

religious truth. The tendency of the rude and uneducated mind is to imagery and ceremony, and God thus adapted religion to the mental and social progress of man, and invested its truths in forms and customs best suited to those to whom it was communicated, and by which it was most likely to be retained. The world was not then prepared for a completely spiritual religion, and it only received that which it was capable of appreciating. As the child requires a peculiar training and adaptation of means to his desires and faculties, so the childhood of the world required a peculiarity of religious system to prepare it for its maturity. It was "as an heir under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father," when risen, so to speak, to its majority, through the previous experience and training, then, "God sent forth his Son" as the great Teacher, to bring it from the elementary condition and character, and divulge a system of a spiritual, universal, and perpetual nature.

But we pass from the divinely instituted religious systems—or rather the shadowy phases of the one system—to those directly under review. We can contrast Judaism with Christianity, and show that the one was the type, the other the reality; that the former was the "coming event which had cast its shadow before." We can prove, that the religious system given to the Jews, was only adapted to their national design and circumstances, which confined them to their own land, and made them an agricultural, rather than a commercial, nation; which shut them in, in every sense, as a peculiar people; and that their institutions, temple, priesthood, rites, emblems and law, rendered it an impossibility that it ever could become universal;—but we have now to consider the other systems, as they exhibited the tendency and utmost powers of the unaided human reason, and thus we will see what the mind, religion, morals, and civilisation are worth, when left without the teaching of God.

The first form of an idolatrous religion, the nature of which history gives us any data to judge, was called Sabatism, and consisted in the worship of the firmamental bodies. Before the flood, it is evident that there must have been idolatry, for "the whole earth had corrupted its way," though we cannot tell of what kind it was; but early in the post-deluvian age, and after the dispersion at Babel, the tendency to idolatry rapidly displayed itself. Tribes were then formed, separated, and scattered; and having only had a traditionary faith, and away from the control, instructions, and priesthood of the great line of patriarchs, and left to tribal independence, to corruptions introduced, and the truth in tradition for-