Trajan, requesting to know how the Christians of  
Bithynia were to be treated. He then describes his  
conduct towards them. “An anonymous libel was exhibited with a catalogue of names of persons, who yet  
declared that they were not Christians then, nor ever  
had been; and they repeated after me an invocation of  
the gods, and of YOUR IMAGE (Trajan’s) *which for the  
purpose I had ordered to be brought with the statues of  
the deities. They performed sacred rites with wine and  
frankincense, and cursed Christ;* none of which things, I  
am told, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do.  
On this account I dismissed them. Others named by  
an informer, first affirmed, and then denied the charge  
of Christianity; declaring that they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so, some three years ago,  
others still longer, some even twenty years ago. ALL  
OF THEM WORSHIPPED YOUR IMAGE, *and the statues of  
the gods, and also cursed Christ*.”  
 The compulsory worship of the Roman emperor,  
which stood in the earliest ages as the great obstacle to  
Christianity, at length reappears. It is not local, but  
like the Roman empire, wide as the habitable earth.  
The features of the last great rebellion have all appeared  
already, they are all connected with the brilliant period  
of Roman history. The worship of the emperor, the  
adoration of his statue and the mark, were all well  
known in John’s day.  
 And lest it should appear that madness so great can  
never return, I give an instance close on our own times:—  
 “Already it (the French philosophy) was drawing  
people back to the most degrading superstitions; to the  
ceremonies of paganism. *Idols* had been forged called  
“Liberty,” and “Equality”; France offered incense to  
them, and bent the knee before *idols of stone and wood*.  
The trunk of a tree represented *the god Mirabeau*.  
This trunk had been cut into the form of a statue [as