

is to raise man to a higher condition than that to which he can raise himself.

(1.) As to the suitableness of the Bible to mankind, in the various stages of human progress, this can easily be shown. We teach children by the simplest means within our power. By means of pictures, we convey ideas to their minds; and every wise instructor refers them as largely as possible to objects, instead of loading their memories with words, to which they can attach no very definite conception. The language of symbol, in a word, is employed instead of abstract expressions. Their progress is gradual; from the teaching of sense, to the unrefined exercise of the powers of the mind.

Now, this is precisely the course adopted in the Scriptures. While men were in a low state of civilization—that is, when they might be described as children,—the teaching of sense was adopted for their improvement. Spiritual thought was embodied in material forms. The understanding and affections of the Jews were appealed to through the senses. Their religion was a religion of rites. The holiness of God's character was impressed upon their minds by a complicated ceremonial. The purity demanded from man was taught by numerous washings, and purgings, and sacrifices. Their gorgeous ritual conveyed some idea of the majesty of God. The miraculous portions of their economy filled them with a sense of his wisdom, and awed them by an exhibition of his power. And their whole training is that of gradual development from the state of children to that of full-grown men; from the teaching of symbol to that of spiritual thought.

As it detracts nothing from the excellencies of a great man, that his methods are imitated and spoiled in and by imitation by others, so it in no degree lessens the value of the Bible that it has been parodied and caricatured by the Koran, nor does the existence of this pretended sacred book, as the source of authority in religious matters among the Mohammedans, take away the peculiarity from Christianity, that it is "the religion of the book."

(2.) One other apparently exceptional case may be referred to, before showing what importance attaches to the special view that we are at present taking of the Scriptures,—the case of the Hindoos, and their shastres or sacred volumes. But the character of these, so far as known to Europeans, at once removes them out of the class of exceptions, by making it evident that they do not in any proper sense occupy the peculiar relation of the Bible to religion. For, (1) their prodigious size unfits them for being the guides of an ignorant people, unable to find time or means for their perusal. (2.) The system, or rather endless systems of polytheism, which they inculcate, virtually leave the character of his religion to the choice and ability of each individual. (3.) While the Bible and science, when fairly examined and properly understood, on no single occasion contradict each other, the absurdities of the shastres are so numerous and astounding, that their wild contradictions become evi-

dent under a single ray of the lamp of truth. But a full consideration of their character would occupy more space than we can at present devote to the subject. On some future occasion, we hope to make it abundantly plain that their existence in no degree lessens the truth of our assertion that Christianity, and Christianity alone, has a right to be termed "the religion of the book."

II. What results follow from this peculiarity of the Christian religion? Many. We may show (1) for example, that on this may be founded a very strong argument that Christianity or, (taking the matter more generally, and so as to include the whole from the beginning), the Bible is from God. We may, for the sake of convenience, put the case in the form of a question, and ask; Does man need a book revelation, in addition to the law and teaching of conscience, in order that he may form a clear conception, not merely of the existence, but of the character of God, and of his own position and duties relative to God? Does man, in a word, require teaching from without, in order to the proper development of his moral faculties? Now, in the first place, it may be taken for granted, that everything created, at least in the present circumstances of the world, is capable of improvement by cultivation. Man was placed upon the earth 'to dress it and to keep or cultivate it.' Nothing will improve of itself. But man, the lord of the lower creation, and possessing a nature higher in the scale than aught else earthly, is able to better whatever is fitted for his use, and to destroy what is obnoxious to him.

Man, likewise, is capable of improvement; but, more especially viewing him as a moral and accountable being, this improvement can only be derived from a Being higher than himself, even as he can cultivate all that is lower than himself. Certain knowledge is needful for the advance of man, which he has certainly never acquired by the exercise of his own powers. We meet with abundance of intellectual development among heathens. We find admirable moral precepts scattered throughout their writings. But they have all been ignorant of the true character of God and the true duties and wants of man; and with reference to moral improvement, the first chapter of the Romans is the best commentary upon their retrograde progress in this respect. The question, then, is, what are the necessary means suited to the constitution of man, in order to his restoration as a moral and accountable being? For it is in these respects, mainly, that he differs from creatures lower in the scale of creation. Evidently, whatever the means may be, they must be such as will bear upon this, his character; and, therefore, they must address themselves to those distinguishing external endowments of man, through which his character is formed and influenced. Now, the most marked external endowment possessed by man, is the power of using *written language*.

(To be Continued.)