

benefitted by a diligent study of the works referred to. And, more than this, I do not scruple to assert, that no one is capable of either believing or disbelieving (in either theology or philosophy), on anything like a rational foundation, without having previously gone through the course of study which I have indicated, or some very analagous course.

SECTION II.

Metaphysics, or Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The next section of this Library consists of upward's of five hundred volumes on the subject of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

From Religions and Mythologies the transition is by no means abrupt to Metaphysics—or mental and moral philosophy—a theme which, although abstruse (nay, perhaps I may say from its very abstruseness), has captivated the master-minds of every age, from the time of Homer down to the present.

Thousands of volumes have been written upon this subject, which, instead of placing it in a clearer light, have only served to envelope it in greater obscurity. Crude and imaginary speculations have usurped the place of close observation and careful experiment: and thus century after century has faded away, and metaphysics has become a by-word of reproach to its exponents. According to popular credence, this reproach remains. Metaphysics is still, by many, considered to be synonymous with nonsense. But it is not so. Metaphysics—or the study of the operations of the human mind, by an analysis of the organs and functions which subserve man's thinking and sensitive being—is of all sciences the noblest and most beautiful; it is however, at the same time, the most difficult; and it is just in consequence of this difficulty that it has been held in such contempt by the vulgar and superficial, and that its advancement has been so feeble and tardy—so that even now its very elements are only beginning to be understood.