

Downfall of Paganism.

Viewed in any of the various lights in which it may be contemplated, the downfall of Paganism in the Roman Empire, is one of the most remarkable occurrences recorded on the pages of history. To propagate a new belief among a people who have little or no religion of their own, or where perpetual change of government & mutability of public opinion, preclude the possibility of permanency in existing forms, may be comparatively an easy matter. Enthusiasm may operate so powerfully, and the terror of the sword be so great, as to revolutionise the public sentiment of a weak and fickle people. But to subvert entirely the fundamental principles of a superstitious religion, which has existed for ages, unaltered, can be attributed only to divine interposition, & the most miraculous success of human ingenuity. This remark is peculiarly applicable to the Romans. Their government, laws, and institutions of every kind were based upon their religion. It was interwoven with their manners & feelings. Influenced alike the senator & the peasant. Operated as well upon private as public life. Determined the policy of state. Directed the movements of armies. Decided the fate of battles, & was the ultimate tribunal to which every action was referred. It found nourishment &

supported in the principles of their Philosophers, the
writings of their Historians & the songs of their poets.
The prolific imaginations of the latter, peopled the
universe with fabulous divinities. There was no
grove but had its presiding deity. No Sylvan retreat
but had its Fauns & Satyrs. No rocky cave, nor
shady cove where the winds did not reside, or some
charming Syren sing. No river but had its Gods
and its nymphs.