

**EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY AND
EGYPTIAN CHRISTIANITY: WITH
THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE
OPINIONS OF MODERN
CHRISTENDOM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649031580

Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity: With Their Influence on the Opinions of
Modern Christendom by Samuel Sharpe

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SAMUEL SHARPE

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OF MODERN CHRISTENDOM.

BY
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AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF EGYPT."



LONDON:
JOHN RUSSELL SMITH,
36, SOHO SQUARE.
1863.

LONDON:
BOWDEN AND BRAUN, PRINTERS,
13, PRINCES STREET, LITTLE QUEEN STREET, W.C.



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PREFACE.

THE study of error is often only a little less important than the study of truth. The history of the human mind in its progress from ignorance towards knowledge, should tell us the mistakes into which it has sometimes wandered, as well as its steps in the right path. We turn indeed with more pleasure to review the sources from which the world has gained any of its valuable truths, in the hope of there finding some further knowledge which may be equally valuable; while for our errors, so long as we are unwilling to acknowledge them to be errors, we too often shut our eyes, and refuse to be shewn their origin.

The Emperor Marcus Antoninus, in his philosophical work, mentions the several tutors and friends from whom he gained his good habits, and those views of life which he chiefly valued; but though we must suppose that he was aware of some failings in his character, he does not tell us to which of his companions he owed them. And so it is with the benefits of civilization, arts, and religion; and also with the evils of superstition. Modern Europe readily acknowledges how many benefits it received from Rome, from Greece, and from Judea, but has been willing to forget how much of its superstition came from Egypt.

When Christians shall at length acknowledge that many of those doctrines which together now make up orthodoxy, or the religion of the majority, as distinguished from the simple religion which Jesus taught and practised, when they shall acknowledge that many of them are so many

sad and lamentable errors, then, and not till then, will they seek to know their origin, and enquire from which of the several branches of Paganism they sprung. They will then see that most of the so called Christian doctrines, that have no place in the New Testament, reached Europe from Egypt, through Alexandria.

The aim of the following pages is not only to explain the Mythology of Egypt, but to show the extraordinary readiness with which its religious opinions were copied by the neighbouring nations, particularly by the Greeks and Romans. In matters of religion, the more ignorant part of those two nations bowed in reverence to the greater earnestness and seriousness of the Egyptians, who were at the same time so remarkably rich in mythological invention. Pagan Greece received from Egypt all that part of its religion which related to a future state of rewards and punishments, and though Christian Greece was for a short time too intelligent to take the whole of the Egyptian mysticism and superstition, yet Christian Rome, from which our own opinions were chiefly learned, had no such hesitation, and was at all times a most willing pupil.

These facts may receive some explanation from two known laws of the human mind. First, among religious persons the fear of doing wrong makes them more afraid of falling into scepticism than into credulity; and those who believe more, whether they believe wisely or unwisely, are apt to think themselves on safer ground than those who believe less. In the case of a proposition in science, when the arguments for it and against it seem equal, the reasoner withholds his assent; but in the case of a religious dogma or article of faith, the mind in its weakness

fancies it safer to accept it than to reject it. The reasoning powers are in part overruled by the feelings. In religious controversy, both parties, the believer and the doubter, usually feel that the reproach of disbelief, which it is in the power of one to throw against the other, hits a much harder blow than the reproach of credulity and superstition, which is all that the other can fling back again. It is only among irreligious persons and scoffers that the feelings strengthen the other side, and that disbelief can shut the door against argument by an equally blind and unfair claim to superiority. Hence arises the power which superstitious and complicated systems of religions have of spreading themselves, and hence the weakness of good sense when setting up its simple truths against the encroachments of such many-sided errors.

Secondly, earnestness and sincerity are the most powerful helps by which we enforce our opinions and convert our neighbours. And there was far more real conviction of the truth of their religion among the Egyptians than among their Greek and Roman neighbours. Hence the opinions of the more ignorant lived and spread, while the opinions held with hollowness and insincerity by the more enlightened died away.

The following are the principal doctrines which are most certainly known to be common to Egyptian Mythology and modern orthodoxy, as distinguished from the religion of Jesus. They include the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, and the atonement by vicarious sufferings.

1st. That the creation and government of the world is not the work of one simple and undivided Being, but of one God, made up of several persons. This is the doctrine of Plurality in Unity.