

their first beginnings are lost in the uncertainty of the fabulous ages; and every addition they receive is fitted to the credulity of the popular mind ere it can assimilate itself to the mass. The grand cause of their popularity, however, consists in the decidedly human character of their gods; for it is according to the nature of man as a religious creature that he meets with an answering nature in Deity. The gods of the Greek and Roman were human beings like themselves, and influenced by a merely human favoritism. The devotion of their worshippers was but a mere reverential species of friendship; and there are perhaps few men of warm imaginations who have become acquainted in early life with the *Æneid* of Virgil, or the *Telemaque* of Fenelon, who are not enabled to conceive, in part at least, how such a friendship could be entertained. The Scandinavian mythology, with the equally barbarous mythologies of the East, however different in other respects, agree in this main principle of popularity, the human character of their gods. The Virgin Mother and the many saints of the Romish Church, with its tangibilities of pictures and images, form an indispensable compensation for its lack of the evangelical principle; and it is undoubtedly to the well-defined and easily-conceived character of Mohammed that Allah owes the homage of the unreckoned millions of the East.

Now, it is according to reason and analogy that the true religion should be formed, if I may so express myself, on a popular principle; that it should be adapted, with all the fitness which constitutes the argument of design, to that human nature which must be regarded as the production of the common author of both. It is indispensable that the religion which God reveals should be suited to the human nature which God has made. Artificial religions, with