

shining worlds, being taught by the things that are made to recognise and adore the one "Eternal power and Godhead." Unaided reason has never discovered moral and religious truth. The experience of six thousand years has demonstrated the fact, not that man can find truth after he has lost it, but that the tendency has been, when he has allowed reason to be undirected by revelation, to lose the truth which he possessed. A eulogy may be pronounced on the mental faculties, as a veil to conceal the opposition to revelation, and that the sceptic may the better ensnare reason as his divinity; but faithful history declares the fact that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Examine most narrowly the philosophy of the ancients from all sources, and through all channels, and where is the world of light into which it came? Take up the Pagan philosophers,—those men whom infidelity holds forth as proofs of the triumphs of reason,—and allow them to have possessed the highest gifts that ever Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, gave to men, and how do they appear to us, when judged by our intelligence? We allow, that they were men of great and independent minds, and too wise to be satisfied with the religion that prevailed, but not wise enough to propound any that was better. They were men struggling in darkness to grope their way to the light, but never could perceive it, and we will maintain, in the face of all controversy, that a well-educated boy of ten years of age, in our own land, now knows more of the real elements of truth, and of true philosophy, theological and natural, than all the sages of all the past put together! and why? because they had their knowledge only from within, from reason—from Nature, the infidel's god—while our own youth are taught by the clear voice of celestial wisdom. Even the great Socrates and Cicero would have rejoined to have known what our children learn; and were they to rise from the dead and live again, would find in an infant class, more than their equals in the highest philosophy. The ancient philosophers reasoned!—it is true—but they never—not one of them—found a certain moral or religious principle on which to erect a system, and their perpetual differences, changes, and inconsistencies prove that, though wisdom was their search, doubt and controversy were all they attained. Their morals, and religious dogmas, or doctrines, were almost all directly, or indirectly, immoral, and had a baleful influence on the opinions and practices of those who embraced them. They never could reason out, who, what, or where, the true God is, and consequently, could never find out what was the true worship. They never could penetrate the mystery of existence, the organization of matter, the rule of duty, or the fact and nature of a future state of existence. All was speculation,—vast, anxious, and profitless—and their minds, without a great truth to direct them, were tossed, like a rudderless ship, on the shoreless expanse of visionary ideas, and all their systems were utterly powerless to subdue or resist moral corruption, and a debasing polytheism.

Turn to Egypt, for example, where pagan philosophy first rose to eminence, and while there is no doubt that there the philosophers had attained to some measure of knowledge in the arts and sciences—though by no means too great as is sometimes asserted—yet their very religion proves, that in point of actual intelligence, they were far from being wise. Their mythology was very much founded on, and governed by astronomy, which was esteemed not a natural science but a religion, and the consultation of the stars was the means by which they obtained their revelations. Astrology therefore became their only, but false, substitute for inspiration; and the horoscope was their empirical pretension to possess the gift of prophecy. Egyptian philosophy? it has been extolled, but where is its excellence? What little we do know of it is worthless, and that which is guessed at, and said to be valuable, we repudiate till we shall have the proof. We have never found even one sound moral, religious, or scientific principle in the whole history of that nation. And though in the crypts of Thebes, and the temples of Memphis, the priests, or philosophers—for they were the same—had their mysteries, and under the assumption of these, and by propagating the notion that they possessed great knowledge, made men believe that they were extraordinarily wise, yet Pythagoras, when allured by their wide fame to visit their schools, and after spending twenty years in trying to acquire all that they could teach him, returned without one new satisfactory principle. And though their study chiefly related to astronomy—at any rate their whole philosophical theories hinged on their astronomical opinions—yet they really knew less about that science than what is taught in the junior classes of our common schools.

Less! rather we should say that they were profoundly ignorant of its simple elements. And in regard to the earth, they seem to have held very early the present pantheistic system of Hindooism—if that is not indeed the ancient Egyptian system—that it is a vast plain fixed in the centre of the universe, with the Nile as the feeder of the oceans, which has its source in heaven, and pours down on the summit of some great cloud-capped mountain in the centre of Africa, and that it rests on the back of an immense tortoise, and that the tortoise rests on the back of a prodigious bear, but on what the bear rested, their philosophy could never discover. Indeed, in many respects, the Egyptian doctrines of religion and philosophy very nearly resembled present Hindooism, with sacred rivers and beasts, cosmogony, astronomy, astrology, and metempsychosis, and surely none, with any intelligence and powers of reason, will consider the Brahmins and Buddhists of India as worthy, for a moment, to be spoken of as philosophers, or their opinions on religion, and science in general, to demand more respect than the pitying, if not contemptuous, smile of the little child. Or look at the Grecian philosophy. Much is boasted of the sages of Greece—and yet how few they were—and how very few!—when we think of the number of centuries in which there was a professed intellectuality. The few Greek minds worthy of notice are only those who were wise enough to reason that the idolatry was unscientific, if not wholly false, but beyond this they never found the truth. Thales was the first, 600 years before Christ, who strongly doubted, and all but firmly denied the existence of the gods, and who sought for one who was yet unknown, and speculated on the probabilities of a great First Cause, but never could assure himself of the fact. Pythagoras followed, and spent a life time in trying to find out truth, by examining all theories, and testing every thing by reason and experience, and died with all his anxieties of investigations unsatisfied. Socrates next rose, and turned his great mind to the solution of the moral nature and destiny of man, but though he reasoned in the right direction, and became a martyr to his infidelity in idolatry, yet, with the cup of hemlock in his hand, and about to pass into eternity, he could not see one clear ray of light on a future state. Perhaps, of all the ancient philosophers he did the most by reason that reason can do; and even were we to grant that he had found the truth, which he did not, it would only prove that the reason of one man had been sufficient to conquer all obstacles, for there has only been one Socrates in the whole pagan world. Plato and Aristotle, his pupils, next rose, and gave his opinions a systematic and developed character, and laid the basis of the present moral science; but still their philosophy was not sound, and in regard to what was an approximation to truth, we are inclined to go beyond the question what they, or Socrates before them, did by reason, and enquire how far they were not aided by the Hebrew faith and the Hebrew oracles, which it is impossible to suppose they did not know. But all the philosophers, with all their knowledge, never could dispel the shadows that unaided reason esteemed to be realities, nor dispel the darkness that enveloped all human inquiries; and it was not till Christianity arose that there was a light to lighten the world; and the Apostle Paul on Mars-hill told the philosophers of Athens what they confessed they were unable to discover; and at once solved the question, "what is truth?" and which had been the absorbing problem of their philosophy for six hundred years.

The whole state of religion, philosophy, and civilisation of the heathen world, is described by St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and the truthfulness of the fearful picture, as regarded Rome, is fully established by Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Roman Satirists; and, if any are prone to boast of the ancient wisdom and virtue, let them read that chapter, and then we shall be surprised if their eulogies are not changed to intense disgust; and there, they will truly learn what a state of depravity mankind arrive at when they have no revelation to guide them, and when they are left to the uncontrolled propensities of an evil nature, and to follow the suggestions of a mind unillumined by the wisdom of God. Cicero—who lived a hundred years before Christ, and had the advantage of gathering into his capacious mind all the reasonings of preceding sages,—certainly came nearest to the truth. His philosophy was of the Greek school, and after the Socratic model, yet it failed to satisfy himself. His idea of virtue is the only thing that is remarkable in his writings, and remarkable, inasmuch that it is the only instance where a heathen sage has given the proof of arriving at a view of practical morals, differing so widely from the opinions that prevailed, and offering so con-