

expense were spared to carry it out; and so extensive, as well as honorable was the priesthood, so rich were the temples, and so important, laborious, and punctilious was the worship, that the first born of every Egyptian family was entitled, if not required, to study and rank as a priest. This was the line of the priesthood, and thus it—what may be called the church—came to hold the superior proprietorship or lordship of the soil of the whole country, and the mass of the people were the mere serfs. On this fact we can see and understand the design of the extraordinary judgment of God, when the first born of every family was doomed to death by the destroying angel. By the hand of Moses, Jehovah had proved himself “high above all gods” in their celestial or infernal catalogue. The plagues came, and by these their celestial gods were shown to be powerless for good; yea, even their great god, the Sun, was overcome by “a darkness that might be felt;” and their infernal gods, according to their belief, were shown to be active against them in the hail, the locusts, and the murrain; and the objects of their terrestrial worship were destroyed. The temples became polluted, so that there could be no service in them; and the people became polluted, so that they could not worship though their temples had been clean. Their sacrifices, too, were all destroyed; and thus by judgment on judgment, they were left without the help of their gods, and without the means and opportunity to propitiate them; and, last of all, by one terrible swoop, to consummate the destruction, and display the majesty of the God of Israel, the whole priesthood was annihilated.

The religion of Egypt is often spoken of as philosophical and refined, but we ask, was that either philosophy or refinement, which led to the worship of gods they knew not what or where—the creations of wild and superstitious fancies and fears—and which condescended even to pay religious honors to the river, the reptile, and the brute? No, for while there is a fictitious honor thrown around the throne of the Pharaohs and the history of a once famous land, yet the religion was a mystery to the people, a trade to the priests, and a curse to all. Egypt may stand prominent for the magnitude of her idolatrous establishment, but not one sound religious principle can be found in her annals; and the most favourable facts we can gather, are only testimonies to the folly of a people who had lost the knowledge of the true God, and in the blindness of their minds—the light that was in them being darkness—were wandering helplessly in the dark fields of religious fiction, and self-creating the more horrible and the deeper pitfalls into which they plunged.