

The worship of one class would be barbarous and disgusting; of another, unvarnished and apparently innocent, while that of a third, would be marked by its gravity and refinement.

Their worship of this common Deity is progressive in its nature, and that not more in the increased power of its grasp than in the positive improvement of its rites, caused by, and proportioned to, the progression of the mental character of its worshipers.

Now it is evident that however much they differ in the externals of their worship, in the forms of their temples, the vestments of their priests, and the order of their services; yet they all agree in the homage which they pay to the one Idol, in the one character of their devotions, in the one motive that prompts them to worship, and in the one determination to support the grand delusion. So specious are its claims, and so vast the power of its enchantment, that the affections of men have been completely enslaved, and their talent and learning have been devoted to the advancement of its interests. The energy of youth, and the experience of hoary age, have equally contributed to its triumphs. The discoverers of science, the patrons of the fine arts, and the thoughtful philosopher, have been retained within the circle of its enchantment, and compelled to add to the *lustre* of its fame. Even genius, notwithstanding her abhorrence of chains, has tendered a feigned obedience. The greatest efforts of the mightiest minds, and the most expansive and purest schemes of the finest moralists—the great teacher alone excepted—have only tended to confirm and extend its thralldom. Every system of mere human philosophy has added strength to her fetters, by the tolerance of the wildest of her enormities, and the