

Great Master is not to be looked for in the early English writers, however important these may be for their bearing upon the development of our language. The foundations of English literature are mainly two—the classics of Greece and Rome, and the sacred literature of the Bible. One is accepted as a basis of liberal education. When the Bible has in its turn become recognized as an English classic, our education will be a faithful reflection of our history, moulded as we have been by the united influences of Hellenic culture and the moral earnestness of the Hebrews.

II.—AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF HELL.

PART II.—RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

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THE future life, in the opinions of primitive men, treated of in a former paper,* is believed, in the main, to be a continuance or a reproduction of the present life; different destinies in that life are determined, arbitrarily, by the will of some deity, or by the conditions which separate men here into higher and lower, happier and more miserable classes. The doctrine that men will receive retribution according to their moral conduct and character in this present life finds only a beginning among some of the lowest tribes, and is but imperfectly apprehended and believed by the more intelligent and more moral races and tribes of primitive men.

In the sphere of the great religions of the world, however, conscience is more correct, conception of moral good and evil is more comprehensive, and conviction of future rewards and punishments is more clear and constant.

In a study of the great religious system of the world, a distinction must be made between the idolatrous forms of worship and the philosophy which underlies these forms. To this philosophy—that is to say, to the conception of God and of good and of the laws of life and of the ultimate destiny of men, this paper is limited.

I. The Egyptians, the oldest nation of whom anything is definitely known, had a religion idolatrous in its forms of worship and polytheistic in the number of its divinities, but with a conception of a Supreme Deity so far as his relation to the human race was concerned, and, probably, at least on the part of the more intelligent, a conception of an eternal and absolute God. Their theology, however, cannot now be further considered. One of the fundamental ideas of Egyptian religious belief was the triumph of light over darkness and of life over death. "The Egyptians," says Herodotus, "were the first to say that the soul of man is immortal." "It is, at all events, certain," says Tiele, "that the belief in immortality, the hope of eternal life, was in no other people more deeply rooted than

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