

the soul of the universe ; if not, it perishes ;—Epicurus and his followers, that “when death is, we are not.” The leading men among the Romans, when philosophy was introduced among them, followed the various Greek sects. Cicero doubted. Pliny declares that the soul and body have no more sense after death than before we were born ; Caesar, “that beyond death there is neither place for care nor joy.” The poets, it is true, spoke of a future state of rewards and punishments ; they had the joys of Elysium and the tortures of Tartarus ; but both philosophers and poets regarded them as vulgar fables.

Thus you see that “the world by wisdom knew not God ;” and that the very first principles of religion were, for ages, either denied, or corrupted by the most fatal errors.

Y. But as I have heard much of *Heathen virtue*, I suppose that the *morals* of Gentile nations were better than their opinions?

N. This also is an error. The facts mentioned in their own histories, and by their own satirists and poets, show that morals were universally corrupted, to an extent not known amongst the worst Christian nations, and that the descriptions of the state of the Heathen world in the New Testament, and especially in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, contain no exaggerations.

1. The slight regard paid to the life of man in all heathen countries, cannot have escaped the notice of reflecting minds. Among the Romans, men were murdered in their very pastimes, by being made to fight with wild beasts and with each other ; and though this was sometimes condemned, yet the passion for blood increased, and no war ever caused so great a slaughter as did the gladiatorial combats. They were at first confined to the funerals of great persons. The first show of this kind exhibited in Rome by the Bruti, on the death of their father, con-