

advent of our Lord ; and those parts of the world into which the light of our religion has not yet entered, even where civilization and learning exist, are in the same condition to this day.

Y. Be pleased to give me some instances of this.

T. It is not necessary to state particularly, what every one knows to be a fact, that the body of the people were in all nations grossly idolatrous and superstitious, ignorant of God and of moral distinctions, and crediting the most absurd fables, both as to the gods, and a future life. But the charge of great ignorance and error lies also against the wisest and most cultivated minds in the Pagan world ; for,

1. Though the belief of one Supreme Being has been found in many parts of the world, yet the notion of subordinate deities, the immediate dispensers of good and evil to men, and the objects of their fear and worship, has almost equally obtained ; and this, of necessity, destroyed or greatly counteracted the moral influence of that just opinion.

2. The modern idolatry of Hindostan, which in principle differs nothing from that of the ancient world, affords a striking comment upon this point, and indeed is of great importance in enabling us to conceive justly of the true character and practical effects of idolatry in all ages. One Supreme Being is acknowledged by the Hindoos ; but they never worship him, nor think that he concerns himself with human affairs at all. "This being," says Moore, "is called Brahm, one eternal mind, the self-existing, incomprehensible Spirit. To him, however, the Hindoos erect no altars. The objects of their adoration commence with the triad, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Seva*, which represent the almighty powers of creation, preservation, and destruction."

3. The learned among the classic Heathen, it is true, occasionally speak nobly concerning God and his attributes ; but at the same time they were led by