

As to the reasoning, it showed either a slight opinion of the knowledge of the audience or a strange ignorance on the part of the lecturer of historical philosophy and of the recent course of thought. A few pages of Colenso, with rhetorical amplifications, would have furnished all the instruction that we got that evening. The Theology, Cosmogony and Moral Code of the Hebrews are to be judged, as every man who has followed the course of investigation knows, not positively, or by comparison with those of modern communities, living in the meridian light of Humanity and Science, but by comparison with those of other primæval races; and judged by that standard they excite not ridicule, but wonder. The perceptions of primæval man are like those of the infant; Deity and the operations of Deity can be presented to him only in forms which to our more advanced intellects appear coarse and unworthy; the question is in every particular case, whether the ideas symbolized are higher or lower than other theologies of the same period. We still use phrases which are relics of a former mental state; we speak of "being in the hands of God;" and if anyone chose to spin this phrase out into a series of jests about the fingers, wrists, nails, &c., of the Supreme Being, his wit would be of the same type as that of Mr. Ingersoll. The Cosmogony of Moses will, of course, not bear the scrutiny of modern science; few probably are now so bigoted as to maintain that it will; but it need not fear comparison with the Cosmogony of any other race. It declares in language which, to Longinus, seemed sublime, the unity of creation, and is thus, unlike the Polytheistic ideas of the world, in harmony with the scientific conception of the universality of the physical laws. The moral code of Moses, again, is tribal and primæval: it is alien to us, who live under the ethical conditions of high civilization and the religion of Humanity; but is it worse or better than other codes framed in the same stage of human progress? We have little doubt as to the conclusion at which a candid inquirer would arrive, after studying any particular department of the Code—say that relating to marriage, to the rights of parents, to slavery,