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CHRISTIANITY

A FORM OF

THE GREAT SOLAR MYTH.

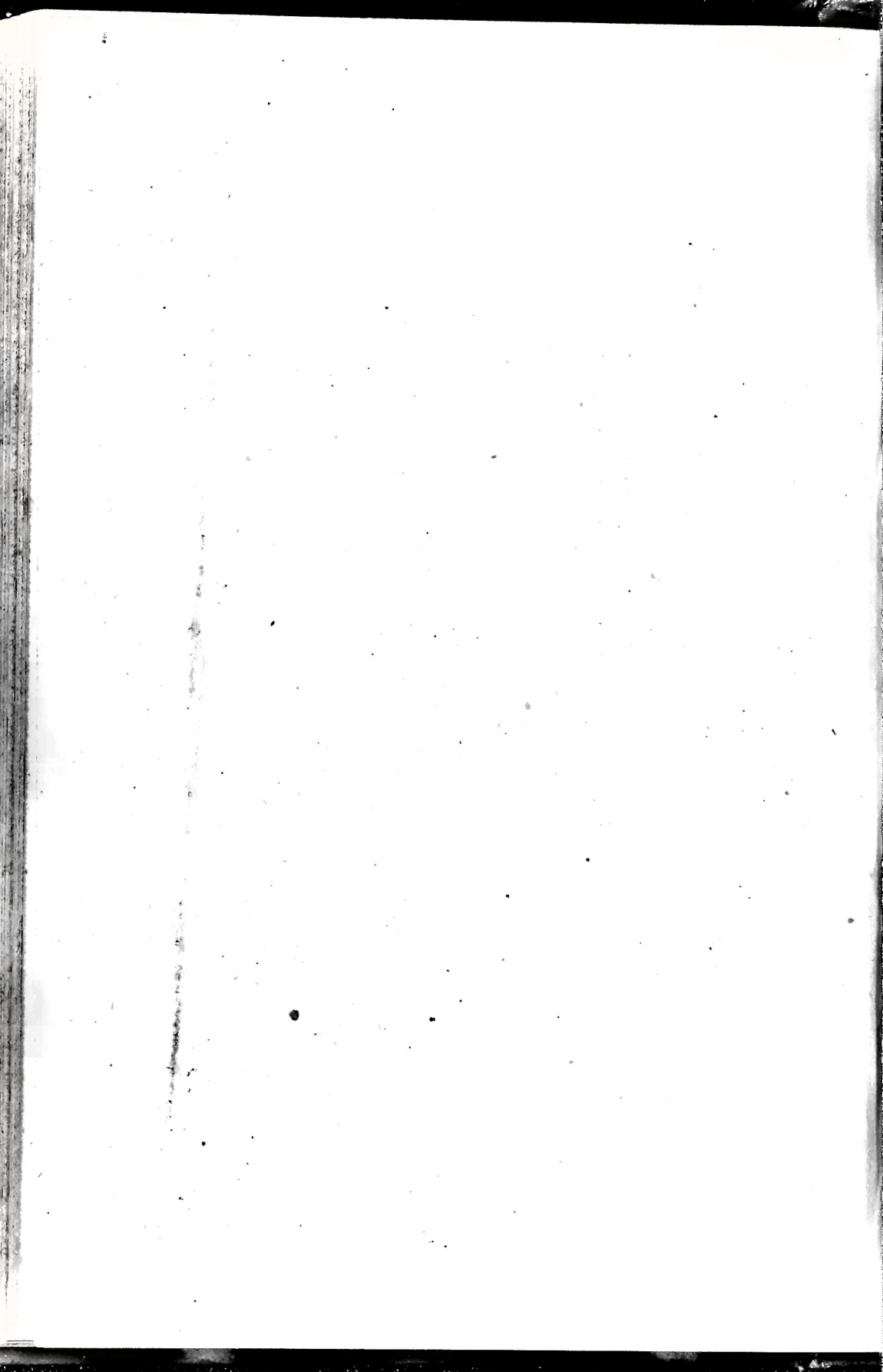
FROM THE FRENCH OF DUPUIS.

"Light and Life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings."



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PREFACE.

Εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου.—PAUL AD COL. I. 15.

THE Roman Empire embraced within its extensive boundaries almost every religion of the ancient world; and compelled each one of them to meet face to face all the rival beliefs. The natural result was to discredit them all. Mutual contact produced at first an exceeding fermentation, and then a rapid decomposition. One nation only preserved its faith; and being more in earnest (from its political condition) than the rest of the Roman world, managed—as the fanatics generally do—to establish for itself a sect in almost every city of the Empire. But Judaism, as it existed in its purity, was quite unfit to conquer and overrun the world. It was designed indeed by its great legislators to keep the people of the Jews separate and distinct from all other peoples; and its laws and customs were adapted only to a small nation living in a compact territory. But when the Jewish people were conquered, in the first instance, by Antiochus and Greek civilization, Greek ideas gradually began to

influence a portion of the Jewish people. And this was especially the case in that part of Palestine which was called Galilee of the Gentiles. In this country it was that Jesus was bred,—a man destined to be the founder of a new and nearly universal religion,—although, as proved eventually, it came to be quite of a different character from the simple theism which he had endeavoured to impress upon his first disciples.

Jewish fanaticism, in view of the coming struggle with Rome, inspired some fervid patriot poet or prophet to compose that singular Politico-Astrological Drama which is known to us as the Apocalypse. This book struck the popular mind at once. It was taken up also by the followers of Jesus, who turned it to account in a way suitable to their own ideas. It was everywhere read in their secret assemblies; and the fierce spirit which inspired it soon filled every congregation with a fire of intense enthusiasm, and the expectation of the immediate advent of a conqueror and saviour, who should be their Messiah.

All the religions of the world (as we said) were at this time in a state of decay and decomposition. All were being reduced to fragments or resolved back again into their elements. A new faith was required for the world, and, being needed, it was gradually evolved. Paul, "the apostle of Jesus Christ," as he styles himself, gave the first impulse to the new faith by extricating the belief in Jesus from the narrowness of Judaism; and he very soon had his sect of disciples,

—now separated from the Jewish congregations,—in every city of the empire. Paul's companion and friend, Apollos, introduced the first mixture of Alexandrian Theosophy into the new faith (in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of which he is almost certainly the author;) and in a generation or two later this element received an immense development by the publication of the Fourth Gospel, which “transfigured” Jesus of Nazareth into the Logos of God.

The Apocalypse gradually fell into disuse, from the failure of its prophetic announcements; and the religion of Jesus was floated by means of this new development. But in order that this growing religion should become popular with the vulgar it needed that there should be infused into it some popular elements of mystery, and some festival occasions. And many such there were everywhere around,—ready to hand,—mysteries and festivals, which belonged in common to all the decayed religions, and were held and celebrated in every country of the world. These constituent elements were gradually adopted into the New Faith; and all the legends and dogmas of Christianity, as we now know it, have been in this way superadded to the original simpler teaching of Jesus—and were transferred to it from the hidden myths and allegories of the old nature-worship. It is the glory of the French astronomer, Dupuis, that he has been at the pains of drawing forth to our view in a wonderful manner the curious mythology of the Chaldean astro-

nomy, and of explaining to us the meaning of these most ancient and interesting allegories. It is from the ninth chapter of Dupuis' abridged work that we have made the following translation, which we now leave to tell its own story to our readers.

INTERPRETATION OF THE FABLE WITH
REFERENCE TO THE SUN WORSHIPPED
UNDER THE NAME OF CHRIST.

IF there be any religion which ought, one would think, to be proof against the analysis to which, with the aid of natural philosophy and astronomy, we have undertaken to submit the religious poems and sacred legends of antiquity, it is assuredly that of Christ, or the legend which has the sun for its object under this name. The followers of this religion, in their zeal for pre-eminence, have a sworn enmity against the worshippers of Nature-power, the sun, moon, and stars, against the Greek and Roman divinities, whose temples and altars they have overthrown. This might give rise to the idea that their religion was no part of the universal religion. But a mistaken notion of the object of a people's worship proves nothing more than the ignorance of that people. The worship of Hercules, Bacchus, and Isis, is the less worship of the sun and moon, because the Greeks held Hercules and Bacchus to be mortals deified, and the Egyptians thought Isis was a gentle princess, who had reigned over Egypt in olden time.

The Romans mocked at the deities worshipped on the Nile banks. They denounced Anubis, Isis, and Serapis, and honoured Mercury, Diana, Ceres, and Pluto. These are the same deities under other names; but such

is the influence of names over the ignorant. Plato said that the Greeks were worshippers of the sun, moon, and stars from the earliest ages ; but Plato failed to see that they still kept to the same deities in his own day, under the names of Hercules, Bacchus, Apollo, Diana, Æsculapius, &c. In full conviction that the opinion of a nation as to the character of its religion proves no more than its own belief, without changing the nature of the religion itself, we shall pursue our researches even into the sanctuaries of modern Rome. The Lamb-God there worshipped is the Roman Jupiter, who often took the form of the Ram or Lamb of Spring, with the title of Ammon. The vanquisher of the Prince of Darkness at Easter, is the same God who in the Bacchic legends triumphs over Typhon at this season, undoing the evil brought by him into the world under the form of a serpent. Here also we recognise, under the name of Peter, old Janus, with his keys and his skiff, at the head of the twelve deities of the twelve months with their altars at his feet. There are prejudices to be overcome ; many persons will readily allow that Bacchus and Hercules are nothing but the sun, yet by no means admit that the worship of Christ is nothing else than sun-worship. Let such persons bear in mind that the Greeks and Romans would have readily conceded this point to us, on the evidence we have to produce ; whereas they would not so easily have given up their conception of Hercules and Bacchus, as heroic princes deified for their mighty deeds. Every one is on the alert against all attacks upon prejudice, strengthened by education, habit, and example. Notwithstanding all the luminous proofs, with which we shall maintain our statement, we do not expect any disciples, except such wise and sincere friends of truth, as are willing to sacrifice prejudice to conviction. For such alone we write ; the masses are victims of ignorance, led away like sheep by the priests, that fatten upon their credulity.

We shall not enter upon the question, whether the Christian religion is a revealed religion, or not. Philosophy has made too great advance in our day to require us to argue about any other communications from God to man, than such as are provided by the light of reason, and the contemplation of nature. We shall not even at present examine into the question of the actual existence of a philosopher, or impostor, named Christ, the founder of the religion known by the name of Christianity. For even if we were to concede this point, Christians would not be satisfied unless we were to acknowledge Christ to be an inspired man, a son of God, nay, himself a God, crucified for our sins. They require a God, who once took food upon earth, and is now the food of his people. Now we are far from granting so much as this, but we invite all who are content to regard him as a human philosopher, to enter upon this question, when we have analysed the religion of Christians, independently of its possible founder or founders. Whether it owes its institution to one man or to many; whether its origin dates from the time of Augustus or Tiberius according to the commonly received legend, or goes back to a much more remote antiquity, deriving its source from the worship of Mithra established in Persia, Armenia, Cappadocia, and even in Rome, as we ourselves believe, the chief point is thoroughly to investigate the nature of Christian worship, whoever its author may have been. We shall be able to show that it is the worship of nature and of the sun; and that the hero of the legends known by the name of gospels, is the same who has been celebrated with far more genius in the poems written in honour of Bacchus, Osiris, Hercules, Adonis, and others.

We have here the pretended story of a God born of a virgin at the winter solstice, and rising again at Easter or the vernal equinox, after a descent into hell; a God who takes about with him a retinue of twelve

apostles, whose leader has the attributes of Janus ; a God who vanquishes the Prince of Darkness, introduces mankind into the realms of light, and remedies the ills of nature. When we shall have shown that this is nothing more than a solar myth like the rest, it will be almost as unnecessary to enquire, whether a man named Christ ever lived, as whether there was a real chieftain called Hercules. Only let the proof hold good that the Being worshipped under the name Christ is the sun, and that the miraculous part of the legend refers to this heavenly body. Then it will be seen that Christians are only sun-worshippers, and their priests hold the same religion as the Peruvians whom they massacred. Let us proceed to examine the dogmatic basis of this religion.

The first point is the introduction of great disorder into the world by means of a serpent inviting a woman to pluck forbidden fruit. The result of this fault was the knowledge of evil, to which man had been so far a stranger ; it could only be undone by the victory of a God over death and the Prince of Darkness. Such is the fundamental dogma of the Christian religion ; Christ's incarnation became necessary to remedy the evil brought into the world by the serpent that seduced the first woman and the first man. These two dogmas cannot be separated one from the other ; were there no sin there need be no salvation ; were there no sinner there need be no saviour. Now this fall of the first man involves the supposition of a twofold state ; he was created originally by the good principle in the full enjoyment of all the blessings he bestows upon the world ; then he passed under the dominion of the evil principle, into a state of misery and degradation, out of which he could only be delivered by the principle of goodness and light. This is a cosmogonical fable of the same kind as those of the Magians about Ormuzd and Ahriman, or rather a copy from them. Their books say that the Magians represented the world

under the emblem of an egg divided into twelve parts, six of which belonged to Ormuzd, the divine author of good and light, and six to Ahriman, the author of evil and darkness. The good and evil of nature result from the twofold action of these principles. The six parts under the sway of the good principle comprised the six months from the vernal to the autumnal equinox; the six parts under the rule of the evil principle embraced the six months of autumn and winter. In this way the circle of the year was divided between these two powers, of whom the one organised life and ripened the fruits of the ground; while the other destroyed the works of his predecessor, and marred the harmony displayed in earth and heaven during the six months of spring and summer. This cosmogonical idea has been presented again in another form by the Magians. They suppose that out of infinite time or eternity is born a finite period which perpetually renews itself. This period they divide into twelve thousand small parts which in allegorical phraseology they call years. Six thousand of these parts belong to the good principle, and the other six to the evil one. To prevent misunderstanding they associate each of these millennial divisions, with one of the signs traversed by the sun successively in the twelve months. The first thousand, they say, corresponds to the Lamb, the second to the Bull, the third to the Twins, &c. Under these first six signs, or under the signs of the first six months of the year divided by the equinoxes, they place the genial rule of the principle of light, under the other six signs the sphere of the evil principle. With the seventh sign, corresponding to the Scales, the first autumnal constellation, they make the reign of darkness and evil begin. This reign lasts until the sun's return to the sign of the Lamb, corresponding with March and Easter. Such is the foundation of their theological system, as regards the distribution of the opposing forces of the two principles, by which man is affected in each solar

revolution. This is the tree of good and evil under which nature has placed him.

To quote their own language, "Time," says the author of the Boundesch, "comprises twelve thousand years. The thousands of God contain the Lamb, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, and the Ear of Corn, or Virgin; in all six thousand years. Substitute for the word years, periods of time, and for the names of the signs those of the months, and you will have April, May, June, July, August, and September, the months of periodical vegetation. After the thousands of God came the Scales, when Ahriman broke loose in the world, afterwards Sagittarius, when Afrasiab shed his evil influence. Substitute respectively for the signs of Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces, the names of the months October, November, December, January, February, and March, and you will get the six periods appropriated to the evil principle and his works, frost, snow, wind, and excessive rain. It is worthy of note that in October, or the apple season, the evil principle begins to spread his fatal influences in the world, viz., cold and decomposition of vegetable life. Then man realises the evils he did not feel in spring and summer, the fair season of the northern hemisphere. This is the idea to which the author of Genesis has sought to give expression in the fable of a woman seduced by a serpent to pluck the fatal apple, which, like Pandora's box, proved a source of evil for all mankind."

"The Supreme God," says the author of Modimel el Tawarik, "in the beginning created Man and the Bull in some place above the earth, where they remained three thousand years free from evil. These three thousand years comprise the Lamb, the Bull, and the Twins. Then they dwelt on the earth three thousand years more, without labour or sorrow. These three thousand years correspond to the Crab, the Lion, and the Ear of Corn, or the Virgin." These are the six thousand years men-

tioned above under the title of Thousands of God, and the signs appropriated to the dominion of the good principle. "After this in the seventh thousand, answering to the Scales, *i.e.*, in Vendemiaire, according to the French revolutionary calendar, evil made its appearance, and man began to till the ground."

Elsewhere in this same cosmogony we read, "that the duration of the world, from the beginning to the end, has been fixed at twelve thousand years. Man remained without evil three thousand years in the higher region, *i.e.*, in the northern hemisphere. He was also exempt from evil for a second period of three thousand years. Then appeared Ahriman, the author of evil and strife, in the seventh thousand, *i.e.*, under the Scales, over which the celestial serpent presides." This was the beginning of the intermixture of good and evil. Here in fact the boundaries of the domains of the two principles approach each other. This is the point of contact between good and evil; or, in the allegorical language of Genesis, there was planted the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which man could not touch without passing under the dominion of the evil principle, the lord of the signs of autumn and winter. Till then he had been favoured of Heaven; Ormuzd had loaded him with every blessing. But Ahriman his rival and foe was fated to poison his best gifts; man fell a prey to him at the moment of the retreat of the Day-God to southern climes. Night assumed its kingdom; and the deadly breath of Ahriman in the form or else under the ascendant of the serpent of the constellations blasted the fair garden, where Ormuzd had placed mankind. Such is the theological idea, which the author of Genesis has taken from the Persian cosmogony and presented in his own style. Zoroaster, author of the Magian Genesis, describes the successive action of the two principles in the world, as follows:—

Ormuzd, the Light God, and good principle, is explaining to Zoroaster that he has given to man a place

of delight. "If I had not bestowed upon him this place, no other being could have done so. This place is Eiren, which in the beginning was fairer than all the world created by me; the beauty of it is beyond comparison. I acted first, and after me Petiareh (*i.e.*, Ahriman, or the evil principle). This Petiareh, fraught with death, set in the river the mighty snake, mother of winter, to diffuse cold over sea and land." According to the phrases of this cosmogony, winter is the evil which was brought into the world. The restorer is the God of Spring, or the Sun on his entrance into the sign of the Lamb; whence the Christ of the Christians takes his forms: for he is the Lamb that takes away the evils of the world, and he is represented under this emblem in early Christian monuments.

Evidently nothing more is here meant than physical and periodical evil, of which the earth feels the shock every year on the retreat of the sun, the source of life and light to all the inhabitants of our globe. So this cosmogony contains only an allegorical picture of natural phenomena, and of the influence of zodiacal signs. The serpent which brings in the winter is, like the Scales, one of the constellations set over the boundary line betwixt the two principles, *i.e.*, in this case the autumnal equinox. This is the real serpent, whose form is assumed by Ahriman in the Magian and Jewish legends, for the purpose of bringing evil into the world. Accordingly, the Persians call this maleficent power the constellation serpent, the celestial serpent, Eve's serpent. They set the track of Ahriman in the heavens under the likeness of a serpent. The Boundesch, or Persian Genesis, says—"Ahriman, or the evil principle, by whom evil comes into the world, made his way into the heavens in the form of a snake, accompanied by the Dews or evil genii, who seek only to destroy;" and elsewhere, "when the evil genii were wasting the world, and the constellation serpent was making himself a pathway between heaven and earth,

i.e., was rising above the horizon." Now the serpent of the heavens rises above the horizon in conjunction with the sun when the sun enters Libra, over which the constellation of the serpent extends: this is the seventh sign in sequence from the Lamb, in which the Magians have been shown to fix the commencement of the reign of the evil principle, and the introduction of evil into the world.

Genesis, the cosmogony of the Jews, brings the serpent on the scene with the man and the woman, and endues him with power of speech. This is evidently in keeping with Oriental idiosyncrasy and the character of allegory. The foundation of the theological idea is absolutely the same. True, the Jewish legend does not say that the serpent brought in winter to destroy the good gifts of nature; but it does say that man felt the need of clothing, and was reduced to till the ground; and this points to the autumnal season. This change in man's state is not said to have taken place in the seventh thousand, or under the seventh sign; but the good principle is said to have worked for six periods, and to have rested in the seventh: so also the fall of man and the introduction of evil by the devil, or evil principle in the form of a serpent, took place in the season of fruit. The scene of the legend is laid in the very regions known under the name of Eiren, or Iran, and towards the sources of the great rivers Euphrates, Tigris, Pison, or Araxes; only instead of Eiren the Hebrew copyists have written Eden; the two letters *r*, *ר*, and *d*, *ד*, being much alike in this language. The Hebrew Genesis does not introduce the millennial phraseology of the Persian. But the Genesis of the ancient Tuscans, which is couched in the same terms in other respects as that of the Hebrews, has kept this allegorical denomination of the divisions of time, during which the all powerful action of the Sun, the soul of nature, is in full force. "The divine architect of the universe has consecrated twelve thousand years to the

work of creation. He has divided them into twelve periods, distributed in the twelve signs or houses of the sun. In the first thousand he created the heaven and the earth: In the second the firmament, which he called heaven: In the third the sea and the waters which flow in the earth: In the fourth the two great lights of nature: In the fifth the soul of birds, reptiles, beasts, and of every living creature in earth, air, and water: In the sixth thousand he created man."

The author adds—"It seems that as there were six thousand years before the creation of man, the human race must last for six more thousand; so that the consummation of this great work may be accomplished in twelve thousand years." We have seen that this period was a fundamental dogma in Persian theology, and was equally divided between the two principles. The thousands have been replaced by days in the Hebrew Genesis; but the number six has been retained, as in the Tuscan and Persian. Thus the ancient Persians, according to Chardin, took the months of the year instead of the six days of the week, during which God worked. Hence it follows that in allegorical and mystical phraseology, the expressions thousand years, days, ghaambers, mean simply months; since they are taken to correspond with the signs of the zodiac, the natural measurement of months. Moreover, the Hebrew Genesis uses identically the same expressions as the Tuscan, and besides retains the distinction of the two principles, and of the serpent, so conspicuous in the Persian Genesis, under the name of Ahriman and Constellation Serpent. The Persian cosmogony seems to be the original, inasmuch as it unites the common features of the other two, and gives us the key to them. So we shall see in the sequel that the Christian religion owes its origin especially to the Magians.

We shall look for nothing more in the Hebrew Genesis than in the Magian. In its wondrous tales we shall not see the history of the first men, but the

Persian allegory upon the state of man here below under the rule of the two principles. This great mystery of the government of the universe has been held sacred in the theology of every people, reproduced under ever-varying forms in ancient rites, and taught by legislators, philosophers, poets, and sacred writers, as Plutarch has shown. Santhoniathon would have us believe that allegory was in those days a veil thrown over sacred truths to increase the reverence of the initiated.

Hebrew Rabbis and Christian divines are agreed that the books attributed to Moses are written in the allegorical style. They often have an esoteric meaning quite different from the letter. We should be receiving false and foolish conceptions of the Deity unless we penetrated the outer rind of sacred teaching. The first and second chapters of Genesis, especially, are acknowledged to conceal an allegorical meaning, which ought not to be rashly confided to the common people.

Maimonides, that most learned of the rabbis, said—
“The Book of the Creation is not to be understood literally according to common acceptance; otherwise our ancient sages would not have charged us with so much care to conceal its meaning, and respect the veil of allegory which covers its truths. Taken literally this work gives most absurd and extravagant notions of the Deity. Whoever divines the true meaning must take good heed not to divulge the same. This is a maxim inculcated by all our sages, especially as regards the interpretation of the six days’ work. Possibly by his own lights, or another’s, a man may come to a true conception of the meaning; in that case, let him hold his peace, or speak obscurely, as I do, leaving him the rest to be divined by such as may understand me.” Maimonides adds that this enigmatical style was not peculiar to Moses and Jewish rabbis, but common to all the sages of antiquity; and he is right, at all events, in the case of Orientals.

Philo, the Jewish writer, held the same view with

regard to the character of the sacred books of the Hebrews. He has written two separate treatises on allegories, and attaches an allegorical meaning to the tree of life, the rivers of Paradise, and other fictions of Genesis. Though not happy in his interpretations, he has none the less discovered the folly of taking these stories literally. Origen says, It is acknowledged by all who have any acquaintance with Scripture, that every truth there is veiled under enigma and parable. This teacher and all his disciples treated the whole history of Adam and Eve, and the fable of Paradise on earth in particular, as allegory.

Augustine, in his "City of God," allows that the accounts of Eve and the serpent, and the earthly paradise, were often held to be allegorical. After quoting several explanations based upon the morality then in vogue, he goes on to say, that better interpretations might be found, and he had nothing to say against them, provided that their historical reality were conceded also. It is hard for Augustine to reconcile fable with history, allegorical fiction with real fact. If he clings to this reality at the risk of being inconsistent, it must be because he has fallen into a still greater contradiction, in acknowledging the reality of Christ's mission as repairer of the first man's sin, while at the same time recognising in the first two chapters of Genesis nothing more than simple allegory. As he would have the atonement made by Christ for sin to be a historical fact, he was bound to maintain the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent as equally historical, for they are essentially connected one with the other. But, on the other hand, the improbability of this story draws from him an important avowal of the necessity of recourse to allegorical interpretation in order to defend such a mass of absurdity. Beausobre said with some truth, that Augustine gives up the Old Testament to the Manicheans, who pleaded that the first three chapters of Genesis were untrue, owning himself unable to main-

tain their literal meaning without offending religious feeling by ascribing improper conduct to God. So that an allegorical interpretation becomes absolutely necessary for the credit of Moses and his history. "For what man of sense," says Origen, "will ever persuade himself that there was a first, and second, and third day, with evening and morning, but without sun, or moon, or stars? Who is so simple as to believe that God, in the character of a gardener, planted a garden eastward? Or that the tree of life was a real palpable tree, bearing fruit able to prolong life for ever?" This teacher goes on to compare the fable of Adam's temptation with that of the birth of Love, whose father was Porus, or plenty, and his mother Poverty. He maintains that there are many narratives in the Old Testament which could not have taken place as the sacred authors record, and are only fictions conveying some hidden truth.

The Fathers of the Christian Church, who were anything but philosophers, in spite of their unconquerable tendency to believe anything, were unable to digest these difficulties, and required the key of allegory to unlock these sacred mysteries. So we, who live in an age more ready to reason than believe, may be allowed to apply to these marvellous records the character which all antiquity has assigned to religious dogmas, and lift the veil of allegory thrown over them. Every part of this narrative must be a shock to those who are resolved to receive it as a history of events which really took place in the dawn of the world. The eternal God and Supreme Cause assumes a body for the pleasure of walking in a garden. A woman holds converse with a serpent, listening to him and taking his advice. A man and woman, destined to immortality, and organised to produce to infinity other beings immortal as themselves, organised likewise for reproduction, are placed in a garden which is to hold them all and feed them all throughout eternity. An apple is plucked,

which causes death, and fixes the hereditary taint of sin in all generations of mankind, though they had no share in the theft. This is a crime which is not to be forgiven until another has been committed, one immeasurably greater, a Deicide, if it were possible there should be such a crime. The woman ever after is condemned to bring forth with pain; as though the pangs of child-birth were not a result of her organisation, and common to other animals who never tasted the deadly fruit. The serpent is bidden to crawl, as though a reptile without feet could move in any other way. Such a mass of foolish and strange ideas, as are found in one or two chapters of this marvellous book, cannot be taken for history by any one who has not quenched the light of reason in the mire of prejudice. Should there be any among our readers hardy enough to digest all this, we pray them to lay us aside, and go back to Jack the Giant-killer, Blue Beard, Hop o' my thumb, the Lives of the Saints, and the Oracles of Balaam's ass. Philosophy is for men, fairy tales for children. As to those who agree to acknowledge in Christ an atoning God, but cannot make up their minds to receive the narrative of Adam and Eve, and the serpent, and of the fall which necessitated the atonement, we must invite them to clear themselves, if they can, of the reproach of inconsistency. For if the sin is not real, what becomes of the atonement? Or if the facts occurred otherwise than is announced in the text of Genesis, what confidence can we place in an author who deceives us in his very first pages, and whose work, nevertheless, serves as the basis of the Christian religion? To advocate a hidden meaning is to acknowledge the necessity of recourse to an allegorical interpretation. This is what we are doing; and the next step is, to examine whether the allegorical explanation we give is sound, and so to estimate our work fairly. This is all we ask; for we are far from wishing that admission of our opinions should be demanded as an act of faith.

We quote original authorities, we furnish celestial configurations ; let them be verified : we draw our conclusions from them ; let them be appreciated : in short, our explanation is as follows :—

The cosmogony of the Magians closely resembles that of the Jews in principle. Both alike place man in a garden of delight, into which evil is brought by a serpent. Out of infinite time a finite period arises, and is divided into twelve parts. Of these six belong to light, and six to darkness ; six to creative operations, and six to destructive ; six to good, and six to evil in nature. This period is the annual revolution of the heaven or rather of the earth. It is represented among the Magians by a mystic egg, divided into twelve parts, six for the Lord of life and light, six for the power of evil and darkness ; among the Jews, by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with twelve kinds of fruit, as is shown in the gospel of Eve. Elsewhere it is represented by twelve thousand years, six of which are called thousands of God, and six thousands of the Devil. All these are so many emblems of the year, during which man passes under the dominion of light and darkness in succession, according to the comparative length of day and night. The blessings and the evils of nature advance and retire or intermingle in dependence on the approach or retreat of the sun to or from our hemisphere. He either organizes sublunary matter by vegetation, or abandons it to its principle of inertia ; hence results that disorganization of matter and elemental disturbance, which winter causes in the world, till the spring time brings back the harmony of nature. At this season, under the equinoctial Lamb, the earth is fecundated by the warmth of the sun and the action of the atmosphere, and becomes an abode of delight for man. But when the orb of day arrives at the Scales and the Serpent, he passes into the other hemisphere ; and our regions are delivered up by his retreat to the rigor of winter, to the storms and devas-

tations, which the evil principle of darkness brings upon the world. No hope is left for man, but in the return of the sun at spring-time to the constellation of the Lamb. This is the Saviour whom man expects.

Let us enquire, in the next place, if the God of the Christians, whom John calls "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," really has the characteristics of the Sun-God, the object of worship in every nation with various names and attributes; also if the account given of him has the same foundation as the other solar fables, which we have taken to pieces. Two seasons in the sun's march have attracted general attention. The first is the winter solstice, when the sun, after seeming to abandon us, enters afresh upon his course towards our abode; from this time the day, now in its infancy, increases gradually. The second is the vernal equinox, when the mighty orb sheds his life-giving warmth over nature; for then he crosses the equinoctial line, which separates the luminous empire of Ormuzd, from the darkness of Ahriman. The worshippers of the orb which dispenses life and light to the world, have always associated their principal festivals with these two seasons.

The sun in reality has neither birth nor death; he always maintains the same majestic brilliancy; but in the relative length of days and nights there is a gradual process of increase and decrease, which has given occasion to fictions of sufficient ingenuity on the part of ancient theologians. They have likened this periodical process of diurnal increase and decrease to the case of man, who is born, grows to manhood, and then decreases and decays, until at length he comes to the end of his career. The god of day was personified in sacred allegories, and subjected to human destiny. He had his cradle and his tomb under the names of Hercules, Bacchus, Osiris, and Christ. He was an infant at the winter solstice, when the days begin to increase. Under this form, his image was displayed in

temples for the worship of his votaries. For then, says Macrobius, when the days are shortest, the god seems to be but a feeble infant. This is the infant of the mysteries, whose image the Egyptians used to produce from the recesses of their sanctuaries on the appointed day every year. The goddess of Sais called herself the mother of this infant in that well-known inscription, "The sun is the fruit of my womb." This is the weak and feeble infant, born in the darkest midnight, of which the Virgin of Sais was delivered about the winter solstice according to Plutarch. This god had his mysteries, his altars, and his statues, which represented him in all the four ages of human life.

The Egyptians are not the only nation who have celebrated at the winter solstice the birth of the sun-god to renovate nature every year. The Romans assigned to the same period their grand festival of the sun's renewal, and the celebration of the solar games of the circus. They placed it on the eighth day before the Calends of January, the very day which corresponds to our 25th December, or the birthday of the sun, worshipped under the name of Mithra or Christ. Proof of this may be found in a Calendar, printed in the Uranologia of Father Petau, where we read, "On the eighth day before the Calends of January, Natalis Invicti." This Invincible one was Mithra or the sun. "Some days before the new year, says Julian the philosopher, we celebrate magnificent games in honour of the sun under the name Invincible. May mine be the happiness long to celebrate them, oh thou sun, king of the universe, thou whom the primal god begat out of his own pure substance!" This expression is Platonic, for Plato used to call the sun the Son of God. The title Invincible is given on all the monuments of the Mithraic religion to Mithra or the Sun, the chief deity of the Persians, "To the Sun-God, Mithra the Invincible." So Mithra and Christ were both born on the same day, and this day was the birth-

day of the sun. Of Mithra it was said that he was the same god as the sun, of Christ that he was the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. To Mithra a grotto was assigned as his birth-place, to Bacchus and Jupiter a cavern, to Christ a manger. Justin himself has drawn the same parallel. Christ was said to be laid in a manger, when the Magi came to worship him. But who were these Magi? Worshipers of Mithra or the sun. What gifts did they bring to the new born god? Three kinds of offering consecrated to the sun in the religion of the Arabs, Chaldeans, and other Orientals. How are they warned of this birth? By means of astrology, their favourite science. What was their faith? They believed, says Chardin, in the eternal existence of a primeval Being, identified with Light. What are they represented as doing in this narrative? Fulfilling the first duty of their religion, which enjoined on them the worship of the rising sun. What name do the prophets give to Christ? He that shall rise, the Rising One, they say, is his name. They see his image in the eastern skies, not in the country of the east. The planisphere of the Magians and Chaldeans, depicted in the heavens a new born infant called Christ and Jesus. He was placed in the arms of the celestial Virgin, the same to whom Eratosthenes gives the name of Isis, mother of Horus. To what point of the heavens did this virgin of the spheres and her infant correspond? To the hour of midnight on the 25th December, the identical moment to which the birth of the year-god, the new sun or Christ has been assigned, on the eastern horizon, at the very point where the sun of the first day arose.

It is a fact independent of all hypotheses and of all deductions, that at the precise hour of midnight, on the 25th December, when Christianity made its appearance, the celestial sign in ascendant on the horizon, to preside over the opening of the new solar revolution, was the constellation Virgo. It is also a fact, that the

sun-god born at the winter solstice, is again in conjunction with her, folding her in his rays, at our feast of the Assumption, or reunion of the mother and child. It is yet again a fact, that she issues out of the solar rays heliacally, at the time when we celebrate her first appearance on earth, or nativity. We have nothing to do with the motive for placing these feasts at these times. Enough that we have three facts, which cannot be reasoned away. From these an attentive student of the ancient mystagogues may derive important results, unless, indeed, he ascribe them to mere chance ; which he will scarcely persuade those men to believe, who are on their guard against all which may mislead their reason, and strengthen their prejudice. At least it is certain that this virgin, who alone can become a mother, according to the allegory, without losing her virginity, fulfils the three chief functions of the Virgin mother of Christ, as regards her son's birth, and her own, and her reunion with him in the skies. Her function as mother is the chief point before us. The ancients, when they personified the sun, made him pass through the several stages of human life, and invented for him marvellous adventures, the subjects of song and legend. It was usual, especially among the Chaldeans and Magians, to cast the horoscope of children at the precise moment of their birth ; so they would naturally cast the horoscope of the sun. The day of birth was kept as a festival, and called *Dies Natalis*. Now, the celestial virgin who dominated the birth of the day-god personified, was held to be his mother, in fulfilment of the prophecy, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son ; *i.e.* she shall bring forth the sun-god, like the virgin of Sais. This is the origin of the figures represented on the celestial globe by the Magians ; of which Abulmazar has given us a description, and of which Kirker, Selden, Pic, Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, Blaëu, Stofler, and many others have written. Abulmazar says, "according to the earliest traditions of Persians,

Chaldeans, Egyptians, Hermes and Æsculapius, a young girl may be seen in the first decan, or ten first degrees of the sign of the Virgin. Her name in the Persian language is Seclenidos de Darzama, expressed in Arabic by Adrenedefa. She is a virgin, chaste, pure, spotless, of comely stature and pleasant countenance, with long hair and modest mien. She sits on a throne with two ears of corn in her hand, and suckles an infant, called Jesus by some writers and Christ by the Greeks." The Persian planisphere, published by Scaliger at the end of his notes on Manilius, describes the celestial Virgin in nearly the same language. It places a man by her side, who can be no other than Boötes, the nursing father of Horus, the son of the Virgin Isis.

There is an Arabic manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale of France, containing an illuminated representation of the twelve signs; the virgin here has an infant at her side, and is depicted like our virgin and child, or the Egyptian Isis. Astrologers of old, with great semblance of truth, set the image of the new-born sun in the heavens, in that constellation which presided over his own birth and that of the year, at the winter solstice. This constellation was Virgo; hence arose the legend that the Day-God was conceived in the virgin's womb. This idea is more natural than that of those who are determined to believe that a living virgin once became a mother, without losing her virginity, and that the child she bore was the author and ruler of all creation. Thus the Greeks said that their ram-shaped god, Jupiter Ammon, was brought up by Themis, another name of the celestial virgin. She bears also the name of Ceres with the title Holy Virgin; this was the mother of Bacchus or the sun, whose infant image was shown in the temples at the winter solstice according to Macrobius. His testimony is confirmed by the author of the "Alexandrine Chronicle" in these terms, "The Egyptians down to this day, have held sacred the offspring of a virgin's womb, and present the

child in a cradle for the people to worship. Ptolemy once asked the reason, and was told that it was a mystery, entrusted to their forefathers by a venerable prophet." A prophet in their country is well known to be a presiding officer at initiations.

It is maintained, but I know not by what authority, that the ancient Druids also paid divine honours to a virgin, with this inscription, *Virgini Pariturae*, on her statue near Chartres. On the monuments of Mithra or the Sun, whose worship was established of yore in Great Britain, a woman is to be seen suckling an infant; and she must be the mother of the Day-God. The English author, who has written a dissertation on this monument, brings together the features necessary to establish the analogy between the festivals of the birth of Christ and of Mithra. But being more pious than philosophical, he thinks them prophetic anticipations of the Christ to come. He remarks with reason that the Mithraic worship was spread throughout the Roman empire, especially in Gaul and Great Britain. He quotes the complaint of St Jerome, that Pagans celebrated the festival of the new-born sun, that is, of Adonis or Mithra, in the very locality at Bethlehem which was believed to be the birth-place of Christ. This religion we have shown to be the same under another name, in the legend of the death and resurrection of Adonis.

Now that we have shown the astronomical basis of the legendary incarnation of the sun, under the name of Christ, in the virgin's womb, we proceed to investigate the legend of his death and resurrection at the vernal equinox under the type of the Pascal Lamb. The Sun is the sole repairer of the evils of winter; sacerdotal fiction supposes him to be born at the winter solstice; three months more he must remain in the lower signs appropriated to darkness and evil, and be subjected to the power of their lord, before he can advance at the vernal equinox to his triumph over night, and his

renovation of the world. Accordingly, he is supposed to suffer all this time under the infirmities of human life, until he reassumes in triumph the prerogatives of the Godhead. The allegorical genius of the mystagogues proceeds to construct a life for him, full of imaginary adventures all tending towards the purposes of the initiation. Just as Æsop, wishing to depict the oppression of the weak by the strong, puts upon his stage animals of different characters, with an imaginary action adapted to the moral of his fable, so in Egypt was constructed the fable of Osiris, or the beneficent sun traversing the universe to dispense the countless blessings of which he is the source ; to him is opposed Typhon, the prince of darkness, who resists his operations, and puts him to death. This simple idea is the basis of the fable of Osiris and Typhon, in which one is presented to us as legitimate monarch, the other as tyrant of Egypt. Over and above the fragments of these old priestly fictions, preserved to us by Isiodorus and Plutarch, we have a life of Osiris and Typhon, the work of Bishop Synesius ; for in those days bishops fabricated legends. In this work the adventures, the character, and the delineation of the two principles of Egyptian theology were drawn from imagination, but yet in accordance with the leading idea of the part which each of them should play in the legend, the object being to express in a fable the working of the contrary principles in nature. The Persians also had their account of Ormuzd and Ahriman, and their warfare ; also of the victory of the good over the evil principle. The Greeks had a life of Hercules, and of Bacchus, with the history of their glorious exploits and the blessings which ensued ; these tales were learned and clever poems. The history of Christ, on the contrary, is only a tiresome legend, of the same dry and melancholy character as the legends of the Indians, which are only concerned with devotees and penitents and Brahmins absorbed in contemplation. Their God

Vishnu, incarnate in Krishna, has many features in common with Christ. There are certain childish fancies with regard to Krishna, closely resembling what is said of Christ in the gospel of the infancy: when grown up like Christ, he brings the dead to life.

The Magians, too, had their legend of the founder of their religion. His birth was announced by prodigies. He was exposed to danger from early childhood, and obliged to fly into Persia, like Christ into Egypt; like him he was persecuted by a hostile king, who wished to be rid of him; an angel carried him up to heaven, whence he brought back the book of his law. Like Christ, he was tempted by the devil, who made magnificent promises in order to attach him to himself. He suffered calumny and persecution from the priests, as Christ did from the Pharisees: he answered them by working miracles in confirmation of his divine mission, and doctrine. The author of the legend of Christ brought the Magi to his cradle under the guidance of the far famed star, which is said to have been foretold by Zoroaster, the founder of their religion. This parallelism leads us to believe that he would not shrink from introducing into the legend many features which belong to the author of the Persian religion. Christianity, indeed, is only a branch of this religion, and bears a great resemblance to it, as we shall have occasion to show in our discussion of the worship of Mithra, the chief deity of Persia.

The authors of this legend had neither learning nor genius enough, to produce such poems as those about Hercules, Theseus, Jason, Bacchus, and others. Moreover, the clue of astronomical science had been lost, and the legends were necessarily constructed out of the debris of ancient fictions no longer understood. Beside all this, the object of the presiding masters of the Christian mysteries was purely moral. They did not wish to represent a conqueror of giants and of all the evils of nature. Eternal Light was the subject of their

mysteries, and their hero was a mild, long-suffering, beneficent being, who came down on earth to preach by his example the practical virtues, which they sought to teach their neophytes. Accordingly he is made to live in this character, and to prescribe the ascetic practices of the Essenes, which are like those of the Indian Brahmins. He had his disciples like the Sommonakodon of the Siamese, who was also a god born of a virgin by solar action. The number of his apostles reproduced the grand duodecimal division, repeated again and again in all solar religions. But his legend is too miraculous to be interesting, and gives tokens of adaptation to Jewish ignorance and credulity. As the author of the sacred story made him a Hebrew by birth, he had to subject him, and his mother likewise, to the religious rites of this people. Like all Jewish male-children, he was circumcised on the eighth day; and like other Jewish women, she had to present herself in the temple for purification. These results naturally follow from the original idea, that he was born and taught, and died, with a view to future resurrection; for without death there can be no rising from the dead. Having assumed humanity, he was made to pass through the stages of childhood and youth, and when twelve years old, he astonished the doctors with his understanding. The moral lessons which the authors wished to convey he was made to prescribe by precept in his discourses, and by example in his life. Miracles were alleged by way of confirmation, and fanatics were produced who said they had seen them; for miracles are always forthcoming, where people are to be found ready to believe them. They have been seen, or thought to be seen, at the tomb of the sainted Paris, in an enlightened age like our own, and in the midst of a dense population, which might supply a few critics, but many more enthusiasts and impostors. They are attributed to the founders of all religions. Among the Chinese, Fo works miracles, and forty thousand disciples proclaim to the world that

they saw them. Odin also among the Scandinavians raises the dead, goes down into hell, and bestows upon new-born children a kind of baptism. The marvellous is the main-spring of all religions ; nothing is so firmly believed as that which is incredible. Bishop Synesius, a good authority on this subject, used to say, that miracles were necessary for the masses at any cost, otherwise it would be impossible to keep them in order. The whole life of Christ has been composed accordingly in this spirit. Its fabricators have associated its fictitious events, not only with well-known places, as all ancient poets have done, in the fables upon Hercules, Bacchus, Osiris, &c., but also with the well-known names of a historical period, like that of Augustus, Tiberius, and Pontius Pilate. This does not prove the real existence of Christ, but only that the priestly fiction is of later date than this period ; a fact we do not call in question. There have been many such fabrications ; so many as fifty gospels or Lives of Christ have been enumerated. So many marvels were ascribed to him, that "the world itself would not contain the books that might be written," as the author of one has said. Full swing has been given to the powers of the mystagogues, nevertheless all are agreed on two fundamental points, the Incarnation, and the Death, and Resurrection. The first point we have already shown to apply to the sun only ; we shall proceed to show the same thing with regard to the second. It is no more than the reproduction of a tragical event, repeated in all the mysteries, and described in all the poetic legends of sun-worshippers under a multitude of different names.

We have shown already that Christ has all the characteristics of the Sun-God, in his birth or incarnation in the virgin's womb ; also that this birth is placed at the season when the ancients celebrated the birth of the sun, under the ascendant of a constellation which carries a young child called Jesus in her arms, according to the Magian planisphere. We have now

to show that he has also the characteristics of the Sun-God in his resurrection, both as regards the time when it is supposed to have taken place, and the aspect which he assumes in his triumph.

Now the triumph of Christ and redress of the ills of mankind is placed exactly at the vernal equinox, in the sacerdotal legend of the Christians called the Life of Christ. They have associated with this season the annual festivals in commemoration of this great event; for the Christian passover, like the Jewish, is always kept at the full moon of the vernal equinox; this is the very time when the sun makes his transition from the domain of darkness to that of light, and reappears with life and light to all nature in our countries. Jews and Christians alike call this feast the Pass-over, for then the Sun-God, the Lord of Nature, passes over to our hemisphere, bringing back his good gifts of which man had been deprived all the winter by the autumnal serpent. Then bright Apollo triumphs over the serpent Python, in the fulness of youthful energy. Then is the Lord's feast; this title of honour has been given to the sun; Adonis or Adonai designates the Sun-God as Lord of the world, in the oriental fable which describes him like Christ, as lamented in death, and triumphant in resurrection. In the dedication of the seven days to the seven planets, the Sun-day is called the Lord's Day. It precedes Monday or Moon's-day, and follows Saturday or Saturn's day; these two planets are the first and last notes of the musical scale, in which the sun is the central note. Thus the title Lord is duly applicable to the sun under all aspects.

This feast of the Lord's Passover was originally fixed on the 25th March, three months to the day after the feast of his birth, which is also that of the Sun's birth. This orb then resuming its creative and fertilizing power, was thought to restore youth to nature by beginning a new order of things. He creates, so to speak, a new world on the ruins of the

old ; and makes men pass over into the light and joy of his presence, under the influence of the equinoctial Lamb.

All these mystic ideas are found together in the following passage from Cedrenus. "The first day of the first month," says this historian, "is the first of the month Nisan : it answers to the 25th March of the Romans, and the Phamenot of the Egyptians. On this day Gabriel announces to Mary her conception of the Saviour." It may be remarked here that in this same month Phamenot, Osiris impregnated the moon according to Egyptian theology. "On this day," adds Cedrenus, "our divine Saviour having ended his life, rose again from the dead, and the early fathers have called it Pascha, or the Lord's Passover. On the same day also early theologians have fixed his return, or second advent : the new age may be expected to begin at this epoch, for the universe was called into being on this day." This agrees well with the last chapter of the Apocalypse, which makes the throne of the Lamb the starting point of the new age, which is to govern the destinies of the world of light and friends of Ormuzd.

The same author, Cedrenus, makes Christ die on the 23d March, and rise again on the 25th. Hence comes, he says, the Church custom of celebrating Easter on the 25th March, *i.e.*, on the eighth day before the calends of April, or three months after the eighth day before the calends of January, the season of the birth of the sun-god. These eighth days before the calends of January and April, were the days on which the Romans fixed the arrival of the sun at the winter solstice and the vernal equinox respectively. As the eighth day of the calends of January was a festival in the religion of the sun-worshippers, so the eighth of the calends of April, 25th March, would naturally be another. On this day the great mysteries were celebrated in commemoration of the sun's triumph at this season every year over the long nights of winter.

The sun was personified in sacred legends : for some days he was lamented as dead ; and then on the 25th March his resurrection was announced with songs of joy. Macrobius is our informant ; the same who tells us that the sun-god is represented at the winter solstice as a new-born child, and in the spring as a lusty and vigorous youth. He adds that these commemorations of the passion, or the death and resurrection of the day-god, at the vernal equinox, are met with in every form of sun-worship. The Egyptians had the death and resurrection of Osiris, the Phœnicians the death and resurrection of Adonis, the Phrygians the tragical adventures of Atys. In all religions the sun-god suffers as Christ did, and triumphs over the grave, as he did, at the same season of the year. Let those persons who are determined to make out Christ to be a different being from the sun, furnish us with the reasons for this singular coincidence. As to ourselves, we do not believe in chance, and so maintain that the passion and resurrection of Christ, commemorated at Easter, are a part of the old solar mysteries, or universal nature-worship.

In the religion of Mithra, or the sun-god worshipped under this name by the Magians, we find the nearest resemblance to the Christian mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ. Mithra was born on the 25th December, like Christ ; he died like him, and was buried, and his disciples came to weep at his tomb. His priests carried his image in the night to a sepulchre prepared for him : he was laid out on a litter, like the Phœnician Adonis. This procession, like our own on Good Friday, was accompanied with funeral chants and the wailing of priests. Some time was spent in feigned sorrow, then the sacred torch or paschal candle was lit, the image was anointed with cream or perfumes, and a priest uttered the solemn words, " Be of good cheer, holy brotherhood, your God is risen, his sufferings have worked out your salvation.* " Why," says the Chris-

* Cf. " The pain which he endured
Our salvation hath procured."

tian writer from whom we take these details, "why do you exhort these unhappy persons to be of good cheer? Why deceive them with false promises? The death of your God is known, his resurrection is unknown: there is no oracle to guarantee the fact: he has not shown himself to man after his death in proof of his godhead. This is an idol that you bury, an idol that you mourn over, an idol that you take from the tomb with sorrow changed into joy." . . . "Tell me," says Firmicus, "who has ever seen this God with bull's horns, whose death you lament?" Let Firmicus answer his own question; "you, too, who mourn over the death of the Lamb slain to wash away the sins of the world with his blood, who has ever seen your Lamb-God, whose triumphal resurrection you celebrate? Do you not know that two thousand years before the Christian era, at the origin of the Persian religion and the worship of Mithra's bull, the sun crossed the equinoctial line under the sign of the Bull? It is only by reason of the precession of the equinoxes that he now crosses it in the sign of the Lamb. There is no change except in the zodiacal signs, and in names. The religion is absolutely the same." In his assault upon the older faiths, Firmicus seems to have intentionally brought together all the points of analogy between their mysteries and those of Christians. He draws a fair parallel between the Mithraic religion especially and that of Christ, the cause of resemblance being that the latter religion is only a sect of the former. True, Firmicus explains all this resemblance between the two religions, by saying with Tertullian and Justin that long before the Christian era, the devil used to take delight in causing its still future mysteries and ceremonies to be travestied by his worshippers. An excellent reason this for such Christians as may be found even now in abundance, but simply pitiful for men of sound sense. We do not believe in the devil, and are not in his secrets; so we shall only say that the Christian religion, being founded, like all

the others, upon sun-worship, has retained the same dogmas, the same practices, the same mysteries, with little variation in form. These points are the same, because the God is the same; the accessories only admit of change, the foundations remain. The earliest apologists of Christianity allow that the Mithraic religion had its sacraments, its baptism, its penance, its eucharist, and mystic words of consecration. The catechumens of this religion had to pass through preparatory tests severer than those of the Christians. The faithful or initiated used to mark their foreheads with a sacred sign; they held the doctrine of resurrection, and won the crown of martyrdom. Their sovereign pontiff might not have been married more than once; they had their virgins and their rule of chastity; in short, the same practices were found among them which afterwards became current among Christians. True, Tertullian calls up the devil again to account for such an exact resemblance. But without the devil, it is easy to see that the elder of two religions, which are so much alike, is the mother, and the younger the daughter. And the worship of Mithra is far more ancient than that of Christ, and his ceremonies long anterior to those of Christians; so we shall draw the conclusion that Christianity is undoubtedly either a sect or an imitation of Magianism.

The learned Hyde tells us, that the Persians had a theory about angels more complete than the Jewish or Christian; they admitted the distinction of angels of light, and angels of darkness; they were acquainted with the story of their battles, and with the names of the angels that have passed into our religion; they named their children at baptism; they had the same fiction of paradise and hell, which is met with among Greeks, Romans, and many other nations. They had a hierarchical order, and all the ecclesiastical constitution of Christians; which in their case may be traced back, according to Hyde, more than three thousand

years. We cannot, however, agree with him that this resemblance is the effect of a providential decree that the Persians should do by anticipation, and in a spirit of prophecy, what the Christians were to do afterwards. Hyde was born in an island, where superstition almost always ranges itself with philosophy in monstrous alliance; and unless he was restrained by the fear of shocking the prejudices of his time and country, in thus disguising the opinion to which so striking a resemblance must of necessity have given birth, it must be allowed that learning is not always the same as good sense, or of the same value. We agree with Hyde, that the two religions are like each other in almost every point; but our inference is, that the two are one, or at any rate two sects of the ancient religion of Oriental sun-worship, and that the institutions of both, with their cardinal doctrines, have, at least as regards their foundation, a common origin. The sun is always the god of this religion, whether he be called Christ or Mithra, Osiris, Bacchus, Adonis, Atys, &c. Let us now pass on to the examination of the principal forms which the sun-god of the Christians assumes in his triumph.

These forms are naturally taken from the zodiacal sign, under which the sun passes; when he brings back warmth and length of days to our hemisphere. When Christianity made its appearance in the West, and for more than fifteen centuries before, this sign was the Ram, called the Lamb by the Persians in their cosmogony. This was the sign of the sun's ascendant in astrological systems, and ancient Sabæanism fixed its chief festival at this season. The sun's return to the zodiacal Lamb brought fresh life to nature every year; hence the form which he took in his triumph was, in mystical language,—the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

Just as Ahriman, lord of darkness, took the shape of the autumnal constellation which brought back the long nights of winter; the God of light, his conqueror,

would duly assume in spring the form of the sign under which his triumph was achieved. This follows quite naturally from the principles adopted in our interpretation of the mythical introduction of evil by the serpent. We know the sun-worshippers loved to represent this orb with the shape and the attributes of the zodiacal signs, with which he was in conjunction month after month. Hence the various metamorphoses of Jupiter among the Greeks, and Vishnu among the Indians. He was painted as a young man leading a ram, or carrying a ram on his shoulders, or armed with rams' horns; this last was the form under which Jupiter Ammon revealed himself. Christ also took the name and form of a lamb; and this animal became his symbolical expression. The name in use was not the sun of the lamb, but simply the lamb, just as the sun of the lion, or of Hercules, was usually called the lion. These are only different expressions of the same idea, and various representations of the same zodiacal creature in the person of the sun of spring.

The special name of Lamb given to Christ as God of light at his equinoctial triumph, is found everywhere in the sacred books of Christians, but chiefly in their book of initiations called the Apocalypse. The faithful are therein styled the disciples of the Lamb. The Lamb is represented as slain in the presence of four beasts, which are also amongst the constellations, at the four cardinal points of the heavens. The twenty-four hours, in the form of elders, fall down before the Lamb, saying, as we read, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The Lamb also opens the book of fate, described as a book sealed with seven seals.

All nations of the earth stand before the throne, and before the Lamb; they are clothed in white, with palm branches in their hands, and cry with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the

throne." We are reminded that the Lamb is the sign of the sun-god's ascendancy, when his orb seems to be lifted up on high in triumph. The Lamb is surrounded with a retinue consisting of multiples of twelve, over whom he rules in the zodiacal signs. He appears standing upon a mountain; the twelve tribes surround him, ready to follow whithersoever he goeth. The conquerors of the dragon sing the song of the Lamb. It would be superfluous to quote other passages: everywhere the God of light, under the name of the Lamb, was the great divinity to whom the neophyte consecrated himself in the initiatory rites of Christians. The mysteries of Christ are neither more nor less than the mysteries of the sun-god in his equinoctial triumph, under the aspect of the zodiacal lamb. So the figure of a lamb was the characteristic mark of the initiated, the tessera or symbol by which the brethren of this religious freemasonry recognised each other. The Christians of that day used to make their children wear the symbolical figure of a lamb round their necks; every one has heard of the well-known *Agnus Dei*.

The earliest representation of the God of the Christians was a lamb, sometimes shedding its blood into a vessel, sometimes stretched at the foot of a cross. This custom lasted until the year 680, down to the pontificate of Agathon, and the reign of Constantine Pogonatus. The sixth synod of Constantinople (canon 32) decreed that the old symbol of the lamb should be superseded by another of a man fastened to a cross. This was confirmed by Pope Adrian I. This symbol is seen to this day on the tabernacle or small chest in which the priests keep the circular image of their sun-god in gold or silver, and also upon the frontal of their altars. The lamb is often represented as lying down upon a cross or upon the book of fate with seven seals. The number seven is that of the seven spheres, of which the sun is the soul, whose revolution is reckoned from Aries, or the equinoctial lamb.

This, is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, according to the Christian saying ; it furnishes antitheses for the Easter ritual, *Victimæ Paschali, &c.*, *Agnus redemit oves, &c.* All the chants of this joyous festival, corresponding with the *Hilaria* of the older sun-worshippers celebrated at the same season, recite the victory of the Lamb over the Prince of Darkness. The paschal candle is lit to show the triumph of light. The priests are dressed in white, the colour of Ormuzd, the god of light. Fresh fire and lustral water are consecrated. Everything is made new in the churches as in nature. The ancient Romans had the same custom in March ; they put up fresh laurels in the houses of their flamens and their places of assembly. In like manner the Persians, at their festival of Neurouz, or the entry of the sun into the vernal lamb, celebrate in song the renewal of all things, and the new day of the new month of the new year of the new age, which is to renew all that is born of time. They also have their commemoration of the cross a few days earlier, followed some days later by that of the victory.

Perseus, the ancient demigod, set over the node of the vernal equinox, was believed to have drawn down from heaven the eternal fire, which the Magians keep up in their fire-shrines ; the same which the Vestals watched at Rome, to re-light the temple-fires every year at spring-time. An ancient monument shows us that the same ceremony was in use in Egypt. It represents a funeral pile, made of three heaps of wood, each containing ten pieces, the numbers answering to those of the decans, and the division of the signs into parts of ten degrees each. Thus there are thirty pieces of wood corresponding with the number of degrees in a sign. On each of the three piles lies a lamb or ram, and above is a great image of the sun with rays reaching to the ground. The priests touch these rays with the tips of their fingers, thus receiving the sacred fire to kindle the funeral pile of the Lamb, and give light to the world.

This scene recalls the equinoctial feast kept in Egypt under Aries, in remembrance of the fire from heaven that lights the world. In this festival red, the colour of fire, was used as a badge, as in the Jewish passover or feast of the Lamb. This resurrection of the sacred fire, which has its source in the sun, and returns every year at springtime, to restore life to nature in our hemisphere is the real resurrection of the sun-Christ. With this idea in view the Bishop of Jerusalem shuts himself up every year in a vault, called the tomb of Christ. He has with him bundles of tapers; he strikes a light, and kindles them; then there is a sudden burst of light, such as we see at the opera, to make people believe that holy fire has fallen from Heaven to earth. Next the Bishop comes out of the vault crying aloud, "the fire of heaven has fallen and the sacred taper is lit." The people rush in crowds to buy these tapers, for they are everywhere the dupes of priests.

The Lamb has been given to Christ as his name and symbol, only because Christ is the sun, and the triumph of the sun takes place every year under the sign of the Lamb, which was then the first of the twelve, and the one in which the vernal equinox occurred. The Trojans consecrated the white Lamb to the sun; and their country was famous for the mysteries of Atys, in which the equinoctial Lamb plays a leading part. Just as Christians suppose that their Sun-God Christ was fastened to the wood of the cross; the Phrygian sun-worshippers under the name of Atys, represented him in his passion as a young man bound to a tree, which was cut down in their sacred rites. At the foot of the tree was the Lamb or Ram of the equinox. These mysteries of Atys lasted three days; there were three days of mourning followed immediately by the joyous festival of the Hilaria, in commemoration of the return of the sun Atys to his dominion.

This feast was that of the 25th March, the same day on which the Passover and triumph of Christ were

originally kept; then was sung Hallelujah, the true voice of the *Hilaria*, and *Hæc dies*, "This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." The well known chant, "*O filii et filiae*," was also sung. There is no difference between these two festivals, except in the name of the hero of the tragedy, who is the same God in both. That famous book of initiation into the mysteries of the Lamb, called the Apocalypse, was written in Phrygia. The Emperor Julian examines the reasons for placing this solemnity at the vernal equinox. He says it is because the sun then crosses the line between him and us, and brings back long days to our hemisphere. This takes place, he adds, when the sun-king passes under the Ram or Lamb. "At his approach we celebrate in the mysteries the presence of God our Saviour and Redeemer."

The Ram or Lamb plays such an important part in Christianity, only because he fills the place which was held before by the Bull in the mysteries of Bacchus and Mithra. Osiris and Bacchus, both represented under the form of the Bull, the equinoctial sign of the olden time, died and rose again like Christ. The mysteries of their passion are reproduced in their sanctuaries, like those of Atys among the Phrygians, and of Christ among the Christians. Fathers of the Church and Christian writers often allude to these feasts of Osiris, who died and rose again, drawing a parallel between them and the adventures of their God. Athanasius, Augustine, Athenagoras, Minutius Felix, Lactantius, Firmicus, as well as the ancient authors who have written about Osiris, the Sun-God of Egypt, all agree in their account of the universal mourning in Egypt, at the commemoration of his death every year, just as we commemorate the death of the Sun-Christ on Good Friday. They describe the ceremonies in use at his tomb, the mourning there for several days, and the joyful festival afterwards, when his resurrection was proclaimed. He went down into hell, and thence

returned to unite himself with Horus, the God of Spring, and triumph over Typhon, the Prince of Darkness, the enemy who had done him to death. The mysteries of his passion were called mysteries of night. Macrobius says these ceremonies were the same in meaning as those of Atys. They refer to the victory of the sun over darkness represented by the serpent; this was the shape which Typhon took in autumn, when the sun entered Scorpio.

The story of Bacchus is the same—he was the Osiris of Egypt and the Sun-God whose image was offered every year at the winter solstice for the worship of the people; ancient writers are agreed upon this. Bacchus died and went down to hell, and rose again; the mysteries of his passion were celebrated every year, under the name of Titanic feasts, or the Perfect night. He was supposed to be torn to pieces by the Titans; his mother Ceres reunited his limbs, and he came to life again in youth and vigour; a bull was killed in memory of his passion, and the flesh eaten raw, because Bacchus, or the Sun-God with bull's horns, had been torn to pieces by the Titans. These mysteries do not present to view the Lamb that was slain, but the Bull that was torn to pieces. At Easter in Mingrelia the prince tears a roast lamb to pieces with his own hands, and distributes it amongst his courtiers.

Julius Firmicus gives us the Cretan legend of the life and death of Bacchus: he will have him to be a man, as he will have Christ to be; but he confesses, the Pagans regarded these stories as solar fables. True, he is deaf to his own arguments, as many other people are to ours: whether it be from ignorance or from love of calumniating what they do not understand, all the Fathers of the Church have criticised Paganism in the same style. Firmicus even undertakes the defence of the sun. He makes the day-god complain of the dishonour done him by such impertinent fables. He says he is drowned in the Nile, under the names of Osiris

and Horus, torn to pieces as Atys and Adonis, boiled in a cauldron, or roasted on a spit as Bacchus. He might have added, he was crucified under the name of Christ. At any rate, it is clear from Firmicus that there was a tradition among the heathen that these incredible tragedies were mysterious fables about the sun, the very same thing that we are establishing here in our interpretation of the legend of Christ's death and resurrection at the vernal equinox.

The name of Saviour was given to Bacchus no less than to Christ; so also to Jupiter, the god with ram's horns, whose statue stood in the temple of the virgin, Minerva Polias, at Athens. Moreover, the notion of a god coming down upon earth was neither new nor peculiar to Christians. The ancients believed the Supreme Being had sent out his sons or grandsons on several occasions for the welfare of the human race. Amongst these were Hercules and Bacchus, or the sun-god under two different names. Bacchus worked miracles like Christ; he healed the sick, and foretold things to come. He was threatened with death in early infancy, as Christ was by Herod.

The miracle of the three pitchers, which filled themselves with wine in his temple, may be set against that of the marriage feast of Cana. The festival in commemoration of this Christian miracle takes place on the 6th January: on the nones of the same month a similar miracle used to be worked in the temple of Bacchus in the isle of Andros. Every year a fountain was seen to flow, the water of which tasted like wine. It would seem as if the author of the Christian legend had collected sundry marvellous fictions, prevalent among sun-worshippers under other names. Bacchus, like Christ, was said to be himself God, the son of God, and the wisdom of God, associated with matter, and incarnate. Like Christ, Bacchus established mysterious rites, in which the serpent, so conspicuous in the fable of the Lamb, was brought upon the scene, as also the

apples of the Hesperides. These rites pledged men to a life of virtue. His disciples expected him to come again; they hoped that he would one day take to himself the government of the universe, and restore mankind to their original blessedness. They were often persecuted, like the followers of Christ and Serapis, or rather of the sun worshipped under these two names. Many crimes were imputed to those who came together for these mysteries, as to the early Christians, and in general to all the celebrants of unknown secret rites. Some legends make Ceres, the celestial virgin, his mother; but the most ancient say that Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, conceived him by the supreme Being in the shape of a serpent. This is the far-famed serpent of Æsculapius, which healed all manner of diseases, like that of Moses in the wilderness, to which Christ compares himself. The offspring of their loves was the horned Bacchus; because in reality whenever the sun was in conjunction with the autumnal serpent, then the Bull of the Spring rose on the horizon, the same that lent its forms to Bacchus, and bore his nurses, the Hyades, on his brow. In later ages he had to take the forms of the Lamb, and then Ceres, or the constellation Virgo, became his mother, in the sense of presiding at his birth. For we have already seen that he was represented under the symbol of a new-born infant at the winter solstice, by way of expressing the infancy of the sun-god, who was worshipped under the name of Bacchus in Greece, Thrace, Asia Minor, India, and Arabia, of Osiris in Egypt, of Mithra in Persia, and of Adonis in Phœnicia; for Adonis is the same as Osiris and Bacchus, by consent of ancient authors. But under this latter name his legend is different from that of Osiris and Bacchus, and less pretentious. He is no longer a king or conqueror, but a youth of rare beauty, like the sun in spring time. The Goddess of nature falls desperately in love with him. He is torn from her by death: an enormous wild boar in the hunting season wounds him in the generative organs. The ill-fated lover of Venus dies,

and goes down into hell, and is mourned as dead upon the earth. The Goddess of hell, mother of Bacchus, and visited by Bacchus also in the infernal regions, keeps him with her for six months. At the end of six months he is restored to life, and to his mistress, who in turn delights in his presence for six months, only again to lose and again to recover him. The same succession of mourning and joy was repeated every year. All writers about this sacred fiction have agreed that Adonis is the sun: his death is his departure from our regions; his sojourn in hell for six months is the time he passes in the lower hemisphere, when nights are long; his return to light is his transition to the upper hemisphere, where he remains also for six months, and the earth clothes herself the while with all the beauties of vegetation and love.

This is Macrobius' interpretation of the legend. He judged rightly that this legend, like the similar tales of Osiris and Atys, had no other meaning than the sun's advance through the zodiac, with the relative effects of his approach or departure upon the earth. These annual phenomena were the cause of joy and sorrow in succession, and gave rise to religious ceremonies in commemoration of the death and resurrection of the sun-god Adonis. A handsome bed was made ready for him, by the side of the Goddess of generation and spring time, mother of the Loves and Graces. Baskets of flowers, perfumes, cakes, and fruits were offered him, the first fruits of those blessings which the sun brings to life. He was called upon in song to hear the vows of mortals. There was a mournful celebration of his sufferings and death before the rejoicings over his return to life. His disciples first sharing the grief of Venus and then her joy. The festival of his resurrection, according to Corsini, was placed on the 25th March, the eighth day before the calends of April.

The funeral rites of Adonis were kept with much ceremony at Alexandria, and also at Athens. In his life of Alcibiades and Nicias, Plutarch tells us that the

Athenian fleet set out on the ill-fated Sicilian expedition at the time of the commemoration of the death of Adonis. His image was being carried to the tomb, accompanied by women weeping and beating their breasts, as at a funeral. Sinister auguries were drawn from this which the result justified only too well. The women of Argos (for the women everywhere are the mainstay of superstition) went to weep, like Martha and Mary at the tomb of Adonis, in a shrine of the Saviour God, otherwise the Ram, or Jupiter, invoked by the name Saviour.

Procopius and St Cyril also mention the mournful celebration of the death of Adonis, and the joyful festivals afterwards in honour of his resurrection. Lamentation was made for the lover of Venus; and his gaping wound was shown like the spear-thrust in the side of Christ. These fictions and these ceremonies were meant to attest the truth of the legend. Men believe such tales when supported by such evidence. Nevertheless, in spite of all the prestige of ritual, the pagans, so called, refused to believe that Adonis was a real man, as our teachers would have us believe in the case of the sun-christ. They always held Adonis to be a personification of the sun, and have explained the miraculous legend of the lover of Venus, by the natural phenomena of the sun's revolution. The poems of Orpheus and Theocritus show plainly enough that Adonis is the god who governs the seasons of the year. They call upon him to come with the new year, to make nature rejoice and earth bring forth her blessings. The hours and the seasons are charged to bring him back at the right time. Orpheus calls Adonis the god of a thousand names, the nursing father of nature, the god whose light is quenched and lit again by the revolution of the hours, who goes down to hell and rises again to heaven, bringing life and warmth to nature. Under the name of Horus also, the seed of the virgin Isis, the sun underwent the same trials. He was per-

secuted by Typhon in the form of a serpent, over whom he triumphs, but not until he has been first cut to pieces like Bacchus, and brought back to life by his goddess-mother, who bestows immortality upon him. We find the chief features of this legend in Christian writers, fathers of the church. They describe the sorrow of Isis at her son's death, and the mourning that gave place to joy at his resurrection. But Horus, by consent of all early writers, is the same as Apollo, and Apollo is the sun-god. Hence it follows that the sun was the object of the festivals in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Horus. Thus it was a fundamental part of sun-worship, to make him die and rise again, and to commemorate either fact with religious rites and sacred legends. Hence the tombs erected everywhere for the sun-god under different names. There was one for Hercules at Cadiz, where his bones were shown; one for Jupiter in Greece, one for Bacchus, many for Osiris in Egypt. The tomb of Apollo is shown at Delphi, in which he was laid when slain by the serpent Python. Thither came three women to weep, like the three women who wept at the tomb of Christ. Apollo afterwards triumphed over his enemy Python; and his triumph was celebrated every year in spring with solemn games. The Hyperboreans, whose chief deity was Apollo, celebrated the sun's return to the sign of the Lamb, at the vernal equinox, and kept up their festival till the rising of the Pleiades. Apollo also took the name of Saviour, a name given him by the Ambraciots. Festivals were held in his honour at Athens and Sparta, at the full moon of spring, the paschal full moon of Jews and Christians.

Many northern nations sacrificed to the sun at the beginning of spring; and in all the Greek islands feasts were kept in honour of the genial god, conqueror of winter and the serpent Python. It would be useless to bring forward other instances of festivals celebrated throughout our hemisphere, in thankful commemora-

tion of the sun's approach, and of the blessings which he brings.

We have given proof enough that almost everywhere these joyful festivals were preceded by some days of mourning. The death of the sun personified was first commemorated, and then his allegorical resurrection and triumph over the prince of darkness. The Phrygians used to call them the festival of the sun's awaking ; for they pretended that he was asleep during the six months of autumn and winter. The Paphlagonians imagined him as bound in chains during the winter, and in the spring celebrated with songs the happy moment of his deliverance from captivity. The prevailing usage was to bring him to life, after an exhibition of the tragical circumstances of his supposed death. All these mystic fictions had no other object, as we have seen, than to represent the alternate victory of night over day, and day over night, together with the earth's successive action and repose under solar influences. These annual phenomena were described in allegorical language, under the tragical metaphors of death, crucifixion, and dismemberment, always followed by resurrection. So the legend of Christ's birth at the winter solstice, and his triumph at the vernal equinox, under the forms of the Lamb, has all the features of the ancient solar fictions, with which it has been compared. The festivals of Christianity, as of all solar religions, are inseparably connected with the cardinal points of the sun's orbit. Whence we conclude that Christ as man bears a strong resemblance to the personification of the sun. His mysteries have all the characteristics of sun-worship ; or rather, to speak plainly, the single object of the Christian religion, in its legends and in its ceremonies, is the worship of eternal light, revealed to man by the sun.

This idea with regard to the religion of Christians has been entertained by other writers before us. Tertullian allows that from the earliest appearance of this

religion in the Western world, enquirers of partially enlightened minds have maintained that it was only an offshoot of Mithraic worship, and that the sun was the deity of Christians, as well as of Persians. Many Christian customs have been thought to disclose such an origin. When praying, Christians always faced towards the east where the sun rises. All their churches, and the places of their religious meetings, were of old directed towards the rising sun. Their weekly festival answered to the sun's day, called Sunday, or the day of the lord sun. The ancient Franks called Sunday the sun's day. These customs were essentially connected with the very nature of their religion.

The Manichæans, whose religion was made up of Christianity and Magianism, always in their prayers turned to the quarter where the sun was. Zoroaster had given the same precept to his disciples. The Manichæans had not altogether lost the thread of ancient Persian belief, with regard to the two principles and the sun-god Mithra, of whom Christ is an imitation. Accordingly they maintained that Christ was the sun, or that he made his abode in the sun, as the ancients said of Apollo and Hercules. This fact is attested by Theodoret, Cyril, and Leo. In consequence of this opinion, the more orthodox, because more ignorant, Christians would not admit them to their communion, unless they abjured their heretical dogma, that Christ was the same as the sun. There exist to the present day in the East two Christian sects of reputed sun-worshippers. The Gnostics and the Basilidians, the most learned and almost the most ancient sectaries of this religion, have preserved many features which betray the origin of this solar worship. They give their Christ the name of Iao, which the oracle of Claros in Macrobius gives to the sun. They had their three hundred and sixty-five Æons or genii, in number equal to the 365 days, which the sun begets, and their

ogload, representative of the spheres. In short, Christianity had so much in common with sun-worship, that the Emperor Adrian called the Christians worshippers of Serapis, that is to say, of the sun; for Serapis was the same as Osiris; and the antique coins which bear the impress of Serapis, have this legend, Sun Serapis. So we are neither the only writers, nor the first, that have classed Christians with sun-worshippers; and if our assertion seems to be a paradox, at all events it is not new.

The result of our arguments is that Christianity, whose origin, at all events in the west, is of recent date, has borrowed everything from the ancient religions. The fiction of paradise on earth, and the introduction of evil by the serpent, which is the groundwork of the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation, and his name Redeemer, is taken from the books of Zoroaster. It is no more than an allegory upon physical good and evil, which intermingle in equal proportions in the operations of nature every year. The Redeemer from evil and the conqueror of darkness is the sun of Easter. The legend of Christ's death and resurrection resembles all the legends and ancient poems about the personification of the sun: and their mysterious rites are the same as those of Osiris, Bacchus, Adonis, and above all of Mithra, or the sun worshipped under many different names. The doctrinal system is far more ancient than Christianity. It is found in the Platonists, Plotinus in Macrobius, and other writers, who were strangers to Christianity and imbued with Platonism centuries before its existence; the same principles were held by their disciples in the days of the earliest Christian writers. In short the Christians have nothing which they can say is their own work, still less which is the work of God.

Now that we have proved that the incarnation of Christ is a personification of the sun, that his death and resurrection are also to be referred to the sun, and

that Christians are as really sun-worshippers, as the Peruvians whom they massacred, we come to the grand question, whether Christ ever existed or not. If the question be understood to be, whether Christ, the object of Christian worship, is a real or ideal Being, he is evidently a real Being ; since we have proved that he is the sun. Nothing can be more real than the orb that lighteth every man that cometh into the world ; he was, and is, and is to be. But if the question is, whether there ever was a man, called Christ, impostor or not, who established, under the name of Christianity, the ancient mysteries of Mithra and Adonis ; it matters little to our work, whether he did or did not exist. Nevertheless we believe he did not ; and we think that as the worshippers of Hercules were wrong in believing in the existence as man of the hero of the twelve labours, simply because he was the sun ; so the worshippers of Christ are wrong in ascribing existence as man to the personification of the sun in their legend. For what proof have we of the existence of such a man ? The general belief of Christendom, from the origin of the sect, or at any rate of its literature ! But it is evident they know no other Christ, than him who was born of the virgin's womb, died, went down into hell, and rose again ; whom they call the Lamb, that taketh away the sins of the world. Now we have proved that this is the sun, and no man at all, impostor or philosopher ; and they themselves, in their ignorance, would be no more willing to allow that they worshipped a man as God, than that they worshipped the sun as Christ.

If we look for evidence of the existence of Christ in heathen authors, we shall find that not one, of those at least whose works have come down to us, professes to give any account of the subject. For a century after the date of his birth, according to the legend, we scarcely find any historian who says a word about him ; and even what they do say is less about him than the

Christians so-called. Tacitus mentions the name, only to give the etymology of the word Christian ; this, he says, was derived from the name of one Christ, who was put to death under Pilate ; in other words, Tacitus repeats what the legend says, and we have seen that this legend was a solar fiction. If Tacitus had mentioned the Brahmins, he would have said, that they derived their name from a certain Brahma, who lived in India ; for so ran the legend. Nevertheless this would have been no proof of the existence of Brahma as man ; for Brahma is only the name of one of the three attributes of the Godhead personified. Tacitus had to speak in his *Annals* of Nero and the Christian sect ; and gave the received etymology, without caring to enquire, whether Christ was a real man, or the hero of a sacred legend ; such an enquiry was foreign to his purpose.

Suetonius, also speaking of the Jews, supposes that they caused great disturbance at Rome, in the reign of Claudius, and that they were stirred up by one Christ, who was the cause of their banishment from Rome by this Emperor. Which of the two historians are we to believe, Tacitus or Suetonius, seeing that they are so much at variance as to the place and time in which this supposed Christ lived ? Christians will prefer Tacitus, as he seems to agree better with the solar legend. As to ourselves, we shall say, that these two historians only mentioned Christ on the faith of vague rumours, without attaching any importance to them ; and their testimony is not sufficient evidence of Christ's existence as man. If his existence had been an unquestionable fact, writers of the age of Tertullian, who had seriously enquired into the origin of Christianity, would not have maintained, that the Christian religion was worship of the sun, and not worship of a man who had lived in bygone days. Let us honestly confess that men make Christ to be a legislator or impostor, only for want of faith to make him

a God, or of knowledge enough of solar fictions, to recognise in him the hero of a priestly legend. Thus men who are unable to accept the exploits of Hercules as real facts, or to allow him to be a God, are reduced to make him a great prince, whose life has been embellished with a colouring of the marvellous. This way of explaining things is very simple, but yields no true result; and Hercules is none the less a personification of the sun. The age assigned to Christ is nearer to our own, than that of Hercules. But when an error is once established, and enlightened criticism placed on the list of crimes; when authorities are fabricated, and some are tampered with, and others destroyed, there is no way left to recover truth after a lapse of time.

If there be some ages of light to the wise and free, all ages are dark to the many, above all in matters of religion. We may measure the credulity of the masses in those days by the impudence of the authors of the earliest legends. If they are to be believed, they do not speak from hearsay, but were eye witnesses of the facts they relate—facts so absurdly miraculous as to be impossible of belief to any one who understands the course of nature. The writers are said to have been simple persons, and the legend is in fact simple enough; but if men are so foolish as to believe everything, and to say that they have seen, when they cannot see at all, their testimony is no historical guarantee. Besides, the writers of the Gospels were far from being entirely without education and enlightenment, traces of imposture may be found in them. One of them, after going through nearly the same story as the other three, declares that Jesus worked so many other miracles, that if they should be written, every one, “even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” The metaphor is a little strong; but how is it that of all these miracles not one has come down to us, and that the four evangelists confine themselves to nearly

the same round of events? Has there been no adroitness on the part of those who have transmitted these writings to us? no effort to secure harmony enough to establish the probability of accounts, supposed to be written independently of each other? There are thousands of remarkable events in the life of Christ, nevertheless the four writers of his life are agreed only to speak of the same facts. The rest are passed over in silence by all the disciples of Christ; tradition and sacred history have no word to say. The author of the legend known as St John's Gospel doubtless reckoned upon having none but good believers to read him. To admit the testimony of these books as proof of the existence of Christ, is in fact to undertake to believe all they say. For if they are to be believed, when they say that Christ lived among them, what reason have we for refusing to believe that he lived as they say, and that his life was signalized by the miraculous works ascribed to him? Good Christians do believe all this; and if they are credulous, at least they are consistent. It might be possible that they should deceive themselves and us as to the details of the life of Christ, and still their mistake might not tell fatally against the fact of his existence. But again, what reliance can be placed upon authors, even as regards his existence, who deceive themselves and others upon every other point, especially when there is a legend, of which the sun, under the name of Christ, is the object? Are we not naturally driven to believe that the worshippers of the Sun-Christ have created for him a historical existence, just as the worshippers of the same sun, under the names of Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules, and Osiris have done, although the principal teachers of these religions well knew that Bacchus, Osiris, Hercules, and Adonis never existed as men, and were nothing more than personifications of the Sun-God? Moreover, there never could be persons so ignorant and so credulous as to be easily induced, like the early Christians, to adopt an oriental

legend about Mithra or the sun, without any suspicion on the part of their teachers, who had received it themselves from other priests of an earlier age, that they were still worshipping the sun. The older fable was revived by men of defective education, whose intention was to associate with it the elements of morality, under the name of the doctrine which Christ, the Son of God, delivered to man. Its mysteries had been celebrated in the obscurity of sanctuaries for many ages, under the names of Mithra and Adonis. The moral lessons might have been put into the mouth of this latter personage, had not his love adventures been too well known. One of the less common mystic names of the sun was chosen, and the authors of the legend adapted to it the events of their own age, with no fear of criticism from a sect, in which credulity is a sacred duty.

It would be impossible to push the impudence of imposture further than was done by the first Christian writers, men who were either fanatics themselves, or tried to make others so. A letter is quoted from Dionysius the Areopagite, which testifies that he and the sophist Apollophanes were at Heliopolis, when the pretended solar eclipse occurred which, at full moon, in opposition to all the laws of nature, took place at the death of the sun, or Christ; a miracle of course. He affirms that they distinctly saw the moon come and place herself before the sun, remain there for three hours, and then return to the point of opposition in the east, where she would not be due until fourteen days afterwards. Wherever there are forgers so shameless as to make up such stories with any hope of acceptance, there must be foolish persons ready to believe anything, and anything may be ventured. Phlegon has collected a number of marvellous tales, which show the shameful credulity of those ages. The history of Dion Cassius is no less fruitful in prodigies of every kind; which proves the readiness with which miracles were then received. The pretended miracles of Simon

Magus, and the ready credence apparently given to this tissue of imposture, show that the common people were ready to believe anything in those days; and Christianity first rose and spread among the common people. The careful reader of the martyrologies of the first three centuries, and of the history of Christianity, may well blush for shame at the dishonour done to human nature by imposture on the one hand and credulity on the other. Nevertheless, such is all the evidence given of the history, and even the existence, of a God or divine person, who is not so much as mentioned by any writer out of his own sect, at the very time when he might be expected to have startled the world with his miracles. The evidences of Christ's existence are the etymology of the word Christian, given by Tacitus, a century after his birth, and a passage interpolated by a pious fraud in Josephus. If this latter author had known of Christ, he would not have failed to expatiate upon the life of a man, who had played so great a part in his own country. Recourse to such means shows the difficulty of persuading men who are resolved to have a reason for the faith that is in them. If there had been in Judæa a man, who had set his mark on his age, either as a great legislator and philosopher, or as a notable impostor, Tacitus would not have limited himself to the simple statement, with regard to Christ, that he died in Judæa. The execution of such an extraordinary man would have furnished such a philosophical historian with much matter for reflection. Tacitus evidently thought the name of Christ of no interest, except as giving the etymology of Christians, a sect recently known at Rome, and marked from the first with hatred and contempt. He related simply what he had heard, on the authority of credulous Christians, and nothing more. So here again we have the guarantee of Christian credulity, not of Tacitus or Suetonius. Much weight will assuredly be claimed for the general belief of Christ's worshippers, who from age to age

have attested his existence and his miracles, just as they have attested those of many martyrs and saints, which no one now believes. But it has already been shown in the case of Hercules, that the belief of generations in matters of religion proves nothing more than the credulity of believers; Hercules is none the less the sun, whatever the Greeks may have said or thought. A great error is more easily propagated than a great truth because it is easier to believe than to reason, and because the marvels of romance are preferred to simple history. Were we to adopt this rule of criticism, we should oppose to Christianity the firm belief which every nation has had and still has in the miracles and oracles of its religion, by way of proof of their truth; a proof which Christians would scarcely allow; and we shall do no more when their religion is in question. They will say, no doubt, that they alone have the truth all to themselves. But other religions will say so too. Who shall decide between them? Common sense, rather than received opinion, however general it may be. To disbelieve the existence of Christ, and the truthfulness of sacred historians, would be to destroy the very foundations of history. So they say. Cicero's brother said also that it would destroy the foundations of history if the truth of the Delphic oracles were denied. Let Christians say whether they think they would be destroying the foundations of history by an assault upon these pretended oracles; and whether the Roman orator would have thought he was destroying the foundations of history by denying the truth of their prophesies, supposing he had known anything about them. Each party stands up for its own chimæra, and not for historic truth.

Astrology has met with wide spread and long continued acceptance; but its basis is futile, and its results false. It has set its mark upon almost all the monuments of antiquity. It predicts everything except the truth; yet the whole world has believed in it, or believes

in it still. Cicero proves the reality of divination by a number of facts brought together in support of his assertion ; he alleges especially the universal acceptance and great antiquity of the science. There has never been a nation without oracles, diviners, augurs, prophets, without belief in dreams and in lots. This may be true ; but what inference must be drawn ? That credulity is an inveterate disease of the whole human race ; and that the world consists of two classes, knaves who lead, and fools who let themselves be led. The reality of ghosts could be equally well proved by antiquity and general consent, and the miracles of St Roch and Æsculapius by the votive offerings in their temples. Human reason has narrow limitations ; but credulity is a bottomless abyss, which swallows all that is thrown in, and refuses nothing. The science of augury is not substantiated, because Accius Nævius is said to have foretold with truth that Tarquin could accomplish the wish in his mind, which was to cut a whetstone with a razor. A statue erected in the forum perpetuated the remembrance of this miracle, and was a proof to every Roman of the infallibility of augurs. The swaddling clothes of Christ and the wood of his cross no more prove his real existence, than the print of Hercules' foot proves that he ever lived, or the columns in the plain of St Denys, that the saint walked there with his head in his hands. St Denys or Dionysius is only the Bacchus of Greece or Osiris of Egypt, whose head sailed every year from the Nile to Byblus, like the head of Orpheus on the river Hebrus. This is a good instance of the effects of imposture and ignorance, when the priest has established his supremacy over the human mind.

The Greeks worshipped Bacchus under the name of Dionysius or Denys ; he was celebrated as the founder of their mysteries under the name of Eleutherius, translated into Liber by the Latins. Two principal festivals were kept in his honour, one in spring, and one in the vintage season. The latter was a rustic,

the former an urban ceremony. A day was added in honour of Demetrius, king of Macedonia, who held his court at Pella on the Gulf of Thessalonica; he was only another name of Bacchus. The feast of Bacchus was designated in the pagan calendar by these words, *Festum Dionysii Eleutherii Rustici*. Our good forefathers made of these names three saints, Denys and his companions, Eleutherius, and Rusticus. On the day before they read the feast of Demetrius; so on the eve of St Denys they placed the festival of St Demetrius, and made him a martyr of Thessalonica. He is also said to have been put to death by Maximine, in despair at the death of Lyæus: Lyæus as well as Demetrius is a name of Bacchus. On the day before this they placed the festival of St Bacchus, and made him too to be an Eastern martyr. So in the Latin calendar, the priests' guide for the commemoration of saints and the celebration of festivals, we find on the 7th October, feast of St Bacchus; on the 8th, feast of St Demetrius; on the 9th, feast of Saints Denys, Eleutherius, and Rusticus. Thus they have made saints of several different names or epithets of the same god, and given them to him as so many companions. It has been shown in the explanation of the poem of Nonnus, the *Dionysiacs*, that Bacchus married the Zephyr, or gentle breeze, under the name of the Nymph Aura. Well, two days before the feast of Denys or Bacchus is that of Aura Placida the Zephyr, under the names St Aura and St Placida.

In like manner the expression of good will, *perpetua felicitas*, gave rise to two female saints, Perpetua and Felicitas, whose names are taken together in the invocation; and *rogare* and *donare*, to pray and to give, became St Rogation and St Donatian, whose names are also taken together. Another joint festival was that of St Flora and St Lucy, flowers and light. St Bibiana had her day at the season in which the Greeks kept their *Pithœgia*, or opening of the tuns: St Apollinaria

had hersome days after the day of the Apollinarian games at Rome. Even the ides of the month were canonized by the name of St Ides. The real face or image of Christ, *vera eicon* or *iconica*, became St Veronica. The beautiful star of the Corona, Margarita, over the serpent of Ophiuchus, was changed into St Margaret, represented with a serpent or dragon under her feet: her festival is kept a few days after this star sets. There is a feast also of St Hippolytus dragged by horses, like the son of Theseus and favourite of Phœdra. His remains were said to have been brought from the island of Scyros to Athens by Cimon. Sacrifices were offered to these pretended relics, as if Theseus himself had returned to the city. This solemnity was repeated every year, on the 8th of November. Our calendar appoints the same day for the Feast of the Holy Relics. It is evident that the pagan calendar, with its impersonations of nature and life, has entered largely into the Christian calendar without much hindrance. These reflections need not be carried further, because the object of this work is not to expose the blunders of ignorance, or the impudence of imposture. Our task is rather to trace back the Christian religion to its real origin, to point out its descent, to show its connection with all other religions, and to prove that it is embraced within the circle of the universal worship of nature and of the sun. The mass of mankind must be abandoned to the priests, but our object will have been attained if a few readers are convinced that Christ is only the sun; that light is the object of Christian mysteries, as well as of those of Mithra and Adonis and Osiris; that this religion differs from all the other religions of antiquity in its names, and forms, and allegories, while the substance is the same; in short, that a good Christian is a sun-worshipper. For the future, if men determine to believe in the existence of a personage, who is neither the Christ of the legend nor the Christ of the mysteries, it matters little to us. There is no necessity for this

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second Christ, since he would not be the central figure of the Christian religion, whose nature we are interested in defining. As to ourselves, we believe that this second Christ has no existence; and we think that more than one judicious reader will agree with us that Christ was no more a real personage than Hercules. Undoubtedly there will be others who will admit our interpretation of the fundamental mysteries of Christianity, and yet persist in believing that Christ was either a legislator or impostor; because they had made up their minds beforehand, and it is not easy to change a fixed opinion. As this is the extent of their philosophy, there is no need for us to labour at length to call their attention to the absence of historic evidence for Christ's existence as man.