

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1856.

No. IV.

ART. I.—*The Bible, the Missal, and the Breviary; or Ritualism Self-illustrated in the Liturgical Books of Rome: Containing the Text of the entire Roman Missal, Rubrics, and Prefaces, translated from the Latin; with Preliminary Dissertations, and Notes from the Breviary, Pontifical, etc.* By the Rev. George Lewis, of Ormiston. Edinburgh, 1853: pp. 809.

MR. LEWIS claims this as the first full English translation of the great Roman Liturgy.* The Missal is not to be found in any other spoken language. One Voisin, in the seventeenth century, who presumed to make a French version, was anathematized for his pains, and the book is not extant. Before the present undertaking, Hussenbeth's was the most complete English translation, and he gives all that is necessary for the information of the unlearned in following the service. The small volumes which are in the hands of the worshippers in these churches, are not missals or mass-books, but guides to the observance of what the priest is performing at the altar,

* The copy followed is "The Roman Missal restored, according to the decree of the most holy Council of Trent; published by order of the holy Pius V., and revised by authority of Pope Clement VIII. and Urban VIII. Augmented with the new Masses granted by the indulgence of the Apostolic See. Mechlin, 1840."

that not a syllable of Scripture—nor even the most ancient of their own symbols—gives example or warrant for the invocation of the Virgin or the Saints! How will the mystery of the real body in the host disappear before Scripture and reason as in the child-like, yet sage-like, logic of Lady Jane Grey, with the Abbot of Westminster. “What took he but bread; what brake he but bread; what gave he but bread? What he took, he brake; what he brake, he gave; what he gave, they eat; and that was bread, not his body, for his body was alive before them, and not broken by himself, nor eaten by them.”

ART. II.—*Commentaire sur le Yaçna, l'un des livres religieux des Parses, ouvrage contenant le texte Zend expliqué pour la première fois, les variantes des quatre manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale, et la version Sanscrite inédite de Nérioseugh, par Eugène Burnouf, Membre de l'Institut, Professeur de Sanscrit au Collège de France.* Tome I. Paris, 1833. 4to. pp. cliii. 592, and cxvi.

Avesta, die heiligen schriften der Parsen, aus dem Grundtexte übersetzt, mit stäter Rücksicht auf die Tradition, von Dr. Friedrich Spiegel. Band I. Der Vendidad. Leipzig, 1852. 8vo. pp. 295.

It belongs to the Church to convert to her own use the accumulated treasures of the world; and no higher honour can be claimed for worldly treasures than that they are capable of subserving the progress and the well-being of the Church of God. Israel spoiling the Egyptians was a type for all after time. Vessels of gold and of silver, rich and costly stuffs, wealth acquired without God and with no regard to his service were, at the bidding of the Most High, and upon the demand of his people, lavishly bestowed upon those who would use them for the construction or embellishment of the sanctuary. This is the destined end of every material and intellectual acquisition. The streams of ancient civilization and culture swelled to their beautiful proportions, that they might empty themselves

into the bosom of Christianity; and the rapid accumulations of modern times tend in the same direction. Religion looks with satisfaction upon the quickened enterprise and intense activity which pervades every department of life at present; for she expects to have that developed from every quarter which will confirm the truth, kindle devotion, or enlarge the means and avenues of good. There is not a field that human diligence can reap, from which she may not cull her proper food and draw from it strength and increase.

It might perhaps seem, at first view, as though one field, to which much and sedulous attention has been turned of late, were utterly unpromising; that the direction of study upon the systems of heathenism would be attended with no profit; that nothing could be gained to the advantage of true religion from what seems so diametrically antagonistic. But the results of the labour expended have shown that this would be a hasty and ill-judged conclusion. However absurd, irrational, or wicked the superstitions of the heathen may be, they should not be dismissed as undeserving of serious examination. They should be studied, if for no other reason, to see how silly and wicked they are, and thus by the contrast to increase our admiration for the glorious gospel, and to heighten our sense of indebtedness to it. The thorough sifting of these false religions is necessary, moreover, for the refutation of the errors which they contain, and the vindication of the opposing truth. The Church is engaged in her struggle with heathenism still. Her missionaries have to meet it upon its own soil, and they must be able to dislodge its batteries and to force its strongholds. A thorough knowledge of the system which they are sent to combat will show them where to plant their artillery with the greatest effect. The apostle, who was raised up to be the chief opposer of Judaism, received his training at the feet of Gamaliel. Paganism has its defences, its subtleties, and its subterfuges; and more skill is needed than upon a hasty consideration might be deemed necessary, so to present or to parry arguments, that the native mind, biassed as it is and accustomed to a style of thought different from our own, may be made to see the falsity of their errors. And in this work aid may be given without personally visiting heathen ground. But lately we

heard inquiries made by a respected brother from India for a popular but thorough refutation of German pantheism, that it might be used against that similar system, which underlies Brahmanical belief. The labours of Burnouf, Spiegel, and others, in unfolding the religion of the Parsis, may not be without their value in the direction just indicated. The followers of Zoroaster are still to be found in inconsiderable communities at Yazd and Kirman in Persia, and in greater numbers in Hindostan. In the city of Bombay, where they most abound, there were 114,698 in 1849, and in the entire peninsula probably more than 500,000. Their wealth, intelligence, and commercial enterprise, give them an importance greater than would be accorded to their mere numbers. That they are rising in consequence will appear from the fact, that "thirty years ago there were but two Parsis employed as English copyists in a government office, and some half a dozen in counting-houses; not only public offices, but banks, merchants' and attorneys' offices are now literally crowded with them."* The Queen of England has knighted one of the professors of this faith, Sir Jemshedji Jijibhai, whose wealth and munificence are such that he is said to have expended a quarter of a million sterling in acts of generosity in twenty-six years. The Parsis have numerous temples, some of which have been recently built, and in a style of great elegance. They support in Bombay seven newspapers, one of which is issued daily. There are also men of some note for learning among them, who have distinguished themselves by publications of various kinds. An evidence of this is furnished by the following statements of Mr. Briggs. "Ardeshir Behramji, the first Parsi interpreter in the Supreme Court of Bombay, published in 1824, a Gujarati Grammar, to facilitate the progress of English students in acquiring that tongue. Sohorabshah Dosabhai has published idiomatical exercises in Gujarati and English. Hirjibhai and Meherwanji of the Lauji family, who visited England, have furnished the public with a volume in English as to their impressions of England and its people. Naurosji Firdunji, one of the present interpreters in the Queen's Court in Bombay, conducted for a

* See *The Parsis, or Modern Zerdusthians*, by H. G. Briggs.

length of time a scientific magazine in Gujarati, called the *Vidhiya Saugar*. Some of the Parsis are intimately conversant with Persian. Sohorabji, the youngest son of Sir Jemshedji Jijibhai, lately issued a translation of a Persian work into the Gujarati dialect. A rising young merchant of Bombay, Shet Dhanjibhai Framji, has devoted upwards of eight years to the compilation of a work on the Zend and Pehlevi dialects,* which he is about to publish. Munshi Dosabhai Sohorabji has published idiomatical exercises in the Persian, Hindusthani, and Gujarati languages, with corresponding lessons in English."

That the polemic value of the investigations into Parsism has not been overlooked by those competent to avail themselves of it, is apparent from the writings of the learned missionary of the Scotch Free Church, Dr. Wilson, especially his "Parsi Religion Unfolded." One thing at least can be accomplished without much difficulty. The divergence can be exhibited between their religious books and their present practice, and they can be convicted of departures from their own acknowledged standards. It is well known with what success this has been done in the case of the Vedas and their adherents. It has resulted in a strife amongst the Hindûs themselves, and a movement on the part of some of them to reform Hindûism by rejecting the popular superstitions, and returning to a more simple worship, such as is reflected in their earliest records. And anything seems better than the absolute apathy and stagnation in which the heathen mind is so commonly found. If this can be interrupted, and religious inquiry stimulated by almost any cause, the result can hardly be other than beneficial.

The study of the systems of heathenism may thus be rendered subsidiary to important ends. But besides these indirect uses, there are direct advantages deserving of pursuit. These have been sometimes misconceived, and false, exaggerated or partial views substituted for the true.

By one school of mythologists exclusive stress is laid upon casual and superficial resemblances between the religions of the heathen and revealed religion, and a close dependence of the

* The prospectus of this work, which is a Zend dictionary in English and Gujarati, is contained in the Journal of the German Oriental Society, VII. pp. 104—106.

former upon the latter is affirmed. Heathenism is searched for traces or reminiscences of scriptural names or personages, events or rites; analogies are seized upon, however fanciful or remote; Satan is everywhere thought to be aping Jehovah, and in these counterfeit religions, of which he is the author, to have simply caricatured the true; and then these caricatures are adduced in evidence of the fidelity and truthfulness of that heavenly original, which, without the deformities of any, is yet the common source of all. The labours of Hercules have been made to confirm the deeds of Samson. The Titan Japetus is taken as the traditional echo of Japheth, Deucalion of Noah, and Vulcan of Tubal-Cain. Arion cast from the ship into the sea, and borne to land by dolphins, is a garbled account of Jonah; and Visvamisra is the Hindu Job. In the same spirit, and with the same design, it was maintained that the wisdom of all the ancient sages and philosophers was drawn more or less directly from the fountain of Hebrew inspiration. The difficulty in either case arose from the forced and arbitrary assumptions which must be made, and the insufficient evidence on which the theory had to rest. The unsatisfactory nature of this view, when pressed to such an undue extent, led by a natural reaction to an opposite extreme still more extravagant, in which the same premises were insisted on, but a contrary conclusion drawn. In the analogies still instituted between heathenism and revealed religion, the former was made the original, and the latter the copy, with the avowed design of placing it on a par with or even beneath acknowledged superstition. The fact is, that there are some great truths of the primeval religion of mankind, and some great facts in human history prior to the dispersion, of which, as it was reasonable to expect, the memory is still preserved among almost all the tribes of men, though mingled oftentimes with the grossest error, and sometimes quite buried beneath the mass of superincumbent falsehood. But as the seat of divine revelation was so limited, and the chosen people were of set purpose kept so secluded from the other nations of the earth, it is certainly not to be expected that what was for the time designed exclusively for them, should find universal circulation and acknowledgment; and to make such an expectation the guiding principle of an investigation, could

only lead to disappointment and error, as well as to the neglect of what was more real and important.

By others, the myths of the heathen have been regarded as legendary distortions of historical facts. Heroes and kings were converted by their admiring successors into gods and demi-gods; and their deeds, which did not pass beyond the bounds of natural occurrences, grew by repeated recitals into the super-human and miraculous. Now, it was thought, if this process could be reversed, and these accretions of the marvellous could be stripped off, the residuum would be reliable history. This was accordingly attempted. Deities were reduced to ordinary men. Their genealogies were retained, their residences fixed, their dates computed. These fabulous records were made to yield successive dynasties, with long lines of kings and their eventful reigns. Ages of possible history were constructed, which might have given occasion to these myths. All seemed very plausible. It would perhaps be difficult to prove that it could not have been so; but whether it actually was so, it was unfortunately quite impossible to ascertain. A hundred other histories might be invented, possessing as much plausibility as any given one that has been proposed. And so the whole scheme broke down, from the want of any basis upon which to rest it, and from the impossibility of arriving at any solid conclusions. The whole is as intangible and as delusive as those appearances of land, which often present themselves to the eye of the mariner in the distant horizon, and yet are nothing but cloud and vapour. There is besides so much discrepancy and contradiction in the myths themselves, that the attempt to reduce them to anything like consistency and unity, except by the most violent and arbitrary methods, seems absolutely hopeless. Thus, for example, Cicero records (*De Nat. Deor.* iii. 21) that in order to reconcile the current fables of the gods, it was necessary to assume the existence of five different Minervas, five Mercuries, four Vulcans, four Apollos, six of the name of Hercules, three Jupiters, and so on. Varro even thought that there were three hundred Jupiters. Of course the endeavour to draw out the thread of history from such tangled confusion, even assuming it to have had a real historical origin, is utterly preposterous. But while some fables may have arisen in the

manner assumed, there are many more which in all probability were derived from a totally distinct source, and never had a particle of real events in their composition; and there is no criterion by which to decide with confidence in each particular case upon the mode of genesis. The best historians now discard all that has been called history, which is thus constructed. They are content to detail the myths of a people, precisely as they lay in their current superstitions, without undertaking to say what their historical basis may have been, or whether they had any. It may be with regret that we see figures once esteemed real, living men, vanish as airy phantoms. And perhaps some historians are disposed to bring down the age of fable too far. Still it is safer not to begin to build until a solid foundation can be found. This principle, while it sweeps away some cherished scenes from classic ground, is equally relentless in the beginnings of Persian story. So that Professor Roth of Tübingen, who may be looked upon as an authority in such matters, says, after reviewing some of the early portions of Firdusi's great epic, "It is better to confess that we have no history of Persia before the time of Cyrus, than to take Firdusi's kings for history."* Such conclusions coming from such a quarter, and reached by purely literary means, are the more acceptable, as the excesses of the historical view have likewise been chastised, by suffering it also to play into the hands of unbelief. And when the shadowy forms of Egyptian and Asiatic fable are arrayed in the dress of a real history, and their immense mythologic periods are paraded as though their chronological exactness could not be disputed, and the attempt is made thereby to cast discredit on the Scripture record, we cannot be displeased to see these shadows made to disappear at the simple waving of a master magician's wand.

Reaction from the flatness and the incongruities of historical explanation led to what may be denominated the mystical mode of treatment, the assumption that the myths were veils of profound religious and philosophical truths. The vulgar mind, imbued with superstition, may have stopped at the outer shell; but it was the province of the wise to penetrate to the kernel.

* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* II. 228.

The mysteries especially were instituted to keep alive the great doctrine of immortality, or other tenets equally important. The fables are never to be taken in their gross obvious sense, but in their inner spiritual meaning. This mode of explanation, like the preceding, already found adherents and advocates among the classic heathen in the decrepitude of their decaying systems. As the glaring absurdities of the popular belief pressed themselves more and more upon the attention of thinking minds, and especially as the Christians made unsparing use of these in their polemics, every effort was made to rid themselves of this grievous incumbrance. One class sought escape by denying to the vulgar throng of gods and goddesses any claim to divinity, sinking them to the level of mortals, and finding back of them an undefined object of homage in a supreme but unknown God. The inconsistencies and difficulties which beset this method of relief, have been before alluded to. The other way of escape was to retain the myths, but assign to them a higher spiritual sense. Allegorizing, thus begun, found its way through the Neo-Platonists to the Alexandrine school of Jews and Christians, and we find Philo and Origen applying the same process to the sacred history which their Pagan masters pursued in regard to the heathen fables. It proved as impracticable in the latter case, as it was absurd in the former. It is impossible to carry through a consistent allegory where none was ever intended. The spiritualizing process proves merely a blind and random guess-work, with no settled principles of guidance, and no possibility of verifying results, and it can only lead to endless diversity and uncertainty. All religions fare alike under the application of this universal solvent; and as they who manage it, find everywhere just what they please to find, all religions are discovered to be equally truthful and good. This is precisely the point reached by the Sufies of Persia, and which they are disposed to apply to the myths of their own land, as to all others. A spurious volume is found among them, called the *Desâtîr*, which represents these sentiments, and is ascribed to a high antiquity. It was, in 1818, published by a learned Parsi priest, and the Avesta is now popularly explained by its adherents agreeably to the mode of interpretation therein adopted, which is very much

after the fashion that the followers of Swedenborg deal with the Holy Scriptures.

Others, again, have sought in these mythologies nothing but a reproduction of the phenomena of external nature, clothed in symbolical forms; those phenomena especially which are most striking to the senses, or most important to the life of man. The passage of the sun through the signs of the zodiac, and the revolution of the seasons with the changes which they occasion, give the keynote to the whole. Joyous festivals celebrate the sun's return; grief and wailing mark his departure. Or the geographical features of a country supply contrasts which are looked upon as the foundation of its myths.

Without meaning to deny or question that heathen fables may have sprung from some, and perhaps all of the various origins suggested by the several partial modes of treatment which have been described, we yet think that to confine inquiry to the specific origin of myths, and to aim chiefly at stripping off the mythical dress, in order to uncover the secret which lies hid beneath it, is to miss what is most interesting and valuable in this whole study. The mythical form is, after all, of greater consequence to us than its obscure or casual origin. Whence it came, or how it grew, less concerns us than what it is. These fables cannot be properly understood or explained from anything exterior to man himself. A religion is not to be comprehended by tearing all that is religious out of it, and leaving behind a non-religious residuum, which, however, it may have entered into the framework, or modified the outside appearance, has nothing to do with the real essence of the matter. All the religions of the world, save one which had its birth in heaven, are the offspring of the spiritual nature of man. The human heart is the soil out of which they have all grown; the inborn principles of man's nature furnished the seeds; and outward circumstances, however greatly they may have affected the growth, did not determine nor produce it. This constitutes the chief interest of the study. The religions of the world make the invisible and immaterial visible and tangible. Man's heart is in them developed in its fruits. They are the products of man's spirit, upon which it has deeply impressed itself. In studying them, then, we study man as he has revealed himself

openly and without disguise. Man's outward worship sustains the same relation to his religious nature and feelings, that language does to his thoughts and his intellectual nature. As words are the expression of ideas, and language the utterance of the mind, in investigating them we bring to light the laws of thought, and trace the workings of the intellectual faculties. Just so religion is the language of the heart; and it is the more truthful representative of the inner man, as its outgoings are spontaneous and unstudied. The conscious effort of the individual to state what is struggling within his breast, is often like the breeze which ruffles the surface of the lake, and makes it a less faithful mirror than when sleeping in entire repose. The spontaneous growth of ages and of masses of men is less liable to such disturbance. And especially, if, without confining ourselves to a single specimen, or within a narrow range of observation, we enlarge the scope of our vision so as to take in the most prominent religions of the world, we may thus get beyond the influence of all that is merely casual and local, and gain a view of those great, permanent and pervading characteristics, which belong to the race.

The analogies and points of relation, which subsist between the most remotely sundered and the most widely varying religions, are oftentimes surprising and extensive. The method was once much in vogue of explaining all such resemblances by the assumption of a direct derivation of one from the other. Some Egyptian or Asiatic origin was claimed for everything. The rites of Judaism even were disposed of in the same way: the process was continued *ad nauseam*, until the magnificent and speaking ceremonial of Moses, with its divinely descended truths, was converted into a confused medley of disjointed rites, picked indiscriminately out of every form of heathenism. Even as applied to Pagan rites themselves, the theory cannot be universally carried out without breaking down under the mass which is laid upon it. There are deep analogies hid beneath superficial diversities, of which no satisfactory solution can be found, except the obvious one, that like causes produce like effects. The nature of man is one; and all that springs from it, however separated in locality, or whatever the variety of attend-

ant circumstances, must bear testimony to the community of its origin.

And now, if we look upon the broad surface of heathenism thus, as the natural heart of man, without quickening from above unfolded to our eye, how momentous and how vast the territory before us! There is room for unlimited exploration, and the results of the search cannot but be of the greatest consequence. The universality of religion proves unmistakably and undeniably that a religious nature is of the very essence of man's being. It is as plain as the gravitation of matter. Man was made to worship: he must worship. And the very degradation of heathenism, and the grovelling nature of its deities, serve but to add a new and signal force to the argument. For they show this principle to be so inwrought into the very constitution of man, that he not only pays spontaneous homage when the proper object of adoration is presented to him, but he will do violence to his intellect and his reason sooner than disobey its impulses.

And then, upon this grand but humiliating arena may be seen, under every various phase, the struggles of the heart with those momentous questions, which necessarily force themselves upon it—Whence came the universe? Whence came man, and whither is he bound? Whence came evil? How may sin be removed and the deity appeased? And when we see the hesitating and despairing, or the monstrous and absurd answers which are everywhere returned, differing in every respect, except their common failure to attain the truth, what emblem can more befit such a spectacle than that of men groping their way in a labyrinth of total darkness? A phenomenon which fills so large and so sad a space in the history of mankind cannot be without some important providential reason. We are sent of God to heathenism as our teacher. He suffered the nations to walk in their own ways. And he did so that the experiment might be wrought out upon so grand a scale as to settle beyond cavil the correctness of its results, whether man can save himself—whether he can, by his own unaided efforts, rise to the knowledge of his Maker, to holiness and bliss. The result is a total failure; a failure so absolute and manifest as to occasion, even in the breasts of the heathen themselves, despair of self-

relief, and dissatisfaction with the system under which they live, working thus that sense of spiritual poverty which may prepare them to hail with joy the riches offered in the glorious gospel.

When we search everywhere throughout heathendom, but search in vain, for any just or even tolerable conception of the unity, the holiness, the mercy, eternity, or greatness of the infinite God—when we can find nowhere a lofty and pure morality either in precept or in practice—when, with all the conscience of sin which was possessed, we meet nowhere with any rational mode by which to purge it away, and none effectual in delivering from its power—and when we are obliged to turn disappointed away even from those mighty and populous empires, and from those most refined and polished nations, which make the greatest figure in the ancient world, to a feeble and despised people, not distinguished for any special cultivation, and which never originated any native system of philosophy, and find among them a religion which combines in itself in unalloyed perfection all those truths for which we look in vain elsewhere, and which has given birth to all just conceptions upon these momentous themes, to the most profound philosophies, and to the highest style ever reached of culture and civilization, we may well ask for a reason of all this; and we may well challenge an explanation upon any other hypothesis than that which admits this religion to be from heaven.

It has been seen how instruction may be gained from heathendom surveyed in its totality; if, however, detached portions be regarded separately, this will open new themes of profitable study. Notwithstanding their general features of resemblance, there is anything but sameness in the religions of the world. It is with them as with the various nations of men themselves: they are strikingly alike, and yet as strikingly different. And their points of diversity are no less instructive than their points of agreement. Even such elements as are common to all, are in each case blended in some new proportions. The great problems of human life and destiny are surveyed from different points, and their relative magnitudes are altered as the point of observation is shifted. One question is uppermost in one system, another in another. One seeks its solution by one

route, another by a route wholly different. Thus, for example, the origin of evil is by the Parsi system referred to an independent being, Agra-Mainyus (Ahriman), who is constantly seeking to introduce disorder into the perfect creation of *Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd); the conflict between these two beings of opposite natures creating the mixture of good and evil which now exists, and which shall finally terminate in the subjugation of Agra-Mainyus, and the triumph of Ahura-Mazda. In express contradiction to this system, the Most High, when predicting by the mouth of Isaiah, the mission of Cyrus, who would be an adherent of it, claims for himself absolute and unlimited control over both the kingdoms of good and of evil: "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil; I the LORD do all these things." Isa. xlv. 7. Another system, as if a precursor of the doctrine that God, even if so disposed, could not prevent sin in his creatures, represents the universe as a series of emanations, which, by the very act of receding from the primal centre of goodness, necessarily lose their purity and brightness, as light and heat become weakened in proportion to their distance from the body by which they are radiated. Again, one prominent thought in the Hindu system is the removal of sin, and the acquisition of merit by self-inflicted sufferings of the transgressor; no such idea is found in Parsism, which accomplishes the removal of uncleanness by a round of purgations. The systems of heathenism are not absolute unmingled falsehood: there are truths mixed up with their errors, though distorted often, and needing a careful search to discover their existence. It is an interesting subject of inquiry how these various systems stand related to each other and to the great problems of human life; which of these problems is most prominent in each, and what solution is offered by them respectively; also what are the elements of truth and power in each, and in what combinations they are presented, and how these stand related to Christianity. For it is most instructive to observe how the religion of the Bible, like Aaron's rod turned serpent, swallows up all the religions of men; how it, in other words, blends together within itself in their purity and har-

* Some etymologists have remarked an analogy between the formation of Ahura, which seems to be a derivative of the substantive verb, and the Hebrew אהרה.

monious combination all those elements of truth and power, which are elsewhere found isolated and obscured; and how it really and fully satisfies all those various needs and longings, of which heathenism painfully proves the existence, but which it knows not how in any of its forms effectually to still. To study heathenism is to study, under most impressive forms, the wants of men; and this is well adapted to bring to view new features of that blessed word of life which is divinely fitted for their relief. We need have no hesitation in admitting, on behalf of any false religion, all of good that a candid examination can discover in it. The religion of Christ can surely never suffer by the contrast. And such an examination will furnish the best refutation of those extravagant claims, which are sometimes put forth, of the excellence of certain Pagan systems, and of the indebtedness of the true religion to them. Thus it has been stoutly affirmed that the Jewish doctrines of angels, and of the resurrection, were either borrowed or underwent essential modification from the Parsi religion. But it appears from the investigations of Burnouf and Spiegel, that the resurrection formed no part of the original faith of Parsism, and that the supposition that it did, rests upon erroneous translations.* And that it was no prejudice in favour of revealed religion which led Spiegel to this result, is apparent from his statement that the Hebrew canon was not closed until after the time of Alexander;† a statement which manifestly presupposes a denial of the genuineness of one or more of the books of the Old Testament.

This subject also has relations to history, too intimate and important to be overlooked. When the religions of mankind are contemplated in their proper light, as at once products and functions of the history of the people amongst whom they are found, they suggest many interesting deductions. In order properly to appreciate the product of an age, or of a state of things different from our own, it is necessary to transfer ourselves to it, and to live, as it were, in the midst of it. We cannot estimate it justly, if we contemplate it merely from the outside, and from a distance, viewing it from our own stand-

* *Zeit. d. Morg. Gesell.* I. p. 260; *Avesta*, p. 15.

† *Zeit. d. Morg. Gesell.* IX. p. 185.

point, and applying to it our own modes of thought and habits of judging, which may be entirely foreign from those amongst which it had its origin. This is true of a literary composition; it is true of the institutions, usages, and enactments of any people; it is true also of their religion. Now, this is only saying that its whole style and texture have been determined by the conditions in which it arose; it may be made to tell the story, therefore, of those conditions. It contains a picture of the moral and mental states of whole races of men during the period of its prevalence. It reveals their inward belief and the range of their ideas, and will thus save from oblivion a large and important chapter in the history of human opinion. And as it is impossible that this should have been inoperative and uninfluential, we shall be warranted in interrogating it still farther. It will disclose to us the spirit of a people, the ideas, so to speak, which rule them, which predominate in and control their history, and of which the whole course of events in which they take part, is but the expression and the symbol. Here it is in fact, that we must seek the key to many otherwise inexplicable phenomena, and the secret springs of many movements visible upon the surface. The religion of a people is to be regarded as more than a single element, co-ordinated with many others of equal influence in their history. It is rather the master-power which reduces all others to its sway, and harmonizes or subjects them to itself. Rooted in the strongest feelings of our nature, it takes rank correspondent with that of the faculties in which it has its seat. Who could understand the history of the Mohammedan powers, while ignorant of the religion of the false prophet?

The religions of men also indicate plainly the culture of those, among whom they are found. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." Ps. l. 21. This lets us into the mode by which men form their conceptions of the deity. Their notions of spiritual beings and of the spiritual world are based upon the world around them. Their minds are not capable of a range of ideas, or of an elevation of thought much above their own actual condition. Their loftiest ideal is formed by taking one like themselves and simply investing him with superhuman power and splendour. The

gods of Homer are formed upon the model of his heroes. This too is the case in the Parsi religion. Upon this Spiegel remarks, (*Zeit. d. Morg. Gesell. V. p. 223*), "The relations of the Persian divinities are altogether patterned after those of men. Take but the *Shah-nameh* of Firdusi in your hand, a book which is certainly based upon the oldest conceptions of the Persians. Perpetual war exists between Iran, civilized Persia, and Turan, the uncivilized nomads of the north. The king consults with his nobles respecting the war with the foreign barbarians; countless hosts follow him. The fortunes of war are various, and though the Iranians mostly reap the due reward of their valour, the crafty and treacherous king of Turan succeeds often in deceiving them, routing them and even subjecting them. Sore times for Iran follow, but they must be patiently endured, for they are transient. At last a hero is found who restores the royal name to honour, and pays the Turanians with interest for the evil which they have inflicted upon the Iranians. Now it is entirely after this plan that their heaven is arranged. The bright heaven of Ahura-mazda is the heavenly Iran; the deep darkness of Agra-mainyus is the superterrestrial Turan. As the monarchs of Iran and Turan are surrounded by their nobles, so these mutually hostile powers, the one by the Ameshaspentas (Amshaspands,) the other by the Daevas. The proper field of combat, on which both parties measure their forces is the earth, especially the earth as known to the Iranians. The armies which they lead against each other, are good and bad men. The life of men and gods is accordingly a constant strife. The victory of the latter is slow, but sure; and such as have faithfully adhered to them, shall receive their merited reward and portion of the bliss."

Again, these religions are neither stationary in themselves, nor sundered from all connection with others. They may therefore, be viewed as they are brought into contact, perhaps conflict, with other systems, or as they are influenced by internal causes disposing to change. As they mingle with the great stream of human opinion, the effect may be traced in the modifications which they cause or which they undergo themselves. Scarcely anything is more interesting than to watch

this strife of opinion, or to trace the various doctrines or religious tendencies, which are commingled on the broad arena of thought and discussion, back to their original sources. Who can understand the mythology of Rome without studying that of Greece? or the mythology of Greece unaided by those of Egypt and the East? Or how can the genesis of the ancient philosophies be comprehended if these religions be left out of view? Or what can be made of the early Christian heresies, the Gnostic, the Manichean, and so on, without them?

The internal history, too, of these religions and the proper development of the germs which they respectively contain, furnish instructive hints regarding the law of human culture and progress. It is often assumed that man's progress is naturally and by an inherent power upward and onward; and that the heathen religions are a step in the progress of the mind up to clear and just views of truth. The facts will be found in conflict with this theory, and justify us rather in regarding them less in the light of stages to be passed through, than of falsities to be renounced. The depraved moral nature of man is a dead weight perpetually dragging him downward. Religions will be found to deteriorate, even while knowledge, refinement and general culture are advancing, until the rottenness induced by the former ultimately engulfs the latter. Heathen systems become uniformly by the lapse of time more irrational, more heartless and formal, more oppressive and burdensome, more subservient to the interests of a crafty and pampered priesthood. It is thus with the Brahmanical religion; it is thus with the Parsi; a fact which goes to show that heathen systems are corruptions of the purer faith of the primitive ages of mankind, and that the light which glimmers through them, is to be traced ultimately to that primeval source. No upward tendency is ever discernible, which is not due more or less immediately to revelation from heaven.

The volumes before us are devoted to the investigation of the religious books of the Parsis. Less than a century has passed since these books were first brought from India to Europe. This was accomplished by an ardent young Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, who, unable to raise the funds needed for so long and expensive a journey in any other way, embarked as a

common soldier. After encountering many difficulties and hardships during his eight years absence, he at length returned, bringing with him 180 manuscripts, and a translation of the Zendavesta, as received from the lips of Parsi priests. This was published in Paris in 1771. Although considerable discussion was at once awakened with regard to the contents of these books, as well as their antiquity and genuineness, for a long time no serious attention was directed to the strange language in which the originals were found. The worth of the language to philology was unknown; and as all the writings it contained had already been given to the world in French, there seemed to be little to attract to its study.

Such was the state of things when Burnouf addressed himself to the study of the manuscripts brought home by Anquetil, supposing that, by availing himself of the aid of his translation, he would have little difficulty in mastering the tongue. He was not long in discovering, however, that from its exceeding inaccuracy but little use could be made of it. The Parsis themselves, from whom it was derived, had lost all accurate knowledge of the language; and as Anquetil conducted his intercourse with them, not in their native tongue but in modern Persian, this was no doubt a fruitful source of misunderstandings and additional errors, especially as the mode of oriental translation, when exactness is insisted upon, is to render with slavish literality word for word, and particle for particle, even though the result be quite unintelligible. In the case of the Vedas, there are numberless native helps of the greatest consequence. There are extensive commentaries upon every word and sentence; there are native grammars and lexicons of the most minute and elaborate character; and there is a vast Sanscrit literature, affording every opportunity for eliciting the meaning of doubtful passages by comparison with others more plain. In the case of the Zend, however, all was different. The Avesta itself, and that a mere fragment of its original extent, comprised all the existing remains of the tongue. There were no grammars, and the native vocabularies published by Anquetil, not to speak of their doubtful origin, were exceedingly meagre, and contained the grossest blunders. The very alphabet, as furnished by Anquetil, needed considerable cor-

rection. The task to be performed was really found to be that of recovering a lost language with the fewest possible aids. And the accomplishment of this task by Burnouf, Bopp, Rask, and others, deserves to be classed with the most brilliant intellectual achievements of modern times. It takes the same rank in philology with the discovery of Le Verrier's planet in astronomy, as a triumphant demonstration of methods and of principles. It may be said, in fact, to have been during the struggle after this result that scientific philology had its birth.

There are two native translations of the Avesta, which furnish all that remains towards its traditional interpretation. The first is in Pehlevi or Huzvaresh. It is an interesting circumstance, that this same language, though otherwise unknown, is found again upon the coins and monuments of the Sassanides, as decyphered by De Sacy, Olshausen, Mordtmann, and others. This, with other considerations conspiring to the same conclusion, is regarded as determining, approximately at least, the age of the version. The language proves to be intermediate between the old Zend and the later Parsi, (from which was ultimately formed the modern Persian,) but with a strong infusion of Aramæan. This has been thought by some scholars to indicate that the version had its origin in Western Persia, where, from the proximity of Syria, Syrian influence would be most strongly felt. This conclusion, however, is not admitted by Spiegel, who thinks the employment of Aramæan words to have been a kind of learned pedantry, equally prevalent in all sections of the country, and analogous to the use of Arabic words in modern Persian. If this version were but intelligible, its aid would be invaluable, but, unfortunately, almost as little is known of the Pehlevi as the Zend: its paucity of flexions, too, makes it incapable of representing adequately the various tenses and cases of the Zend. It will be more likely to be of assistance in ascertaining the state of the Parsi religion and of the Avesta text, and the current of principles of interpretation at the time of the Sassanides, than in throwing much direct light, for the present at least, upon the meaning of the Avesta itself.

The second native translation is reputed to be about four centuries old, and is in Sanscrit. The name of the translator

is given as Neriosengh. This version is professedly made, not directly from the Zend, but from the Pehlevi version just named. It is much to be regretted that this version, so far as is known at present, at least, is but partial, being confined to the Yaçna, which is but a single division of the Avesta. It has been said to contain a part of the Vendidad; but if so, this has not yet been brought to Europe. Burnouf has made effective use of it in the commentary before us. This version has the advantage of being in a language which is now well understood, and which is equally rich in flexions with the Zend itself. But its value is greatly impaired by the fact that the Sanscrit is so barbarous from the slavish character of the version, as to be in many cases unintelligible without a recourse to the original, and then it represents the Zend only mediately, and contains all the glosses and additions of the Pehlevi from which it was made.

With a good version, accurately corresponding to the original Zend, it would have been comparatively an easy task to fix definitely the meaning, as well as the grammatical value, of all the words and forms; and the construction of a grammar and lexicon for the language would have been very plain work. But with a periphrastic and inexact translation, the case was seriously altered. And the very first step, viz. the determination of the grammatical character of words and forms could only be accomplished with the greatest toil and difficulty. Happily the close relation which was soon discovered to exist between the Zend and the Sanscrit, greatly facilitated this labour. The next step, after ascertaining the grammatical character and relation of each word in the sentence, was to apply to it the vague and general sense of the translation, so that each word might have its proper force, as already determined. The comparison of passages in which these words occurred again, or of the Sanscrit or other languages in which their cognates were preserved, supplying the corrective. Where these methods failed, it was necessary to have recourse to what Burnouf calls a species of divination, but which is now recognized as forming the basis of scientific philology. It is not easy to describe it better than in his own words:—pp. xxvii., etc.

“The problem which I had to solve was this: given a Zend

word, to which the Parsis attribute a signification which a comparison of passages and the study of the languages belonging to the same family neither confirm nor explain, to justify the sense given by the Parsis, or to find another. I commenced by detaching from the word to be translated its formative and suffixed terminations, which I had learned from the grammatical analysis of other words, in which the concurrence of Neriosengh, of Anquetil, and of the comparison of languages, left no doubt. I thus reduced the word, about which there was difficulty, to its simplest elements, or what is called its radical. And once master of this radical, I sought to discover whether the languages with which the Zend has most relation, the Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, the Germanic dialects, etc., bore any traces of it. This method led me, in a great number of instances, to very curious results. Thus I have established that the list of Sanscrit roots contained almost all the radicals whose meaning I sought; but that these radicals were infrequently used, if they were used at all in the classical Sanscrit, and that in order to find them in the language it was necessary to ascend to the Vedas. These old radicals were ordinarily strangers to the Greek and Latin languages, for otherwise I would have recognized them more speedily: some were found only in the Germanic dialects. So that the Zend and Sanscrit radicals, viewed with reference to their employment, naturally divided themselves into classes, the most marked of which only I shall indicate at present: 1. Zend radicals, belonging almost exclusively to the language of the Vedas, or to the most ancient Sanscrit, very rare in Greek and Latin, more common in the Germanic languages. 2. Zend radicals not found in classical Sanscrit, but which being mentioned in the lists of roots, have certainly belonged to the language, and probably to its most ancient form: this numerous class is rare in the learned idioms of Europe. 3. Zend radicals belonging to all ages of the Sanscrit, and common to the Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slavic and Celtic tongues. This class is the most numerous of all, and it may be said to form the common fund of all these languages. 4. Finally, Zend radicals, which I have not been able to refer to any known radical of these different languages, but

which I have almost always found again more or less altered in the Persian dictionary.

“If, as I venture to hope, these results at least in the general are incontestable, they cast new light upon the statistics of one of the richest families of human languages. In the first place they establish the high antiquity of the Zend, of which a considerable part is thus found cotemporary with the primitive dialect of the Vedas. In the second place, they evidently prove that the different languages which compose the Sanscritic family should not be regarded as derived one from the other, but that laying aside the different ages of their culture, which establish among them an appearance of chronological succession, they belong primitively to one and the same fund from which they have drawn in unequal proportions. This inequality so striking in the employment of the radicals is found again in the greater or less development which these radicals have received in the different idioms which have preserved them. Thus a root, which in Sanscrit has remained unproductive, has in Zend given birth to numerous offshoots. Another stopping in the midst of its growth has run through only the first period in one of these idioms, and in another only the last. In a word, whether in derivatives or radicals, nothing is absolutely equal in all these languages, but all set out from an originally common fund and are developed by the same laws.

“This community of origin, of which I met such convincing proofs at every step, emboldened me to attempt an account of a certain number of Zend words, which I saw resist the means of analysis, whose process and results have just been summarily indicated. The comparison of words identical or almost identical in Zend and in Sanscrit, for example, had given me a certain number of laws of permutation of letters; laws, whose certainty is greater, the greater the number of observations upon which they rest, and insofar as they have their ultimate reason in the peculiar constitution of the vocal organs. Zend words which differ from Sanscrit only by the change of one letter, and to which the application of one of these laws could be made with certainty, become the base from which I raised myself to other words, in which the simultaneous application of several laws was necessary. So that I came to explain

Zend words very different in sound from the corresponding Sanscrit terms, and to refer them by the comparative analysis of their elements to the form in which they appear in other idioms. I am far from concealing from myself the inconveniences attached to the exclusive employment of such a method, and I am not ignorant of the dangers of applying it without discretion. For the worth of the rules of permutation is not precisely the same for words which differ completely from each other as for those which are almost alike, and the certainty of these laws decreases in some measure in proportion to the need there is of applying them. But the appreciation of the different circumstances, which can permit or limit their use, belongs to criticism, and I hope it will not be found that I have in this work refused to the reader any of the means of verification which it was my duty to furnish him."

By methods such as this the exhumation of this fossil tongue has been accomplished. And it is a most interesting as well as valuable fact for science, that in philology, as in natural history the fossil remains of what has been extinct for ages, fill chasms and supply missing members in existing species and genera. The recovery of the Zend cannot as yet be considered complete. The general question even is still in dispute among those who have made it their special study, what comparative weight is to be attributed in cases of conflict to traditional aid and to that of the kindred tongues. For some passages of the Avesta, Spiegel does not even venture to propose a translation: in others he speaks with great hesitation and doubt. And when the promised translation of Westergaard appears, who is the champion of dialectic aids as Spiegel of tradition, there will, without doubt, be no small divergence between them. Still the work is essentially done. The language is understood; its structure and general character have been fully exposed; and its relations to the great family of languages within which it is embraced, have been definitely settled.

The Avesta, as we possess it, is a motley jumble of prayers, ritual prescriptions and dogmatic statements, mostly in the form of questions answered by direct address of Ahura-mazda to Zarathustra (Zoroaster.) The Vendidad, the Yaçna, which

is wholly of a liturgical character, and the Vispered, a small collection of invocations, constitute together what is called the Vendidad-Sade. To these are to be added the Yeshts, and a few other ancient fragments. The Bundehesh and other religious writings of the Parsis, manifestly belong to a much later period. Parsi tradition asserts that the books of Zoroaster consisted originally of twenty-one *nosks* or chapters, and that all which now remains is but a fragment of one of these. The destruction of the remainder is charged upon Alexander the Great, who, after translating all that related to astronomy, medicine, and other sciences into Greek, committed them to the flames; the priests subsequently restoring as much as they could from memory. Spiegel thinks it probable that it was first reduced to writing in its present form, during the Bactrian dominion, in the centuries just before or after the birth of Christ. The second part of the Yaçna, which is the only portion written in measure, is supposed to be the oldest. The Vendidad and the first part of the Yaçna, belong to a somewhat later date and perhaps a different place. The Yeshts are later still. The character in which the manuscripts are now written, is not older than the sixth century of the Christian era. The word *Avesta* strictly means "text." Zend, though commonly applied to the language since the time of Anquetil, has properly no such meaning, but denotes translation or commentary, and is the designation of the Pehlevi version. Spiegel proposes to abolish it as the name of the language and substitute Old Bactrian.