

LOGAN MITCHELL



**RELIGION IN THE HEAVENS;
OR, MYTHOLOGY UNVEILED
IN A SERIES OF LECTURES**

Logan Mitchell

Religion in the Heavens; Or, Mythology Unveiled in a Series of Lectures

Enriched edition.

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Michael
Wellesley*

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PREFACE.

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ACCORDING to the ignorant prejudices which priestcraft has interwoven through the human mind, the subjects treated of in the following Lectures, are considered as sacred ground by the votaries of superstition; and therefore every attempt to examine them with freedom, or to expose them to the test of reason and free discussion, appears shocking to the blindly bigoted, and alarming to interested priests. But as neither complaisance nor forbearance is due to either of these parties, the free inquirer, stimulated by the love of truth alone, will be earnestly desirous of emancipating the minds of his fellows from the fears and delusions of a sanguinary and distracting superstition, which has no foundation in reason, either as regards the past or the future; and from the gloomy grasp of its active, subtle, and vindictive priesthood, who want nothing but the *power* to imprison and roast alive, as they did in former ages. Yet even in the present times of science and reform, what has been the fate of the daring wight who has ventured to expose the origin and shown the terrible effects of Christianity during fifteen hundred years? He has drawn upon himself the concentrated essence of malice from all the hireling sacerdotal orders, abetted by their allies the aristocracy of every country, by whom he has commonly been robbed and imprisoned, or otherwise ruined both in fortune and reputation.*

* "Knowledge is called infidelity:
.... Hence the few who knew

Aught worth recording, and were fools enough
To vent their free opinions, what has been
Their recompense and their reward? The stake,
The fagot and the cross."

—Goethe's "Faust."

Infidelity—we say; but to what?
To vulgar superstitions enforced.

How does he incur the implacable vengeance of the theologians? Because his search after truth, in the paths of Nature, has a direct tendency to overturn that monstrous fabric of delusion, which enables so many hundreds of thousands of them to live in ease and luxury, at a prodigious expense to human industry. Why do the aristocracy and the rich of the land persecute and pursue him to ruin? The aristocracy being, in point of fact, the national rulers, as such, have hitherto considered it necessary to support some kind of superstition (any sort does equally well for the ignorant and vulgar), perceiving that, by an iniquitous confederacy with its priesthood for mutual support, the strongest arm of bad government is created. Moreover, the ranks of the hierarchy are recruited by scions from aristocratical stocks, who are called by the "Holy Ghost," to receive revenues sufficient for "*the attraction of gentlemen*" and whether these be younger sons, brothers, blackguards, or blockheads, it is all the same—they are good enough for Mother Church. This is a powerful—an almost irresistible scheme for fostering ignorance and falsehood—for upholding the foul connexion between Church and State, and for perpetuating the mental slavery of the people. The cause of truth and the welfare of society call loudly for the exposure of these enormous corruptions; and the dangerous

task will be hailed and encouraged by every true friend to human improvement, as the surest means of banishing from amongst men the blasting and demoralizing belief in supernaturalism, for that is the principal, if not the sole source of all the moral evils on the face of the earth.

It was the strikingly eloquent saying of Mr. Paine[1], that "prejudice is the spider that spins its web on the mind." This entangling web is so interwoven into the tender and plastic mind of youth by systematized deception, that even the strongest intellect can hardly extricate itself during life; and this spell holds equally good with Jew, Christian, Mahomedan, or in any other of all the heaven-derived superstitions that have afflicted the human race. These are the universal plagues—the fatal barriers which stand perpetually between man and the harmonious union which he would ever maintain with nature. All religions have in succession sprung out of the superstitions which preceded them, and there is no difficulty in proving that the Christian scheme is no exception to the rule; for, on its very front, it carries the most conclusive evidence of having been drawn out of the exhaustless ethnical magazines of Paganism,* and metamorphosed there is not a vestige—not an iota of Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, that did not belong to Paganism, thousands of years before the reign of Tiberius; and that all the "religion" practised in Europe is merely the exoteric quackery of the old universal solar mythos. In like manner, it was only the initiated Jews of their cabbala, who knew the secret of the same mythos. This was called Gnosticism[2][1q].

* Beyond the limits of the papal conclave of cardinals, there is every reason to believe that very little true, or

esoteric Christianity is known; and that only among the learned and most laborious in fearless research. In that modern cabbala of the initiated, the secret is guarded with the most solemn and profound vigilance; and the sacred trust

is, that into that unsightly and distorted texture of wild and irrational superstition, which has deluded men by teaching them to overlook the moral and physical realities of nature—fixing their minds upon imaginary existence; and by an intercourse which surplused magicians have pretended to, with a place called heaven, everything that is good and congenial to man upon earth has been destroyed.

"For the the craft of priesthood that hath shaped
A future world,—the kings of distant days
Have countenanced the fraud, that fools content,
Might look for blessings in another scene,
And bear the yoke more tranquilly in this."

None but bigoted and priest-subdued minds will deny that it has been Christian superstition, and its offspring, cherished ignorance, that have distracted and made stages for theological gladiators, of Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, for a succession of ages. By its natural tendency to corrupt every kind of government, it has shed the blood of Erin's priest-ridden sons, to satisfy the rapacious hierarchy of a more favored sect! In England, at this moment, is it not a demonstrable fact that, as theology enters into, and taints everything, so it is the ready and insuperable barrier against every salutary improvement; for, whenever a reform of bad laws and abuses is proposed, or any measure attempted that would tend to the relief and benefit of the people at large, do not Churchcraft, Aristocracy and Co. put their veto upon it immediately? *

It is the essence of this pretended science of theology, particularly that of triune-Christianity, to oppose, and in everything to combat the light of Nature and reason—to degrade and crush the human mind in youth, as the best security against its future expansion; and hence it is that, poor deluded man, in his abject and ludicrous terrors, has been rendered the most bewildered, piteous, and contemptible of all animals,** wishing to live for ever *after death*, yet afraid to die! Such being the nature of this dark pestilence, the terrible evils it has produced in Europe for so many centuries, and is still producing even to this day are precisely what might be expected from such a cause.

* The demon of Toryism, which pervades Europe throughout, is

the legitimate offspring of Priestcraft, Aristocracy and Co.—that is, a confederacy of the great monopolisers of the land and the church hierarchy, for the honest purpose of subjugating and fleecing the industrious wealth-producers.

** No man will ever write as a true philosopher who seeks the approbation of more than one in every ten thousand of men, as they are moulded at present by theology.

To any species of political tyranny that happened to be strong enough to bestow riches and power upon its priests, it has ever been ready to link itself; and to form the mainstay and support of that flagitious and shameful policy which promotes ignorance, as the surest medium through which to deceive mankind into submission to bad government. Even now, in the nineteenth century, there are no legislative disputes and dissensions in which it is not the perpetual bone of contention—no national interests discussed wherein it forms not the most inflaming

ingredient.* From a cause that is thus essentially and innately evil, such effects must emanate of necessity; and, therefore, there would be the highest folly in expecting that this baleful superstition can ever change, or be anything else than that which it hitherto has been—a burden and a scourge to every country *in the exact ratio of its influence*.

The reproachful canting cry of heretic, infidel, atheist, etc., will be raised against the author of these lectures, by every fiery intolerant bigot into whose hands they may fall. But he alone is the true infidel who forsakes the laws of his Nature, and gives up his mind to a belief in fabulous and demoralising legends, which contradict all experience, and stand in opposition to the testimony of his own senses and reason.** In regard to the term Atheist, which, of all others, is meant to be the most opprobrious, let our angry zealot, in the first place, define precisely what he means by the word:—if he explains it by saying "it signifies one who supposes that there is no God;" we reply that it is impossible to understand this definition until he declares in express and intelligible terms what he means by the word "God." If it is used to designate that incomprehensible POWER by which the universe is ruled, there cannot be such a thing as an Atheist in existence.

* It was formerly maintained by hangmen and funeral piles, and now by clerical riches and power, hereditary lawgivers, harsh judges, ignorant juries, fines and imprisonments.

** Diderot, in illustrating the conflict of priests against reason, says, "Bewildered in an immense forest during the night, and having only one small torch for my guide, a stranger approaches, and thus addresses me,—'Friend, blow

out thy light if thou wouldst make sure of the right path.'"—This stranger was a priest.

Do the Jews, Christians, and Mahomedans, by their wild and degrading anthropomorphism, or by forming their deity in the likeness of any entity that the human mind can conceive, evince a worthy, or anything approaching to an adequate, conception of the unknown,* all-ruling *Power*? Quite the contrary; for in absurdly embodying it as a located Being, or by conferring personification in any shape or manner whatsoever, they impiously create one of those idols which they pretend to abhor, and become themselves idolators. These alone are the real Atheists, as they not only endow their man-God with the worst of human frailties and passions, but contemn and repudiate the true revelation of Nature. The mean and grovelling notions which the half-inch mind of the priest-led fanatic has of his God (for instance the Jewish one), form a striking contrast with the elevated and pure ideas which fill the mind of Nature's free votary, towards the one universal Power,—a veneration infinitely too exalted to allow for a moment the puerile and ridiculous notion of its being personified in the form or likeness of any existing thing.**

* What do theologues now know of that which they call Deity more than was known to the philosophic Brahmin, Egyptian, or Zoroastrian, ten thousand years ago? Absolutely nothing. What does the pampered Oxonian professor of theology know more of it than the meanest cow-boy in England? Absolutely nothing.

** The deist talks of "Nature's God," that is, the powers of Nature personified, for it is impossible it should mean anything else. As a poetic figure, we have no objection to this.

But the priests of all religions that have at any time plagued the earth, have agreed in the absolute necessity of inventing such imbodyed Gods or idols; and whether they be Jupiters or Jehovahs is no great matter, as they answer equally well as mystic sources from whence to derive the usurped power of the sacerdotal orders; and as relentless tormentors, to keep the minds of their frenzied dupes in perpetual terror. Without these pre-requisites, their trade would soon come to an end. Hence arises their well-known malignity against all who are sceptical respecting the existence of such *supernatural personages*; for those who have doubts about that which is indispensable to the theologians, are denounced by them as abominable Atheists, which, being explained, designates the few unfettered, ingenuous minds, who are capable of perceiving the matchless absurdity of attempting, by any entity, or personified representation whatsoever, to convey the slightest rational idea of that incomprehensible Power, by which countless millions of worlds are ruled.

LECTURE FIRST. ON MIRACLES

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"Man is born in ignorance of everything around him; and this ignorance of natural causes beget terror; terror, superstition; superstition, priests and the priesthood: whose interests and unbending efforts are exerted to perpetuate the ignorance, the fear, and the superstition that gave them birth"

THE ignorance of the natural causes of the effects which man sees around him, has ever been the foundation upon which the fabricators of all religions have built the whole machinery of those delusions by which the human race in all ages has been duped.. These impostors have invariably relied on their artful jugglery in the pretended science of supernaturalism, for the success of their respective systems; and of all such means of deception, that of working miracles by legerdemain, or collusive agency, has been the most successfully palmed off upon the credulous multitude in all countries; whilst men of knowledge and reflection have in all times rejected the pretended infractions of the immutable course of nature, as the inventions of knavery to delude and thereby prey upon ignorance. The faith reposed in these delusive prodigies was always in proportion to the degree of simplicity in the deceived; they were not generally believed by those who saw, but most firmly by those who did *not* see, them performed; and though not true at first, that is but a trivial matter, as time has established the veracity of those of the Jews and primitive Christians; and now when they are

upheld by overwhelming clerical riches and power, backed by political corruption, they will continue to degrade, and be the grossest outrage upon common sense and experience, until the great and salutary moral change shall take place, when the mind of youth shall no longer be mortgaged to the priest in education.

Though a miracle, or pseudo violation of Nature's laws, be the most certain method of exciting the admiration of the vulgar, it is contrary to reason that anything of the kind should be true; but it is by no means contrary to the testimony of experience, that impostors might have lived two or three thousand years ago, and propagated falsehood. This conclusion is fully corroborated by all modern experience, in which we find that deception and falsehood form the medium through which knavery rules simple ignorance; and to such a degree do these ingredients pervade the whole of society, that they in a great measure constitute the religious and moral element in which man lives at the present day; and so besotted has the breathing of this atmosphere of error and delusion rendered him, that the more outrageous a miracle, or other theological fable, is against rational light and common sense, the more greedily has it ever been received by the unthinking and priest-ridden million, who delight in the marvellous and the incredible—believing everything, and examining nothing:—hence the success of the ludicrous medley that makes up our Christian *Polytheism*. Admitting, for a moment, the possibility of such physical prodigies being true, what do we gain by them,—do they either confer additional authority on moral truth, or prove it false? Can they make right wrong, or

wrong right? It is a melancholy fallacy to attribute to them any such power or influence, and implies a lamentably low estimate of the dignity and greatness of moral truth. All that we gain by pretended violations of Nature's laws, is dogmatism, bigotry, spiritual fear, intolerance, and superstition; together with all the other curses which come in the train of religion, when backed by authority.

A modern philosopher has given the quietus to miracles in the following death-blow:—"A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature[29]; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined; and, therefore, no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, *unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish*" This argument is absolutely invincible. The boundless plenum of Nature—the revolution of hundreds of millions of globes round a million of suns, may be called miraculous, but in all this, Nature, or the material universe in motion,* is still invariable, and acting by *self-existing qualities or properties*, which are therefore inviolable and immutable. If it is asked, "cannot a law that is made by the Supreme Power be suspended by its author?" we reply, that the innate or essential properties of matter, being *principles*, could have no author—no antecedent—no beginning:—they are co-eternal as matter and motion, or the immutable Power which we call Nature. This hypothesis is plain, simple, easy, and rational: but the theory of your personified, localised artificer, is the reverse of all this; for

he himself would stand a thousand times more in need of an artificer or author than does the material universe. We *know that matter exists*:**—there can be only one infinite—ergo, matter *must* be that infinite.

* Lalande says that at the age of nineteen, he thought the heavens proved a personified God (the anthropomorphism of the Jews). but now, says he, I see in them nothing but matter and motion. He said also that Materialism was beyond the vulgar, to whom it would be neither agreeable nor useful.

** Begging my Lord of Cloyne's pardon.

In their secret doctrines, the philosophers and priests of antiquity admitted no miraculous powers; and when they said that a certain thing was done by a god, or "the gods," they were merely using words suited to the capacity of the multitude, while the mystic or esoteric meaning was, that the thing arose from the concatenation of natural causes and effects, or the eternal order of necessity; and not, as the ignorant imagine, that the laws of nature were suspended by the interference of some personified god. With the above two classes of the initiated, all their mysteries were rooted in, and had constant allusion to zodiacal objects, and the physical powers of Nature; which objects and powers were, by the prosopopoeia, converted into abstract existences, called gods and goddesses. This was done by all the priests of antiquity, as their varied schemes of superstition gained footing so as to foster ignorance and mental blindness amongst their dupes; and herein they were imitated by their successors, the

Christians, who likewise claimed a power in their gods, to suspend or make infractions in the unalterable course of Nature. Judaism was a barbarous version of some of the beautiful and lively fables of the Pagans; and the present superstition of Europe is a rude polytheistical caricature of the whole.

The miracle-working Deity of the Jews appears to have been of Egyptian extraction; and had his prototype in the god *Jahouh* [3], who held a high rank in the polytheism of the Thebans. This Jahouh was a personification of that power which giveth forms to matter (viz., motion), and organises animal and vegetable life, *alias* soul of the world. Moses, who is said to have been a priest of Isis, or Nature, the secret of whose mysteries was the unity of the supreme Power,* seems to have been wishful of preserving that unity in the Deity he had borrowed of the Thebans, as is stated by Strabo, in his Geography,** who informs us that Moses taught his followers to worship the god Jahouh *without representing it by emblem*.

* Moses borrowed this of the Egyptians. Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, and Hyde, in his treatise on the religion of the Persians, acknowledge that the unity of God was the foundation of the religion of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians.

** Strabo's account is corroborated by his contemporary, Diodorus Siculus, and also by Plutarch. Diodorus's account of Moses not being-agreeable to the Church, has been suppressed.—See Translation of the Abbé Terrasson.

There can be no doubt as to the identity of this name and that of Jehovah. That Moses adopted this deity, and that the name when first introduced, was new to the Jews, appears

from Exod. vi., 3. Neither Philo nor Josephus deny that the Jews borrowed circumcision from the Egyptians; why, then, might they not borrow a god also?*

As every nation had its cosmogony to account for the origin of things, the Jews must have theirs likewise; so the scribes, who compiled their legends, imitated very closely the Zoroastrian fable, according to which the gods made the world in six gahanbars, or periods; of which the story in Genesis, even to the detail of work done in each day, is a mere copy; but the Jewish compiler mistook the matter so far as to put *days* in place of periods, or *gahanbars*; which word was significant of the six summer months, when the sun, by his genial and all-powerful impulse, makes a fresh creation every year. The learned have farther declared that, in the Talmuds, the expression in the first verse of Genesis is in the plural, viz. "the Elohim" (the gods) placed in order the heavens and the earth that in the same verse, the word "barah," which signifies to arrange, to place in order, has been mistranslated "created" In like manner the words "ruh elohim," in the second verse, have been falsely rendered "spirit of God," though their true meaning is, *the wind of the gods*.***

* Dr. Geddes, however, is of opinion that Moses learnt the name of Jehovah in Midian, while he resided with his father-in-law.

** The Indians had their Vedas and Pouranas; the Egyptians, the five books of Hermes; the Persians, the cosmogony of Zoroaster; the Greeks, that of Hesiod; the Phoenicians, that of Sanchoniatho. The Phoenician, though written in the style of history, is made up of personifications of time, the sun, the stars, earth, seasons, etc.

*** In St. John's Gospel iii, 5 and 6, the Greek word pneuma (air or wind), is translated spirit; and in the 8th verse it is translated, "wind" and "spirit" both. In Luke i, 85, is not this word pneuma translated "Ghost"?

Thus, in the very first two verses of this pretended "word of God," we have no less than three instances of false translation. The learned Dr. Parkhurst has translated and shown that this word elohim or gods means the seven planetary bodies, as known to the ancients. He calls them *the disposers of the affairs of men*; an influence still attributed to them by the astronomical quacks called astrologers. These seven planets were the cabiri of the Egyptians and Phoenicians; of which Baal, "the Lord," was the chief, being added as the eighth. Baal (the Sun) was also one of the names of the Jewish god, Jehovah. See Hosea ii., 16. That the astro-theology of the eastern nations had exclusive allusion to physical objects—the elements, seasons, etc., was well known to all the learned Jews. Maimonides says: "We must not, like the vulgar, understand literally what is written in the book of the creation (Genesis); otherwise our men of old would not have so earnestly recommended to conceal its meaning, *and refrain from raising the allegorical veil which covereth the truth under it. Understood literally, this work presenteth us with ideas of the deity which are most ridiculously absurd. The true meaning of the six days' work ought never to be divulged*" The treatises of Philo Judæus have hardly any other object than the allegorical explanation of the Jewish scripture. The great Origen himself treated all these stories as astronomical emblems. "What man of sense," says he, "can

persuade himself that there was a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of those days had a night, when there was yet neither sun,* moon, nor stars!!!"

* Of all the glaring blunders committed by the compiler of Genesis, the most unfortunate was the miraculous production of three whole days before he thought of *making* the sun.

Dupuis says, speaking of the astronomical origin of all religions: "The first six signs of the zodiac may be considered as forming the empire of God or Oromazdes; the remaining signs as that of the Devil or Ahrimanes (cold and darkness). After the evil principle has reigned during the six winter months, from the autumnal to the vernal equinox, the sun resumes his empire, bringing with him warmth and animation for a fresh creation; and causing the day to triumph over the night. The vernal equinox was therefore universally considered to be the time: of creation. It is then that the Persians, who call April the month of Paradise, celebrate their Neurouz or the new revolution. The Jesuit Petavius has remarked that the Rabbis, when speaking of the creation, use the word *Bara*, which signifies to arrange, or rather to renew."

Syncellus, Cedremus, St. Cyril, and others, agree that the word *creation* alludes to the vernal equinox; at which time they expect the coming of their god, who, as Cedrenus tells us, will arrive at *the Lord's Passover*; or the passage of the sun as he crosses the line of the equator at the vernal equinox point. Formerly, when the sun was in Taurus or the Bull, that sign presided over the vernal equinox, and it was to the Bull that the Persians attributed those ideas of *regeneration*, which a more recent superstition (the

Christian) has naturally transferred to Aries, a sign called by the Persians 'the Lamb.'

But if the vernal equinox point be now in Pisces or the fishes, Christians have nothing more to do with the Ram, as he is the "*Lamb of God*" no longer; and therefore they should adopt, as of old, when the sun was in Pisces, the famous savior fish Oannes, which used to preach so prettily upon the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates. At that exceedingly remote period, say nearly 26,000 years ago, this fish must have been a principal god amongst the Egyptians and Chaldeans; and certainly, while the sun occupied the fishy sign in the zodiac at the vernal equinox, nothing could be more appropriate than that the emblem god should appear in the shape of a fish, to preach the annual salvation.* Each sign in succession has, by the slow precession of equinoxes, enjoyed a similar honor.

* The first of the nine incarnations of the Indian Redeemer, Vishnu, was in the form of a fish.

That the Jewish priests, from not having science within themselves, were apt to be too late in borrowing their emblem gods from the more learned hierophants of Egypt, Chaldea, and Persia, appears in that *unhandy* mistake committed by Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii., 4), in sacrificing to the golden calf, the old representative of the sign Taurus, which was then out of date, when he ought to have been paying his respects to the "Lamb of God," the accredited envoy of the sign of the Ram, which had come into play by the Sun's having entered it some time previously. By the mouth of his messenger, "the Lord" (the Sun) seems to reproach Jeroboam in terms something like the following: "What ignorant ninnies you and your priests are, not to know that,

having left my bull-house in the zodiacal town,* and taken a two thousand one hundred and fifty years' lease at the *sign* of the Ram, I have now nothing to do with calves: go, ye shallow novices, and learn better of your masters, my older and more scientific priests, the Magi and Chaldees, that the appropriate symbol of my worship, is now a Lamb, called the Lamb of God."**

*The New Jerusalem.

**April-fools are no doubt of vast antiquity; but Jeroboam is perhaps the first we met with in the Bible. This reproach was incurred by those who, like him, persisted in calf adoration, after its archetype the Bull, or sign Taurus, had ceased to be the "House of the Sun," at the-vernal equinox; that is, after the Bull of April had given place to the Ram, or Lamb of March; and, according to the Rev. Mr. Maurice, that point could not have coincided with the first degree of Aries, later than 1800 years before our era.

Wherever such digressions as the above are made in the course of these Lectures, they are intended to show that, although we treat the Bible according to its literal meaning, the respect we have for it, *so far as it is a book of hidden science*, induces us to give such explanations, as they alone do it justice according to knowledge. But since its priests and their ignorant dupes insist on adopting the outward, or sense nonsensical, the best way to expose their folly is to take them at their word..

The legend about the first man may have been taken from Apollodorus' fable of Prometheus, who made the first man and woman with clay, and afterwards animated them with fire which he had stolen from the chariot of the sun; or was the first creation in Genesis imitated from Plato's story

of the androgynæ, or double *homo*, possessing both sexes? Such was the hermaphrodite, or first creation in Genesis; the second was purely masculine, and only one of his ribs turned into the feminine. In the ancient Persian traditions, there were two distinct fables about the creation of man, from which those in Genesis appear to have been taken: but the compiler of that book, knowing both of the stories, and being at a loss which to prefer, has foolishly mingled them together, yet still preserving the two creations. Thus it seems pretty certain that the Jewish fable about the first man and woman is of Persian origin. Henry Lord, in a book written at Surat, on the cosmogonies of India and Persia, and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says: "In the Persian cosmogony, the name of the first man was *Adamoh* and of the woman *Hevah*. From hence come the Adam and Eve of the book of Genesis. Hevah is the name given to the woman, in an English edition of the Bible, printed in 1583."

In the Zoroastrian and Chaldean mysteries, the above supposed originals of the human race were personifications of the zodiacal signs, Bootés and Virgo; and their *fall*, or expulsion from the summer garden of fruits and flowers, was emblematical of the solar year, after the autumnal equinox. Anciently, in India and Chaldea, the phænomenon of the starry heavens was called Aden, or the Celestial Garden. In all probability the Jews picked up these shreds of figurative astronomy when they were slaves to the Babylonians, and, ignorantly taking them in the literal sense, foisted them into their heterogeneous miscellany. Supported by the sound knowledge of Philo, and all the learned Jews, Origen again shows his contempt for those

who understood Genesis literally, and cries out: "What man can be stupid enough to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, had planted a garden in the east; that the tree of life was a real tree, and that the fruit of it had the virtue of making those who eat of it live for ever?"* The first four chapters of that book contain parts of three, if not four distinct fables, all evidently derived from different sources. The rest of this extraordinary medley, called the Old Testament, is made up of some dramatic fragments of the Egyptians and Persians (as the plague, miracles, and the book of Job), fabulous legends plagiarized by the Jews, barbarous narrative, and the rhapsodies of vagrant minstrels, who sung of past events, seemingly in the future tense.

* St. Augustine, in his "City of God," allows that in his time, the whole story about Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the garden of Eden, with its forbidden fruit, was considered as allegorical. There was not one, but there were *two* prohibited trees!

The Emperor Julian, with that wisdom which characterised him, observed that, "If there ever had been, or could be a tree of knowledge, instead of God forbidding man to eat thereof, it would be that of which he would order him to eat the most." Reason is the real forbidden tree of priestcraft.

From a mass of ill-strung fables, derived from such a variety of sources—a chaos of revolting prodigies, mixed up with a few probable facts, such as the expulsion or flight from Egyptian slavery, the murders and devastations in Southern Syria, etc., we cannot, in the bounds of a lecture, notice more than a few of the most prominent miracles, all of which had Pagan prototypes.

As every oriental country had its cosmogony, accounting very clearly, though contrarily to each other, for the origin of things, so all had traditionary floods, which each nation quoted as proof of its antiquity.* Why should not the Jews have one also? The Chaldeans said that theirs happened 25,000 years before the war of Troy, when the immense surface now occupied by the Mediterranean Sea was inundated.. The Egyptians had their inundations; and hence their ark of Osiris (the archetype of the Noah's ark) the same as the constellation Argo. The Greeks had their floods of Ogyges and Deucalion; the latter of which, was fully treated of by Berosus, and after him by Lucian, in his Syrian goddess; but the Jews, who took everything from their masters, borrowed the Chaldean pilot *Noe*, made him skipper of their ark, slightly changing his name to *Noah*, and appropriated to themselves the flood of Deucalion,** with all its details, almost word for word as fabled by Berosus and Lucian.. That this tradition was not adopted by the Jews until long after the alleged time of Jehovah's flood, is proved by the orders which he gave Noah respecting clean and unclean beasts, the distinction whereof not being made until several hundred years after the assumed time of Noah. Nothing can be more probable than that, amongst the initiated few, all these floods had secret reference to the supposed influence of the winter or watery constellations.

* Even the long lives of the antediluvians, according to the Jews, are the exact copy of the logues of the Hindu Indians.

** The flood of Xisuthrus was almost the same as that of Deucalion.

6 Pathros is a biblical name for a region of Upper Egypt (often identified with the Theban area of southern Egypt, roughly the modern Luxor region) used in Hebrew texts to denote that part of Egypt.

7 The Therapeutæ (or Therapeutae) were a Jewish ascetic and contemplative group described by the 1st-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria as living near Alexandria and practising communal study and devotion; later writers sometimes compared them with early Christian monastic communities.

8 A Jewish religious movement active during the Second Temple period (roughly 515 BCE–70 CE) known for emphasis on oral law, ritual purity, and interpretive traditions that influenced later Rabbinic Judaism.

9 An ecumenical synod convened at Nicaea (often spelled Nice in older texts) in 325 CE by Emperor Constantine to address theological disputes such as Arianism and to produce the original Nicene Creed.

10 A traditional English name for the Christian festival of Pentecost, observed fifty days after Easter to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit (also called Whitsunday or Pentecost).

11 Tammuz was a Mesopotamian god of fertility and shepherds (Sumerian name Dumuzi) whose annual death-and-rebirth cycle was commemorated in mourning and renewal rites; his cult is attested in Near Eastern and classical sources from the second millennium BCE into the early centuries CE.

12 St. Hermas is an early Christian author traditionally credited with the work called 'The Pastor' (also 'The

Shepherd'), probably composed in the 2nd century CE; his writings were influential in some early Christian communities but were not included in the New Testament canon.

13 Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/265–339/340 CE) was a fourth-century bishop and historian best known for his *Ecclesiastical History*; he is a major source for early church events but is also widely discussed by scholars for possible partiality, especially in relation to Emperor Constantine.

14 Eratosthenes was an ancient Greek scholar (active c. 276–194 BCE) best known for measuring the Earth's circumference and for work in geography and astronomy; later writers also cite him for remarks about celestial mythology.

15 Candlemas is a Christian feast on February 2 commemorating the Presentation of Jesus and the Purification of Mary; it became associated with the blessing and use of candles and has links to earlier pagan light festivals.

16 Metempsychosis is the doctrine of transmigration or reincarnation of the soul—originally a Greek term adopted by Pythagorean and Platonic traditions—denoting the soul's passage into another body after death.

17 Likely refers to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754–1838), who served briefly as Bishop of Autun before becoming a prominent French diplomat and statesman; attributions of specific letters or statements to him are often repeated in 19th-century sources and can be disputed.

18 Minucius Felix (active c. 2nd–3rd century) was an early Latin Christian apologist, author of the dialogue