

whole, it is a fresh and most important topic for the earnest mental enterprise of some writer on the Christian Evidences. But extensive, important, and fascinating as it is, and though there is no want of facts and arguments, we are limited in this mode of presenting it, to a reasonable brevity, and therefore, instead of going minutely over the whole field of enquiry, must look only at the chief points; and instead of giving quotations in proof of what is asserted, must simply state what we believe are facts, and dogmatically draw our conclusions, leaving the readers, whether they doubt or believe, to investigate fully for themselves. Indeed, we would rather provoke personal inquiry, for we are well assured that no one who will candidly and diligently set himself to the study, and draw the contrast, but will arrive at the conclusion, not simply that Christianity, with its whole offspring of piety, philosophy, and civilization, is pre-eminent over all kinds and degrees of heathenism, but, that it is absolutely necessary for the true and the best, physical and temporal, spiritual and eternal, interests of mankind. As the sun in its gorgeous majesty confers more blessings on this world, than all the stars that gem the night sky; and as by day their light is unseen because of a greater, and it is only in the night, when there is no sun, that their lustre is perceived; so, Christianity rises on the moral horizon of the world, and as it ascends to its meridian altitude, the systems of men, which might shine when they had no such competitor, now sink away, and are obscured as lights that were, but whose glory is outshone. The religious systems of the pagan world were as the torches of men, kindled at the fires of the natural mind, but this is "THE LIGHT, THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and which is kindled at the source of the Godhead. The others were the twinklings of unaided or distorted reason, but this is the effulgence of divinity, the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness.

PART I.

THE FIRST PART OF THE SUBJECT IS, THE RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CIVILISATION OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN; OR THE EVIDENCE THAT REASON ALONE IS NOT A COMPETENT INSTRUCTOR AND GUIDE FOR MAN.

Under this part we consider

1st. The moral and spiritual characteristics of the various systems of ancient religion. Undoubtedly the first religion was divine in its origin.