

fallacious as ventriloquism. In pagan Greece and Rome, their historians, except perhaps Tacitus, were even over credulous on the subject of polytheistic religion. And so in modern times, previous to the last century, the historian was usually the supporter of revealed truth. But the talented yet anomalous Bayle, in that manual of irreligion, his *Critical Dictionary*, led the way in converting facts into an engine against Christianity. Voltaire and others learned the lesson, which was perfected by Gibbon and Hume. So often, however, have their sophistries and cavils been exposed, that it is only the unwary who are now entrapped. The great mass of historical literature also, your Rollin and Ramsay, Müller, Schlegel, Heeren, Goldsmith, Smollet, Russell, Turner, Robertson, and a multitude of others, are favorable to religion; although a Von Rotteck, in the costume of a baptized infidel, rejects biblical history as fabulous. Religion, therefore, need have no fears from her alliance with History; and, indeed, she may hope for many a rich harvest of illustration and confirmation from future researches; for there are other papyri to be unrolled, other hieroglyphics to be deciphered, and other Sir William Joneses and Champollions to be raised up.

Another most sacrilegious perversion of polite literature consists in clothing immorality and irreligion in the vestal robe of poetry. I say sacrilegious; for poetry is the natural handmaid of pure religion. Hence it was chosen by the Holy Ghost as the appropriate language of prophets and other inspired men. But it is the appropriate language of all strong emotions, and may, therefore, be employed for giving an attractive dress to immoral and irreligious sentiments, as well as to those which are virtuous and holy. Accordingly, so wide has been this misapplication of the poetic talent, that in almost every age its highest efforts have been consecrated to