lord, though equally as the fruits of the ground, and the flock, an offering through man to the Lord, or to nature. Therefore, the Lord is not a distinct individuality, but represents man and nature, and the ideas of man; and it is *said by man*, and not by God, 'The Lord had respect

unto Abel, and to his offering: But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.' The subsequent anger of Cain was, therefore, the consequence of the rivalry between them. 'And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.' God comes forward and says he had no occasion for it, which is conveyed in the *why* of the inquiry, 'And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? *If* thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door: And unto thee shall be his desire: And thou shalt rule over him.' The conditions of acceptance and salvation are laid down in the *if*; and are made subjunctive and alternative.

Man is making God after his own image: God, instead of any respect or disrespect to offerings, is made to affirm his total ignorance of them—of what had occasioned the perturbation in Cain—and demanded the reason from him, which was saying there was no reason for it—which was to say there was no religion; and our acceptance is consequent on our acts.

The latter half of the seventh verse is difficult of translation, but means our desire shall be to sin, but we may have the mastery over it. 'And Cain *talked* with Abel his brother.' We may very well conceive that when conscience in the man had spoken to Cain, that he acquiesced in the judgment said to be delivered by God, which was his own opinion, and, probably, the unprejudiced opinion of all the world, when the superstitions and passions of man have not led him to think there were different means of acceptance and salvation. We equally well know that when men talk together upon these subjects, they lose all control over themselves, and cannot carry out their best intentions. The religious controversy, the *odium theologium*, always prefaces the resort to blows and death. Probably Abel persisted that God had respect unto his offering, and would not admit the reasoning and moral message which Cain had brought from God. Therefore, in his turn, Cain might think Abel denied God. Sacrifices and talk are neither of them acceptable to God, but the doing well. 'And so it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.' The story of Cain and Abel is not mentioned in the Old Testament. But when we come to the conclusion that Cain killed Abel, mention is made of that circumstance in 'Wisdom,' a book of the Apocrypha. The offering of the brothers are not spoken of, but the act of Cain, as the result of anger, is said to have brought the same fate upon Cain. This is the retaliation of other men, which follows upon murder by one of them. This is justice. That the story is of man, and not of an individual, Cain and Abel is further shown by the consequence of it being said to be the flood (Wisdom, chap. x., 3, 4)—'But when the *unrighteous* went away from *wisdom* in his anger, he perished also in the *fury* wherewith he murdered his brother, for whose cause the earth being drowned with the flood.' The only mention of it in the four gospels is by

Christ (Matthew xxiii., 34 to 39), who does not speak of the difference in religion between Cain and Abel, but of the blood shed by Cain. In this chapter is the chronological transposition of facts, as to Zacharias, and a speech drawn out of the Apocryphal book of Esdras, and put into the mouth of Christ, all which shows that it enters, not into the truth of history, but into the domain of the idea. This is further shown by Christ saying, 'All these things shall come upon this generation.' Now we cannot conceive that what Cain did to Abel, about four thousand years afterwards should be visited upon the Jews; and, therefore, we must take it as a repetition of the moral of the original, equally true at any time, that the shedding of blood must be answered by blood. Paul, in those epistles usually attributed to him, and where he first makes use of the fall, has nothing to say of the sacrifice of Abel. In Paul to the Hebrews (chap. xi., 4., and chap. xii., 24) Christianity dates the sacrifice of Christ from the sacrifice of Abel; and, therefore, the respect which God had unto Abel's offerings. The idea is, that man had more respect to the blood of man shed for the sake of others, as Paul to the Hebrews says, than the blood of animals killed by Abel. We see how long it had to travel unknown—this idea—before it became developed. Apart from the doubt that the Hebrews were even written by Paul—that is, by another hand, we now learn from Professor Jowett that Paul was a man purely of ideas—ideas which he stated as facts. Now, if we cannot rely upon the facts, which were the foundations of his ideas; if, as the Professor says, his ideas did not turn out true, when he would have them tested by their becoming facts in the future, can we think his other ideas of any more credit which, out of the past, went to the doubtful present, and totally failed in the future? Besides, the subject matter of the Hebrews, and that part of it from whence reference is made to the sacrifice of Abel, runs altogether upon faith founded upon ideas, which faith, not having answered its own definition, the things hoped for not having come to pass, and the evidence, therefore, of the things not seen, not being good, all the ideas fall to the ground. John, in his first epistle, chap. iii., 10, 11, 12, has a commentary on the moral of God to Cain—'In this, the children of *God* are *manifest*, and the children of the *Devil*: whosoever *doeth* not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the *message* that ye have heard from the *beginning*, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother; and, wherefore, slew he him? Because his own *works* were evil, and his brother's righteous.' We think this is unmistakeable evidence of our interpretation. The works that were meant were those of doing good and loving mankind. There is no mention of religion, the sacrifices, the offerings; but the speech of God to Cain is said to be the message from the beginning. Even if God did not speak the same language before, in his recommendation of life, we

do not think any other meaning is necessary, or attaches to the works of Cain, than that his were evil, and Abel's were righteous, than that Cain killed Abel, and Abel did not kill Cain. But if Cain's offerings were evil works, and Abel's righteous, it can only be understood figuratively. Abel may be understood to have done a good work to mankind in providing him with animal food; and Cain to have done nothing for man in giving him what he had already got. Another meaning may be, that we are not born to consume the fruits of the earth, as the poet said, but have to take up our cross, and through difficulties, blood, and death required at our hands, achieve a good work.

Instead, therefore, of God having more respect for Abel's offering, Cain seems to have been the most favoured, and most in the right, until he rose up against his brother, and slew him.

The Christian moral was an idea born in the world long before Christianity. But the Christian dogma is exactly opposed to the moral. They always were irreconcilable with the two ideas—the dogma of a Messiah, religious, or temporal, and the moral. These heterogeneous ideas were joined, and separated directly the aim of the unnatural coalition was attained. When the dogma and the temporal power flourished, the moral fell into abeyance. Morality and religion are as distinct as possible, though they may be united. It is much more difficult to suppose how they can agree, than how they can differ, and experience proved it. The criminal was to answer for his crimes, and even his follies. For conscience inquires and passes judgment upon everything of the past, unfortunately more severely on trifles often than serious things. In a more social and judicial view, inquiry will be made and sentence passed on the shedding of blood. 'And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother?' We think it much more honourable to the Deity that he should represent all time, than that he should be restricted to a particular detail, or a fact which should afterwards be answered by a correspondent, or similar fact said to have happened ages afterwards; and not to have been found out by those to whom it did happen. When the margin, therefore, refers to the Psalm, ix., 12, that '*inquisition is made for blood*,' it shows that a great truth is being told known to all the world, but not by the fact here related. The answer of Cain was not a confession of guilt; neither was he urged to repentance; but in being asked for an avowal of faults, we may say repentance and reparation is required. It is conscience making the inquiry and tormenting the sinner.

A God cannot be brought upon the scene without man being allowed every freedom with him. It is when God has been totally removed from the scene, it begins to appear blasphemous for man to have any opinions about, or in common with, God. None would be allowed but those which have authority, and to depart from them is blasphemy. In fact, to have

a God is blasphemy; and to have none is reverence. The Bible speaks constantly to that effect. Cain, instead of confessing and repenting, says, 'I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?' If freedom of opinion is not allowed by man, great freedom of opinion is allowed by God to man. The answer of Cain is such as a man gives, and has no right to give, to society. As a brother, he should not be a keeper as a master over a slave; but as a brother, he ought to do a brother-man every good work. Man has no right only to do what he will with his own. Possession of one's self has its duties as well as its rights. Man ought to know his fellow-man.

Man ought to *know* his fellow-man, and he is the keeper of his brother, as far as trying to preserve him from physical, and even moral evil. Man ought to be his own Providence, providence to himself and to one another. There is a certain truth conveyed in the repartee of Cain, which is not uncommon in the Bible, 'if there is a God and a Providence you are his keeper and not I;' and the thought unfortunately has much influence in society, leaving men to the knowledge and assistance of God. Certainly if there be a God and Providence as represented, what can we do for ourselves or others? The reply of God, 'What hast thou done?' shows that it is not an inquiry made by a God, but a view of the consequences following an act of murder, and which is probably the first utterance of the conscience to the murderer after the deed. None of the consequences flow from heaven but from earth. 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground,' is the general cry for vengeance, which proceeds from all against murder. If it were for help or vengeance, it was not responded to from heaven. The margin refers to Revelations, as containing the idea that God does judge and revenge murder, which is not in the story of Cain and Abel. The passage from Revelations acknowledges that however expected, it has not happened upon earth, though Jesus had said it would. Jesus Christ is made to say, 'Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That *upon you may come* all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come *upon this generation.*' Jesus Christ may have taken sufficient revenge for himself in the destruction of Jerusalem; but it appears that those who came after did not think so, any more than the kingdom of heaven had come. The measure was not filled up in spite of what Christ had said. 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, *How long*, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' There was no revenge on earth or in heaven for Abel, such as was expected by the martyrs. But Cain received sentence which was always to proceed from the earth. 'And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened *her mouth* to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.' Here earth is made as much a person as himself, and the blood of Abel. It was sufficient for the punishment of men to be accursed upon the earth; but the consequence does follow from murder and war, that the earth does not yield her strength when she is not worked by the labour of men, but the blood and strength which should go towards it, is thrown away upon the earth. Therefore, it is said, 'When thou tillest the ground it shall not yield to thee her strength.' This was a second curse from God to account for the sterility of the earth, and which is very well accounted for when by murder, and violence, and war, no one can be at rest and cultivate it. Cain could not till the ground, nor man under the same circumstances, when he is told as a consequence of his crime, 'a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.'

It does not appear in the sequel that Cain was a fugitive and a vagabond. It was only for the moment a sentence of transportation and emigration. Races, perhaps, would not be spread, or the waste places of the earth populated, if men were not to quarrel as Cain and Abel, separate and disperse over the face of the earth. It is thus that the Puritans of England, on account of a religious difference in their offerings at home, went to America. The new world has thus been peopled by Europeans, as the new world was in the beginning by Cain, though he may have left people, and found other people, as Europeans did in America. 'And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy *face* shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me.'

Here we have Cain or man correcting God. Cain says, if he has nothing to do but escape from man, he will be a vagabond and a fugitive, and finally he will die at their hands. God therefore remits the sentence, and Cain is not a vagabond and a fugitive, nor is capital punishment, or the *lex talionis* exacted for his crime.

In the foundation of society, if for every murder another life had been taken, there would probably have been no lives left. Perhaps this was a difficulty amongst men, and therefore the *lex talionis* in depriving men of life, was not at first encouraged. This is probably the meaning when God says 'Vengeance shall be taken seven fold on anyone who kills Cain;' murder would have gone on by compound interest, and the human race

would have been exterminated. In the origin of society, death was the result of war. We read of it amongst the ancients, and found it amongst the savages of North America. Blood for blood remained in Scotland, and it exists even now in Corsica. However, here was Cain produced by God, and left by God for the hereditary transmission of crime, when we should have thought it best for a God to have made a good beginning, and if a bad, to have weeded it out in the case of one rather than of many. Man thinks and acts the same as God. He sends his convicts to the colonies instead of hanging them at home, and then he is puzzled with the consequences, as God was before the deluge, and had to apply the wholesale remedy of death for the human race, instead of a little weeding out at the commencement. God is made in the image of all men, and all human ideas are represented by him in the Bible. Some are for no capital punishment; they find an example of it in God's conduct towards Cain. Others will find God an example for taking away life for every possible reason. There are some who have acted upon what Christ said, that a small offence was equal to a great, and hanged for five shillings as well as murder. At the same time they, as Christians, found fault with the Jews for adjudging an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, equal and not disproportionate punishment to the offence. There are some who would visit whole districts, the innocent and the guilty, and they find an example in God and the Canaanites in God, and Sodom and Gomorrah, and even in Christ, who said the same should be to towns who did not receive him and his disciples. There are some philosophers, however, who despair of mankind, and think he should be entirely wiped out, and nature should begin on a fresh creation. Of this opinion, is Schopenhauer, the philosopher of Frankfort, an eminent English physiologist of London, and the sentiment is expressed by Rogers in his 'Eclipse of Faith.' We should call this the anti-Messianic idea. We have an example of it recurring to the mind of God in the Bible, and put into execution at the deluge with no better result. But he left the old stock. The anti-Messianic idea portrayed in the deluge, may be said to be that of those who are always looking to the end of the world, rather than a time after it. The Messianic idea has, however, always incorporated these two ideas, typified in the deluge, and has been the future, but always with the old stock. Man is unwilling to give up the idea of a future state, either in himself individually, or in his race perpetrated and improved. After the trials that have been made of man, perhaps it is most philosophical to suppose that nothing can be done, except by another race. But as we know nothing about the future of ages, we can only make the best of the present, and great revolutions seem contrary to the laws of nature.

As the Jews always believed in a Messianic state, as much as in a man so there are always men to be found who think one is to appear who will

produce great changes. They are hero worshippers; their leader is Carlyle; and they believe in a coming man rather than in a good time coming. For ourselves we entertain the more popular and democratic idea of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, and of the New Testament, that no one will teach another—knowledge will be to every one, God and Christ is in every one. This is to be hoped if it is not to be, and the tendencies of the age are catholic and universal. We may here observe that the face of the earth, or the face of nature, is used as the same as the face of God by Cain. It is the same when we say the laws of nature are the same as the laws of God, for which Professor Jowett was abused by Conybeare in the *Quarterly Review*. The Rev. Dr. Giles, in his 'Moral Philosophy,' price ninepence, says, 'The longer we live, the more plainly do we see that the laws of nature and the will of God are the same thing.' If the will of God and the laws of nature are the same, God and nature are the same. When the earth did not yield its strength to the murderer, and the murderer became accursed upon the earth, it is natural that man in that state should desire to live elsewhere, and in some other way than on the land. Therefore Cain, as the man, murderer, or criminal, in general is represented as the first builder of a city. It is probable this is the origin of all cities.

A criminal fled to a stronghold. Other criminals associated with him, which is represented by Cain not building a city till he had a son. The city originally resorted to as a place of refuge, and defended by nature and art, would become a locality from which to attack and plunder others with impunity. Such a city was probably Jerusalem, and led to its so often being taken and destroyed, and rising again. What we have imagined, and was probably the fact, is not only depicted in the story of Cain and Abel, as general humanity, but as particular to the history of Rome. There two brothers—Romulus and Remus—quarrel and fight, and the one slays the other. Their different states, and the occasion of their disunion, is shown by the subject on which they quarrel. Romulus encloses ground for a city; he is the man of the city: Remus jumps over the boundary in derision; he is the man of the plains, and of the flocks and herds. Romulus kills him, as the citizen wages war with the countryman, and as the murderer founds, and takes refuge in the city. The city is said to have owed its origin to Cain; and Rome is said to have owed its origin to Romulus, the murderer of his brother, and to have been peopled by the thieves, robbers, murderers, and men of violence, that could be collected from all quarters. Thence it was that the Jews appointed cities of refuge for murderers. They established by law, and took from nature and God what had already happened in the experience of men. It is equally true that the arts and sciences come from the inhabitants of cities, and not from the shepherds and the goatherds. The descendants, therefore, of Cain, are represented as introducing all the arts and sciences; while those of Seth, who

came in the place of Abel, and therefore may be said to represent him in all circumstances, introduce none. They probably continued to lead the shepherd life, which was probably thought from the nature of the animal, and the condition of the man who kept them, the most innocent upon earth. Those who had herds, and lived in tents, are said to be descendants of Cain. The Jews thought themselves descended from the shepherds. We may ask, What became of all these useful inventions, if those in whose line they were originated and followed, were swept off from the face of the earth by the flood; and those only were left whose boast it was they had never followed any of these servile occupations, the consequences of the sin of Cain? After the flood, as if a secondary epoch, the Israelites did live under tents and kept herds. Then they were told they were not so innocent as before the flood. Their ideas are changed—their experience is different, and from the shepherd to the herdsman, they thought the best state of life was either in civilised Egypt, or in cultivated land, flowing with milk and honey, wine, oil, and figs. They thought the best state of life that which they had represented as the worst, and to have been in the line of Cain. Thence cities became the objects of their ambition, and even to have the metropolis of the world. Hence David and Solomon were, in their estimation, after God's own heart. Hence the two Messianic ideas, the lamb of sacrifice, the murderer and righteous Abel, and the murderer and city-building Cain changed places. The moral became the temporal Messiah, and flowed together in the stream of time, till they became fulfilled in Christianity and the destruction of the Jews. When the Jews changed, they said God did it, and gave them the land and cities of the Canaanites.

The man, on Cain's side, introduced polygamy. 'And Lamech took unto him two wives.' Polygamy may be very properly attributed to power, riches, and may be ranked among the evils of civilisation. It was the result often of violence. The Romans took the women of the Sabines. The rape of Hellen, whose name stood for Greek, was the abduction of the Grecian women by the people on the opposite coast of the Mediterranean. Polygamy is now practised among the nations who allow it, by the rich and not by the poor. Lamech is made to carry on the crimes of Cain, and the consequence of it. He kills two men; he says it will be to his injury; and that the killing him will be attended by still worse consequences. This is a preface to the state of violence, which, in the line of Cain, is said to have produced the flood. On the other hand, when the son of Seth is born, it is said 'Then began men to call *civis* a city upon the name of the Lord.' Religion was invented in his line. God—the object of it—was imagined; and prayer was made. The line of Cain worked to gain their desires. Labour was their prayer, and resulted in civilisation, the word civilisation being derived from Christianity. The

line of Seth, in place of Abel, only prayed. It is not told us what for, or what they got. Thus were marked, and ever have continued, the differences between those who were not, and those who were, occupied with religion. There also may have been, and which ever have been argued, the two opposed ideas—whether civilization, or a savage state was the happier for men?

Under the question, which was the happier, is the ever corresponding idea of the Deity—that the happiest state is favoured by him. Men will argue whatever is the state, it is from him; and then will argue that it is favoured by him; and what is favoured by him must be the right and the happiest state. Then where there is religion is said to be the happiest state, however denuded of morality, as well as of the advantages of civilisation.

Prayer was always for the Messianic idea; a future state upon the earth better than the present.

Prayer is primary evidence of the wants of men; and that their condition who called upon God was not the happiest, except in the idea of those who offered up prayer; and, therefore, conceived God had respect to them. We have no evidence from the text, but the contrary, that they were better off than those who they represented had no religion. God and reward was always in the future; causes operating produced effects. God did not ever appear; but, after a long interval, he is said to have heard, which, taking away the impersonation, is equally true of nature, or the history of humanity. It was not till two thousand years afterwards that God appeared upon the scene, and the deluge came. Thus a future state, whether he lives afterwards, or no, seems ever to be the destiny and the prospect of the man of the present.

Man's hopes are for ever in the future. Man comes to think he shall be what his hopes are—for ever in the future. Slight is the latter hope. It has been taken up by the crafty and the clever; their motives have been generally interested; they have been put down as criminal; and they are supposed to have originated idolatry. Such is the history of the idea in the Bible. It has required a supposed special revelation and miracles to make men believe in the idea; and, according to their own account, will require more miracles, and another revelation. This revelation and miracles people would not believe in were it not for the hope. If there were a God, or a future state, the simple facts would prove them. Thus we have gone through creation, life, or good, the fall, death, or evil, and the history of man in Cain and Abel.

The Bible continues to the end as it has begun—variations upon the original themes. In succession, we hope to develop these 'beginnings,' and their conclusions—the eternal 'word,' or idea; the myth, or fable.

Paul said of the Old Testament, 'which things are an allegory,' and was

the first to interpret the Scriptures allegorically. The allegories have been all received as facts 'on the true faith of a Christian.' Paul was the first person who mentioned Adam, Eve, and the fall; and, therefore, may be said to have introduced the method of interpreting the fables of old as figures of the future. Modern Christians of the letter have taken the fables as types, and also as facts.

Before Paul, the writers of the Old and New Testament did not mention at all, or only slightly alluded to, some particular of Genesis as fact or figure. The writers of the Old Testament, quoted by Paul, frequently and positively said no one knew anything about the beginning of the world. They did not separate good and evil, but declared good and evil to be one and the same God. Jesus Christ did not say anything about the origin of the world, or circumstances of Genesis, though he is said to have known all about it, and came on account of it. We must, therefore, suppose his knowledge of the beginning to be as figurative as the details are in Genesis. Always making exceptions for such a diversified, interpolated, and impersonated idea as Jesus Christ, he seems to have considered Genesis allegorical, philosophical, and moral. We should say, therefore, from internal evidence, the writers in the body of the Old Testament knew nothing of the first four chapters of Genesis, if they knew anything of Moses and the Pentateuch, or previous history. From the fact of having no way to hand it down, all previous history may be supposed to be ideal until the time letters and writing are ascertained to have been known. We must come to the conclusion, therefore, that the first four chapters of Genesis were inserted after, not before, the present canonical books of the Old Testament. As a general rule, what is first, came last.

We may argue from internal evidence that the same process has taken place in the compilation of the New Testament. Jesus Christ said nothing of his birth. The Acts, Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, said nothing of the beginning, which is attached only to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Mark and John begin with a grown up person of thirty. The Epistles seem to know no particulars of the life of Christ, nothing except reports of his death and resurrection. We must, therefore, suppose the history of Christ was brought forward and then went backwards. The word was made flesh in a man of St. John, and afterwards he was actually incarnated by God in a woman. Whether the allegory came from the philosophy, or the philosophy from the allegory, it would be difficult to say. They probably both came from the idea without any concert with each other. So far they may be said to be inspired, as nothing is so much inspired as a pure idea; and a falsehood may be said to be more inspired than a truth, which is a visible fact.

That all that Jesus Christ ever said was parable we are told by Matthew xiii. 34, and especially by Mark iv. 34, John xvi. 25-29. The officers sent

by the priests in John's Gospel to arrest Jesus Christ said, vii. 46, 'Never man spake like this man, as also the disciple said, "we cannot tell what he saith."' Now we are morally certain that no man ever spoke to any people as represented in St. John's Gospel, or that no man ever addressed a multitude constantly and systematically so as to be unintelligible. We come, therefore, to the same conclusion as the officers, and from his own manner of speech at other times, that no such man ever existed. The fact may be said to be told us, as in this instance, by a figure.

Paul says, 'Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the *similitude* of Adam's transgression, who is the *figure* of him that was to come.' (Rom., v. 14.) The reader may also be referred to the celebrated 1 Cor., xv., 45-6-7, where Christ seems to be the figure of Adam. It will ever be the subject of our inquiry, the beginning, the middle, and the end, whether Jesus Christ was not allegory, figure, parable, fable, similitude, mystery, spirit, word, hard saying, or some other form of the idea. We will not say, as Paul and the fathers said, 'a lie.'

All Paul's arguments are figures and illustrations, and we must think often very extraordinary disfigurations of the original. Paul, however, takes refuge out of his difficulties in **Materialism**, and the whole (1 Cor. xv.) may only be an allegory of the transubstantiation of nature, when he says (28), 'Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that *God may be all in all.*'

'For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be *Gods* many, and lords many), but to us there is but *one* God, of *whom are all things, and we in him*; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' (1 Cor., viii., 56.)

Allowing for figure as the coverings of ideas, and not as facts, we think all Materialists might subscribe to the above, as well as that 'in the beginning causes create the heavens and the earth.' We also refer to Acts xvii., 26, 27. Similar instances of Materialism in Paul are numerous; but we will conclude by referring to one among many out of Jesus Christ's own mouth, 'That they *all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one in us*: and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we *are one*: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in *one.*'

Of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the seventh—quoted in the preface—gives authority for three opinions expressed in this inquiry. The first opinion is, that amid the variety within the Bible, and the difference of dogmas drawn from it, the moral alone is necessary. The second is, that the same truths are taught throughout the Old and New Testament. And the third is, that of those truths Jesus Christ is one as an idea throughout the Scriptures.

Archbishop Whately and Bishop Warburton could not have subscribed to

this article in the sense in which it is generally taken, that the Jews of the Old Testament believed in everlasting life, because both divines have written books to prove there was no knowledge of it amongst them, or the Gentiles, until Christ's resurrection. Or they considered the articles perfectly unbinding on men; and a man a fool who had not two ideas in his head, so as not to be able to *exchange* at any time one for the other in an article of religion. We have not to trouble ourselves with the assertions of the articles, and their possible truth or falsehood, agreement or not, between them and the Scriptures, when they have left us to think what we like about them. We only say we think that the seventh article supports our view, that Christ never personally existed, when it says, 'Both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ.' Christ was an idea, therefore, in the Old as we have argued; and if an idea in the Old, he was in the New. He was a part, or impersonation, of the Messianic idea.



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