

came light, and heat, and dews, and rains, and all other blessings; and, when the gods were angry, winds, and storms, thunderbolts and earthquakes. The sun and stars were made expressly for man, as were the seasons, with seed-time and harvest. The earth rested upon pillars, while under it were immense fires, in which the demons were confined, and hence the wicked were doomed to dwell; while above the vault were the Elysian fields, the home of the blest.

This wild astronomical and theological theory of creation was the prevailing idea among all peoples, five and six thousand years ago. Indeed, the true theory in regard to the solar system has been taught by the learned but a little more than three hundred years, the great mass of the uneducated still entertaining a belief in the ancient system, and are still quoting their sacred books in confirmation of it. The Phœnicians taught this flat-earth-and-vaulted-firmament theory at home, and in all their colonies. It was a part of the religious belief of all the nations bordering on the Mediterranean. It was believed by the cultured Greeks, as by the more modern Romans. The whole system of theology of all these nations was built upon this idea; and this was also true of the Hebrews, as their books furnish incontrovertible evidence. True, Herodotus, the Greek historian, ridiculed this teaching, and wrote:

"I cannot but laugh, when I see numbers of persons drawing maps of the world without having any reason to guide them; making, as they do, the ocean-stream to run all around the earth, and the earth itself an exact circle, as if described by a pair of compasses."

The reader will please remember that this was the idea entertained by him who gave us a history of the "flood," the "opening of the windows of heaven" through which to let down the rain, and the breaking up of "all the fountains of the great deep." This conception of the deluge came from Indus; it was as old as the most ancient civilizations; but it had been modernized with advancing thought as was the story of William Tell—as have all the myths which the learned have exploded—their origin lost in the sands of time, so antiquated that no one can trace their beginning, or learn when they were not believed as facts.

The mythical teachings in regard to a general deluge are not the only fabrications which have puzzled humanity, and, because of being interblended with a religious education,

have paralyzed investigation through many generations. The Egyptians taught that the world would be alternately purified by water and fire; that these were parts of the system which the Creator employed to prevent man from growing in power, and gaining a mastery over him! The teachings of barbarian races, slightly changed, have survived the ages; they have entered into the religious beliefs of the world, and will be as difficult to eradicate from the common mind as any other inherited error of so ancient an origin. Thos. Moore has well written:—

"The lover may
Distrust that look that steals his soul away;
The babe may cease to think it can play
With heaven's rainbow; alchemists may doubt
The shining gold their crucible gives out;
But Faith, fanatic Faith, once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

It is to be regretted that scientists are not permitted, without subjecting themselves to sectarian abuse, to pour in a flood of light upon the ancient fallacies which have crept into all our early teachings. Were they at full liberty to give the public their honest thoughts we should soon have a truer conception of the past, and a more exalted idea of the future; but ere that "good time coming" shall dawn upon the world, it is possible that many years may intervene.

Commencing with the story of creation, as borrowed from the Hebrew writers from countries where they had been slaves, wherein it is represented that the whole planetary and stellar systems are the out-growth of six days' labor, (not the production of a single mind, as the English reader finds it in his translation; but the task of *many gods*, as a correct rendering of the Jewish narrative, will show), with all the long incidental errors, following this first incorrect teaching, and ending with the looking forward to a general destruction of the material universe, when a grand conflagration will envelop all in universal ruin; when earth, and moon, and sun, and stars, will be "rolled together as a scroll," and disappear, while darkness and chaos succeed the present order of things, much is found that needs revision. He who is sincerely honest is hopeful that the day will not be too far distant when every false teaching shall receive that consideration it deserves; when every myth shall be exploded, and the sunlight of Truth shall illuminate all the dark corners of the world. This grand consummation of desire will usher in the *real* millenium, when "knowledge shall run to and fro as the waters cover the great deep."