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Docent, and I also held a complete Examinatorium on Doctrinal Theology, in the Latin language, after Reinhard's work, four hours each week. As besides this I held two weekly exercises in disputing, I was obliged to speak Latin daily, by means of which I acquired great readiness in using it. The lectures upon the Interpretation of the New Testament, which I delivered gratis, and which were very well attended, were the occasion of my publishing, in the autumn of 1805, "the historical-doctrinal exposition of the New Testament," printed by Barth in Leipsic. I dedicated it to my revered teacher, Keil, whose principles I followed in composing it. In the year 1806 appeared also my commentary upon Sirach, which was the last theological work I prepared in Wittenberg. These literary productions, together with the fees from the students, and one of the "Stipendia" for young Docenten which I had obtained, so well covered my expenses, that I might have remained at the university without anxiety in respect to the future, had it not been for the terrible political tempest which was about to burst on Northern Germany.

[To be continued.]

ARTICLE II.

VESTIGES OF CULTURE IN THE EARLY AGES.

By M. P. Case, M. A., Newburyport, Mass.

If reliable histories could be given us of the great nations and events of the world, prior to the time to which authentic accounts now extend, they would find no lack of interested readers. It is at first view a singular fact, that so little of the first half of the world's history has come down to us; and that over full three thousand years of human events, a sea of oblivion has long rolled its waves. Only here and there arises anything out of that sea, which presents definite outlines. Between the early and later ages, there yawns a wide gulf which Revelation only traverses, and that but at a few points. Profane annals fail us, or give place only to legend and tradition, while yet we are midway on our journey to the primitive time. Far be-

yond stretches away a night of ages whose darkness is relieved only by a few solitary stars.

There can be no doubt that there were, during all those centuries, now silent to us, materials enough from which such histories as we have supposed might be constructed. The undoubted facts of which we are certain, show that, in pre-historic periods, the race flourished and was spread over the earth; that powerful empires arose and held sway for their time, and that mighty men of renown lived and left their impress upon the world. Some of the oldest writings assert such facts as these. But the details are unfortunately lost. After all the certainty we can gather, there is still left a wide field for inference and conjecture. As yet the manuscripts and monuments have not been found, which tell us much in detail of those old empires, and of the men who figured in those primitive times; or explain the origin of those systems of philosophy and religion, which were existing in full life in the days of the oldest historians whose writings have come down to us.

We will be thankful, however, for what we do know. And we think, that the great facts which are now fairly within our possession, if rightly combined, will lead us to yet further general knowledge of those earlier ages. If we take all that profane history and other memorials of the past can give us, and add to this what the Bible reveals of the social, political and spiritual condition of those primitive times, we may undoubtedly reach some correct conclusions, respecting their general culture and civilization. We are not aware of any extended research in this particular direction with reference to such an end; and we sincerely suspect that if such research were pushed far enough, it would become a certainty, better ascertained than even now, that the early centuries of the world were very far from being characterized by mental imbecility and barbarism, as some would have us believe they were. Rather would it be found that, in the beginning, man was created perfect in all his powers; that the sun of humanity rose, as it is destined to go down, in glory; and that the truly dark and barbaric period of the world, as of Christendom, was *mediaeval*. What has been said of the individual would be verified in respect to the race — *nemo repente turpissimus*. It would be seen that the clouds of superstition and sin rose gradually; and that it was not till centuries had elapsed after the first disobedience, that the firmament was enveloped in gloom, and man went groping on his way. And this *mediaeval* period of darkness, into which, here and there, history darts some rays of light, was the grave of primitive

culture, of art, history and spiritual life. The mad spirit of war reigned in those gloomy days where history begins its narrations. Whole nations, with all their treasures of whatever kind, were often exterminated or carried into hopeless captivity. Humanity had almost died from the earth; and in the mid-day of its being, the race seemed to have reached the lowest depth of human degradation. Thus and then it was, in that Night of the Ages, that the earlier world's history was destroyed with the nations themselves, except the few traces which have survived this destruction. May we not hope that more of these traces will yet come to light, when Eastern and Central Asia are better known?

It is not our present purpose to enter upon such a research as has been alluded to. Our design is the much easier task of indicating a few of the evidences of a high culture in the early ages, which come most obviously to view. We should indeed conclude on *à priori* grounds, that God would have made man perfect. We should expect from the hand of such an artificer no incomplete work. We find it hard to believe that he would have made the most wonderful specimen of his skill, which the earth was destined to witness, with wholly undeveloped powers, in short, an innocent savage, whose only excellence, for the time, was the negative quality of sinlessness, which quality he shared with the brutes around him. Reason does not so teach us, and inspiration responds to reason. This is the wondrous revelation: "So God made man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Was this bearing the image of God consistent with ignorance, intellectual inactivity or barbarism? As we read the brief narrative of the six days' work, we pass rapidly up a scale of stupendous creations and find man at last, on the summit, in the likeness of the great Architect. If we review the series, from the moment when the life-giving Spirit "moved upon the face of the waters," till a beautiful world was made, and man created to dwell upon it, we see each event preparing the way for, and itself becoming mutely prophetic of something yet higher and better. As the light, which first broke upon those realms of "Chaos and old Night," betokened the life of plant and animal which were soon to exist and rejoice in its genial power; so the mystery of this inferior life foreshadowed that higher mystery of a spiritual being who was to be

— "the master work, the end
Of all yet done."

For what end, may it be fitly asked, was there a paradise or a world

of beauty seen by its Maker "very good," and described by the divine philosopher, as *εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεοῦ αἰσθητός, μέγιστος καὶ ἀριστος κάλλιστός τε καὶ τελειώτατος*,¹ if only an uncultivated barbarian were to look out upon them from an empty soul dead to all their glories? That he was no such being, but possessed rather an expanded intellect with large knowledge, and was seeking with the avidity of all educated souls for yet higher wisdom, is evident from the tempter's very argument, which was addressed, not to the sense, but to the intellect. It appealed to the desire of greater knowledge. Here was the most vulnerable point, else why was here the first assault?

From this summit he fell, alas, how soon! but not at once to total degradation. Both revelation and historical facts show that the descent was gradual. Adam lived many centuries after the fall, and it is not to be supposed that, after he had been driven out from paradise, he wholly forgot what he had known there; or ceased to be, in some measure, the same intellectual and spiritual being he had been before the curse fell upon him. Himself and his posterity had become alienated from the great Father, but not so wholly as in after time. Before the deep and universal sin which brought the deluge may we look for the spiritual era of mankind. The intercourse between God and his human offspring, as the Bible clearly shows, was more direct then, than it has ever been since. Those centuries in which Adam lived as the great patriarch and teacher of men, we may well believe, were the golden age of the world. Why should not the men of those times have been distinguished for intellectual and spiritual culture? Their teacher had once been the very image of God, and, though he had lost this distinction, he could not so easily have forgotten the fact or what the fact implied. The knowledge he had intuitively or otherwise acquired, he would most naturally have communicated, and there would be no presumption even here in supposing that science, as we know it to be true, to some extent, in respect to art, was cultivated in those primal ages. Indeed, everything which the Bible teaches us on the subject, agrees with and tends to establish the theory that the first centuries of the world constitute a truly enlightened period of humanity.

In the second place, tradition leads us back to such a period of primitive excellence. Universal almost in every civilized age and country do we find traditionary belief of this kind. Oriental mythologies tell of a primeval age, when the earth was the scene of peace, longevity and happiness; when its inhabitants lived a thousand years

¹ Timæus of Plato, 93. C.

under the wise rule of a descendant of the sun. There is also a legend of a translation to heaven of a sinless man without the pains of death in that happy time. Accounts are also given in the Buddhist books of a degeneracy from such a primeval state of excellence; of the entrance of falsehood and murder into the world; and the consequent shortening of human life and the loss of happiness at first enjoyed.¹

The golden, silver and brazen ages of Greek mythology refer in like manner to an early state of human excellence and happiness, and a subsequent degeneracy. The curious myth or tradition, whichever it is, of the Atlantic Island in the *Timæus* and *Critias* of Plato, may be taken as a type of popular belief in the times when it was written. It represents a people in a very remote age, as living happily and wisely in the possession of great power and wealth; as understanding the arts in a high degree; as having close relations with the Deity; and finally, as losing their happiness and dignity only through the corruption of a mortal nature entering and destroying the divine life within them.² In connection with the story of this race, the old Egyptian priest of Sais is represented as informing Solon of a far higher state of excellence among the Athenians, in an age so remote that they themselves had lost all records of it; an age when the valor and political power of Athens was incomparably greater than at that period.³

Closely allied to such traditions is the general belief in human deterioration. Such degeneracy is a historical fact, in regard to almost every particular nation; and as such has significance in its relation to the primitive condition of mankind. In all time has the sad strain of Horace contained the key-note of the moralist:

Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturas,
Progeniem vitiosorem.⁴

In the third place, an extended, early culture is indicated by actual traces which long survived it. Such are the ruins of very ancient cities and the monuments of old races found in the East, in Egypt and holy Asia;⁵ the yet existing languages of those races, and the

¹ v. *Sacred and Historical Books of Ceylon*. By Edward Upham. London. 1833. Int., p. 17.

² v. *Critias*, 121. Ε. ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μὲν μοῖρα ἐξέτηλος ἐγένετο ἐν αὐτοῖς πολλῆ εὖ θνητῶ, καὶ πολλὰς ἀνακατασκευάσθη.

³ *Timæus*, 23. C. seq.

⁴ Lib. 3, Ode 7.

⁵ *Aeschylus*, *Prom. Vinc.* 410. ὄπρου τ' ἔποιον ἀγῶς Ἀσίας ἴδος νέμερται.

relics of an early and pure faith, both as to doctrine and practice. Though history, as we have said, does not give us the records of the first ages, it does lead us back to periods in which we find unmistakable evidence of an earlier and extinct civilization. It places before us the ruins of Art and of Empire which had existence in a far distant Past. Its light fades away, while yet we stand amid the *debris* of a hoary antiquity, surrounded by the marks of human cultivation, in some directions greater than we know of in more modern times. Babylon had become an ancient city when Herodotus visited it and measured its immense walls. The pyramids were the wonder of an olden time, when Plato travelled into Egypt. He saw the ruins and monuments, and read the inscriptions of a people, who, a thousand years before, had been distinguished for wisdom and political greatness. It was among this people that Moses dwelt; and it was in their literature that he became an accomplished scholar. Those among whom this great lawgiver was reared, and in whose learning and religion he was so thoroughly instructed, were, as their enduring monuments prove to us, illustrious teachers even then, in art or science.

We are not unaware of certain unkindly uses which have been made of the Egyptian monuments, nor of the inferences which have been drawn from them, prejudicial to our commonly received chronology, and the fact of a deluge. That in the time of Moses and even long before, Egypt was a populous and powerful nation, with a class of very learned men, is indeed a well ascertained fact. And we do not, by any means, feel obliged to conclude, therefore, that more time than the eight centuries which separated that epoch from the deluge, was necessary to produce under the circumstances such a state of human advancement, even though we adopt the ancient opinion that the deluge was universal. Those who would force us into a dilemma here, take it for granted that before the deluge, there was but little or no knowledge of art or science in the world; and that what there was, must have been destroyed by such a fearful catastrophe, had it actually occurred. But it may be remembered that one family survived; that this family might have preserved, and probably did preserve, the knowledge of the earliest times — for Noah must have known those who had seen and been instructed by Adam — and that those survivors would most naturally transmit such knowledge to their descendants. Thus the immediately succeeding generations would become possessed of all the wisdom with few of the vices of the antediluvian ages. And as for the insufficiency of

the time for the results, who can affirm this, that remembers what the last two hundred years have done for this continent; or the last fifty even, for scientific discovery? It might be more reasonably concluded that immediately after the flood, men were more virtuous, more industrious, more healthful, and so more prolific than at any previous period since the first centuries. Suffice it that we believe the Bible, and have confidence in the monuments; but doubt the possibility of finding any irreconcilable discrepancy between them when fairly brought together.

These monuments designate a high civilization derived perhaps through Noah from earlier times. This patriarch had lived with the contemporaries of Adam before the deluge. He lived also a long period after that terrific time. As a second first Man, he would naturally care for his widely extending posterity. All that would elevate and truly dignify that posterity we may well suppose he would inculcate; and with the earth purified from its vices and sins, the earlier spiritual age of Adam was for a short season at least, reproduced after the deluge. Then it was that those arts flourished, some of them long since lost,¹ which have been the wonder of all subsequent times; and then, too, perhaps those old philosophies, so sublime and often so true, took form and shape, which, in succeeding centuries, the Greek sages visited the banks of the Nile to study and admire. In the chambers and on the walls of those ancient piles, yet standing there, may be read at this day, not merely Egypt's political history; those old hieroglyphics teach us also that in the time of Moses, philosophy, theology, legislation and other kinds of lore, were in vigorous growth in that part of the world.

The perfect character of some of the oldest known languages is a fact bearing quite directly upon the question of an early culture. A language must bear a certain relation to the intellectual character of those speaking it, or at least of those with whom it originated. It is an index, of necessity, more or less perfect, of the inward life of those who use it. If we apply the Sanskrit here as a test, the old

¹ A late traveller viewing the immense ruins of one of the old palaces at Thebes says: "It is melancholy to sit on the piled stones amidst the wreck of this wonderful edifice, where violence, inconceivable to us, has been used to destroy what art, inconceivable to us, had erected. What a rebuke to the vanity of succeeding ages is here! What have we been about to imagine men in those early times to have been childish or barbarous, — or to suppose science and civilization reserved for us in these later ages, when here are works in whose presence it is a task for the imagination to overtake the eyesight!" — *Eastern Life, Past and Present*, by Miss Martineau, p. 162.

Hindûs who lived between Abraham and Moses must have been a philosophic and highly cultivated people. Those who best know that language, tell us of its exceeding richness and peculiar power as a vehicle of thought; and pronounce it to be, as it is, the *mother language* of the Greek, the Latin and the Gothic dialects of our ancestors; and so the fountain-head of those languages now spoken by the greater portion of the Christian world. And often, as the student has noted the marvellous beauty and fulness of the Greek, has the question arisen, whence came this wonderful language? Even the oldest writings in it, of which we have knowledge, show it to have had its birth and growth among a people who, though unknown to us, must have had the nicest conceptions of beauty in all its forms; and to whom discriminating thought was not an accident but a habit. Could a language, of which with hardly more enthusiasm than truth it has been said, that "it is as universal as the race, as individual as ourselves; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, to which nothing was vulgar; from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English, with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer;"¹ could such a language have originated with a barbarous or even a semi-civilized race? And what shall we say when the still older Sanskrit is found to be superior even to this?

But it is perhaps in the relics of an early faith scattered world-wide, that we find the most distinct and living evidence of a primitive civilization. We have spoken of the earliest centuries as constituting the golden era, the age of light and spiritual life. We know that men did then hold direct intercourse with the Deity. Did we not know that such was actually the fact, we should reasonably conclude that God would have had intelligent intercourse with his newly created offspring. We should suppose he would communicate to them knowledge corresponding in kind and degree to all their powers. Thus we should expect a revelation; and such there was. This revelation, doubtless, had primary reference to spiritual education— from which we should indeed infer intellectual culture,² as an obvious

¹ H. N. Coleridge's Study of the Greek Classic Poets.

² There is evidence, as we have seen, of more scientific and other knowledge in the world in its earlier periods, than the general belief would lead us to suppose. Certain astronomical doctrines were more nearly correct in the time of Pythagoras, than a thousand years afterwards. There has been, also, much ridicule over the ancient philosophers and their four elements, which a profounder knowledge of their teachings would have gladly spared. And there is

result — and from it the great questions which relate to man's nature, destiny and relations, must have been well understood. In the free and unrestrained communion of man with his spiritual Father, of which the earlier Scripture history contains frequent examples, there must have been a more satisfactory revelation of God's will, his truth and his ways, than any written account of these could become; for the written revelation, from the nature of the case, is liable to be misunderstood, whereas the oral could hardly have been mistaken. In its transmission, however, to others, it might be more liable to perversion than the written; but while the age of oral revelation continued, men must have thoroughly understood the Divine nature and will, and known the pure truth without admixture of error or heresy. And had this state of things remained, no written word would have been requisite. But the apostasy became at length so great, the descent of man from the high elevation he first held so low, and the distance between the human and the divine so wide, that this mode of communication of necessity ceased. The truth became gradually more and more corrupted with error; and thus came the necessity of a written revelation, such as God has given to the world. But what became of those fundamental truths thus early lodged in the heart of humanity, and which fed that spiritual life whose pulsations were so vigorous in those early days? Were they wholly lost amid the idolatry and sin of succeeding times? We cannot so believe. There is an adaptation in those truths to man's nature and wants. They touch a chord in his bosom which vibrates only to them. Hence those primal revelations lived long in the world; some of them live still, buried or smothered though they have been under ever accumulating burdens of delusion. Sometimes we find them standing forth with distinctness of outline, showing much of their native grace or grandeur; sometimes they are so concealed and disfigured that they present only a slight resemblance to the original form; and sometimes, like the rich ore, they may be found running in minute yet traceable veins, among unsightly masses of falsehood and superstition.

somewhat more than a possibility that the great Western continent was inhabited, and well known to the dwellers on the Eastern, even before the building of the pyramids. Stallbaum says well, in regard to the story of the Atlantic Island in the *Timæus*, before referred to: "Quidquid rei est, illud quidem negari non potest, quæ de situ et regione, de magnitudine, de potentia, denique atque opibus hujus insulæ & Platone narratur, ea mirifice in Americam convenire; ut si non ex historiae fontibus ducta, certe singulari quadam ac prorsus divina animi præcognitione conficta sint." See note *ad locum*.

How much of our own Christian faith may be found among the various forms of paganism is, on many accounts, a deeply interesting question. The aggregate might, indeed, at first view surprise us. A distinct recognition of the great central fact may be wanting in all; and what we do find is more or less distorted by error, thus showing the imperative need of an unmixed revelation, authoritative and Divine. But it is a significant fact, that in general, the oldest systems of human belief approach the nearest — *sed proximus magno intervallo* — to this Divine revelation. The most ancient doctrine respecting the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being is often surprisingly correct. The Egyptian priests represented him as the most ancient of things and uncreated, as the Unutterable and Eternal One. These and such like lofty truths were carried by the philosophers into Greece. In the sacred books of the Hindûs, much may be found which shows that the present idolatrous system of that people is only a corruption of a highly spiritual religion; and that its grosser forms sprung up and attached themselves to the parent stock only after literature and philosophy had declined from a high original condition. In the Vêdas, written as many suppose not far from the time when Moses received the law on the sacred mountain, the unity and other attributes of God are distinctly asserted. To this effect are such passages as these: "No vision can approach Him; no language can describe Him; no intellectual power can compass or determine Him. He is beyond all that is within the reach of comprehension; and also beyond nature which is beyond conception." It is added: "*Our ancient SPIRITUAL PARENTS have thus explained Him.*" Here, beyond question, is a tradition coming down from a more spiritual age. Again it is said: "He alone whom no one can conceive by vision, and by whose superintendence every one perceives the objects of vision, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship."¹ The last phrase is often repeated in similar connections in other places. These passages afford a specimen of the proof which might be given that monotheism was the ancient form of religion among the Hindûs; and that the polytheistic character which that religion afterwards assumed, was the product of a less enlightened age.

The godness of the Deity, his Divine and universal providence, extending alike to the least events and the greatest, his unchangeable character,² as every reader of the classics knows, are most fully

¹ See Rammohun Roy's translation from the Upanischad of the Sama Vêda, Calcutta. 1816.

² Republic of Plato, 381. D. where this attribute is beautifully illustrated.

asserted by Plato, Plutarch and Cicero especially, and also less often by many other writers. He is called by Plato, the Best of Causes,¹ and is represented as the impersonation of Beauty, Wisdom and Goodness.² The justice of God, too, is vividly set forth in many places by the tragic poets; and Plato, in the tenth book of the Laws, in notable words declares that it will pursue its object in this life and in the next; whether in heaven, earth, or Hades, or regions "still more wild than these," until a fitting penalty is exacted. Connected with this idea of Divine justice is that of a future punishment of the wicked. The extent and clearness with which this doctrine is stated by the ancient heathen moralists, and the great agreement of its earliest forms with the so-called orthodox view of it, must furnish a somewhat perplexing puzzle to those who would set it aside as altogether unjust and unreasonable, or represent the notion as a modern device of priestcraft. In fact, the denial of the doctrine may be designated as the modern phenomenon respecting it.

The belief in a future judgment, in agreement with which this retribution is to be dispensed, is apparently as old as that in the retribution itself. We have the clearest evidence that this was an article in the old Egyptian creed; and the closing pages of the Gorgias of Plato show us what that philosopher would teach on this subject. In that celebrated myth, which he makes Socrates utter as simple truth, not only is the fact of a future judgment, impartial in all respects, solemnly stated and dwelt upon; the thoroughly Christian belief is also asserted, that death, being only a separation of the soul and body, works no change in the moral condition; for with the same character it possessed while in the body, will the soul appear before the impartial Judge. And these facts are made the occasion of a solemn appeal to the hearers, to live virtuous lives, "to study not to *appear* good, but to *be* so in truth, both privately and publicly;"³ and thus to become fitted to receive the reward promised to the righteous — a happy life in the islands of the blessed. Consistently with such teachings, and even as their ground, do we find those same writers inculcating the essential evil of sin, and the sad fact of human depravity.

In like manner, the existence of invisible spirits, both good and bad, and their connection with human affairs, is one of the oldest and most general articles of human belief. And, indeed, as our mission-

¹ Timæus, 29. A. ² Phædr. 246. D. τὸ δὲ θεῖον, καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν.

³ 527. B. αὐτὸ δὲ δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι. Cf. Septem cont. Thebas, 574. Also Republic, 361. A. where it is said to be the greatest injustice to seem just, and not to be so.

aries and others who have the means of knowing, assure us, such a belief is, at the present day, as universal as is the idea of a Supreme Being. Plutarch, quoting the opinions of much older writers than himself, says: "Xenocrates thinks that there exist, in the air¹ which surrounds us, great and powerful natures, but at the same time morose and ill-natured, that delight in doing such (i. e. mischievous) things. . . . Hesiod, again, calls the beneficent class holy genii, guardians of mankind, givers of wealth. . . . Plato call this class the interpreting and ministering kind, holding a middle place between gods and men, carrying up the prayers and offerings of the latter to the former, and bringing back prophetic answers and gifts of good things.² Empedocles, also, declares that wicked spirits suffer punishment for their sins and misdemeanors." Their condition, according to this poet, is a peculiarly hard one. He says:

*Αἰθέριον μὲν γὰρ σφαι μόνος πόντον δὲ διοίκει,
Πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέκτισσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
Ἡελίου ἀκάμαντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
Ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγίοναί δὲ πάντες.³*

We search in vain for so distinct or so universal recognitions of the necessity of a spiritual regeneration. And yet there is something not unlike this, in the dogmas of some religions. The peculiar idea of *caste* among the Hindûs, implies simply and primarily, if we understand it, the separation from the common mass of a more spiritual class and for specific religious ends. They are reckoned and named a body of "twice born" men; and their separation from others is grounded upon the fact of some peculiar fitness for the society of the Divine One, of him who is the Absolute Intelligence, the Essential Light.⁴ The difference between the Brahmin and other men is thus founded on his relation to Brâhma who is Light and Wisdom. Is there not here, somewhat more than a fanciful resemblance to the idea of a Christian church, and the peculiar relations and character of its regenerated members?

Nor do we find the most distinct enunciation of the doctrine of ONE

¹ For this locality of daemons, see also Diog. L. as referred to by Ritter, Hist. of An. Philosophy, Morrison's Trans. Vol. I. p. 407. Cf. also Eph. 6: 12 and 2: 2, where Satan is called *τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ αἵματος*.

² Reference is had to a passage in the Symposium here almost quoted.

³ De Is. et Os. Reiske, Tom. VII. pp. 425, 426. In translating we have abridged somewhat.

⁴ See Maurice's Boyle Lectures on the Religions of the World, and their relations to Christianity. Lectures 2nd and 6th. London. 1848.

atonement sacrifice in the heathen religions, either the early or the later. Still we cannot fail to notice in the various observances of those religions, especially the sacrificial observances, such manifest resemblance to the Hebrew ritual, as suggests at once the hypothesis of a common origin. Whence, indeed, came this so general notion, that the Deity can be propitiated only by the suffering of the innocent and unoffending? Or that pardon can come only by the shedding of blood? It can hardly have been a spontaneous idea of reason. The light of nature, so called, certainly would not have suggested it. And yet in remote ages, and among races widely separated, hardly knowing each other's existence, strikingly similar views have prevailed in regard to sacrifice. And over how large a portion of the earth, and for how long a time did the practice of human sacrifice prevail? A custom alike abhorrent to the feelings and repugnant to the reason, yet all but universal in the world, when the great Offering was made and the holy blood shed upon the cross. Whence came such belief and practice, unless it was the assent of the soul, feeling the burden and terrible guilt of sin, to a primarily revealed truth coming with all the authority of sacred ancient tradition, and declaring: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

The bare mention of the soul's immortality brings at once to the remembrance of the classical student, certain pages of the great Roman orator, where that sublime and Christian belief is set forth with a diction and eloquence worthy of it and of him. It will call to mind, too, that most beautiful and touching of Plato's dialogues, the *Phaedo*, in which, whatever we may think of the arguments there adduced to prove it, the soul's immortal life stands out as the central thought. It may suggest, also, a fine passage in that remarkable essay of Plutarch, "*De sera Numinis Vindicta*," as well as similar writings of other moralists. Of much that is found in the moral essays of the last-named philosopher, it is truly difficult to say what most compels our admiration; whether the amazing extent of his knowledge on subjects political, moral, philosophical and historical; or the great wisdom of many of his views and the solid good sense prevailing everywhere; or the conservative and serious tone in which he often discourses; or finally, the wonderful agreement of many of his opinions with those of the most distinguished teachers of the Christian church. He lived, it is true, a little after the apostles; but there is no satisfactory evidence that he knew anything of the Christian faith. On the contrary, his writings furnish conclusive proof, that he derived his belief from other and far older sources. In the essay above

mentioned, many of the doctrines are so just and so much in accord with our own modes of thinking, that for the moment, we seem to be reading from the Fathers, if not from one of the old English divines, *pour ainsi dire*, done into Greek. So general was his knowledge of his own and previous times, that he perhaps more than any other Ancient writer, may be said to have been the compiler of ancient belief. In him we seem to see a deeply religious mind seeking honestly for the truth; and by immense labor, and with great patience and discrimination, culling out the rational teachings of preceding ages; and, after working them over in the laboratory of his own thoughts, presenting them in his own form, to his own and succeeding times. We wonder where he, a heathen as he is often called, obtained those Christian views. And we can find no satisfactory solution of the difficulty, except on some hypothesis such as we have suggested, that in the old philosophies, there were the remains of an early oral revelation.

We are unwilling to leave this brief and imperfect enumeration of doctrines without a passing allusion to the correct views of some of the ancient writers, and of Plato, as perhaps their best representative here, in regard to the general character of all spiritual truth. The grand distinction between the natural and supernatural is everywhere kept in view in his writings. The spheres of sense and of reason are never confounded. Each has its fixed limitations. And as soul is older than body and superior to it, so is the spiritual sphere the higher and the nobler, the realm of necessary truth and being. This important distinction, in its whole breadth, is laid down and illustrated with great clearness and beauty of language in the *Timæus*,¹ where true being is designated as *τὸ ὄν*, and the phenomenal and only sensible as *τὸ γιγνόμενον*. The first includes all that is absolute, uncreated and eternal, the latter extends to all that exists under the forms of sense and time, — the truly natural. Elsewhere and often he speaks of the specific forms which fall under these general heads, as *τὰ αἰσθητά*, the sensible, and *τὰ νοητά*, the purely rational; or as *τὸ ὁρατόν*, the seen, and *τὸ αἰδέε*, the unseen. These distinctions suggest almost exactly similar ones in the sacred Scriptures, and none more readily perhaps than that in 2 Cor. 4: 18, where in like manner the “seen and the temporal” are put in direct contrast to “the unseen and eternal.”

Had it come within our original design in preparing this article, we could have found in the ancient ethical teachings abundant

¹ 27. D.

statements of Christian duty as well as doctrine. Though in matters of practice every mind has the impulsive power of conscience, which, in spite of education, tradition or authority, will guide aright in many things, if carefully obeyed; yet there are some laws which bear upon them the sign manual of Divinity. We see that human wisdom could not have originated them, just as it could not have invented many beautiful arrangements which we find in nature. Such have existed, even where no written revelation ever found its way, unless it was one now lost. We must refer them to an earlier age and revelation. And infidelity, when she points to those sublime laws, as independent of revelation, and as showing its uselessness or annulling its authority, begs her ground entirely, and holds it only at the mercy of history and reason.

The fact of a primitive civilization, we do not forget, has something to do with the question of human progress and various theories often advanced respecting it. If the early condition of mankind was an elevated one, of which we think there is sufficient evidence where we have designated it, then for half the centuries since the creation of man, has his progress been downward; a descent from an eminence of spiritual life, and all its attendant and related good. Art, history, philosophy and spiritual truth were lost wholly or in part; and though in the later centuries, and chiefly in connection with the Christian dispensation, the race has begun to ascend again to its original inheritance of Truth and Light, yet humility in view of what has been lost, rather than pride over what has been gained, might be the more fitting sentiment. And as an intellectual decline evidently followed close upon a spiritual, so may we expect no true or permanent or desirable progress except as it attends upon a spiritual culture. Reformers may learn lessons from the remote past; and this most clearly, that human progress is no inevitable fact or law. We may scatter knowledge everywhere; this alone "puffeth up," generating pride which leads to ruin. We may have telegraphs and steam-ships and railroads; and thus wealth and power may be increased. But wealth and power are apt to result in luxury, and this like pride leads again to ruin. If, with these ministries of nature, there is Charity, Faith and Righteousness, then may we look for rapid progress, and a final return to the high summits of true humanity. But if Pride and Luxury and the lust of Power shall reign, who shall say, that ere that time arrive, the race may not yet again return to the darkness which characterized the middle era of mankind?