

gotten, and to the vain imaginations natural to the human heart, each altered the parent religious belief, and changed customs and worship; and the truth thus became so mixed up and diluted with religious fancies, arising both from ignorance and perversion, from fear and folly, that it could not be discerned. Error thus grew till it formed into a system; and that first systematised form of idolatry, was Sabaism, and had its origin in western Asia. Mankind gradually lost the knowledge of the true God, of his Being and attributes, but still looking upward to powers supreme, formed the idea that the sun and moon were the two great divinities;—the one they called the King, and the other the Queen of heaven—and to each they gave a peculiar homage. They, then, further supposed them to be parents, and that all the stars were their offspring, and to the most brilliant of these they gave names and worship. When once this idea was fixed in their minds, they next attributed peculiar functions and powers to each, and thence began the opinion of lucky and unlucky stars—thence originated the whole system of ancient astrology—which, instead of recognising the one, supreme, over-ruling Providence, led to the most erroneous conceptions of astral influence. That, then, was the first step. It was leaving the Creator to worship his works—it was multiplying their gods—it was still looking upwards—it was still seeing their divinities in the heavens—but having lost God, they lost the first truth and purity of religion; and there was but another step, which they soon took, to form idols on earth—likenesses of what they supposed were the gods, in the sun, moon, and stars; and to these they began to pay their worship, and thus their foolish minds became darkened; and even when “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” From Sabaism, then, was all idolatry derived. It was the first step that man took from the throne of God; and we will find that the human race declined exactly in proportion, as their religion became more and more “of the earth, earthy;” and from this great parent system of error, we can see that all subsequent systems bore evidence of their paternity.

Next in age was the Egyptian religion. Sabaism was succeeded by material, terrestrial, idolatry. The religious sentimentalism connected with celestial objects, gradually decayed, and the earth took the place of the sky in furnishing gods; and Egypt—the boasted Egypt—ranked the first in making, worshipping, and extending, the lowest and meanest sys-

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