

survive his usefulness. On the last day of his life, his plans of duty were arranged and partially executed, and he was in the midst of the prosecution of them, when the hand of death wassuddenly laid on him. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing:"—*Com.*

Original Articles.

REASON OR REVELATION:

OR, THE RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CIVILIZATION OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN, CONTRASTED WITH CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LEGITIMATE CONSEQUENCES.

(Continued from Number 11, page 170.)

PART II.—No. V.

We proceed now to the SECOND PART of the subject, which is, to bring out the contrast between ancient Heathenism and Christianity and its legitimate consequences, by shewing the infinite superiority, in all respects, of the latter over the former.

To a certain extent this has been already, indirectly, done, and the intelligent reader must have been making the contrast in his own mind as he proceeded, but it is still necessary that it be made a distinct part of our subject, and rendered more apparent and prominent. It has been shown what the state of the world was, when, with one exception, the nations "did not like to retain God in their knowledge;" and when they were untaught and unguided by divine revelation; and this truth is taken for granted as established, that, as mankind religiously, morally, and socially were debased, and degenerated when without revelation, therefore, judging from experience, it is absolutely essential that they have some directory from heaven. Maintaining this necessity, Christianity, as asserting its revelatory character, and as the last and perfected system divulged by the Son of God himself, becomes so much the more evidently and practically "worthy of all acceptance," as its principles stand the test of reason, and its announcements and promises satisfy, stimulate, and gladden the highest and holiest aspirations of man, and its whole utility universally stands the test of experience. Christianity can do, for it has done, what all other systems have failed to accomplish, and that is proof, if not of its divinity, at least of its superiority.—On this ground it can be argued that, as man must have a religion, he should choose the best, and therefore choose Christianity, because it is the best.

But while we are willing to meet the rationalist or utilitarian on such low ground as that, and make him—for he cannot help himself—confess to its supremacy, yet far be it from us to take our stand for Christianity on its temporal aspects, and its mere superiority to other religious systems, whether ancient or modern. From the success which it has attended it; its first rapid progress; the prejudices which it engendered and removed; the hostilities which it encountered, endured and survived; and the civilisation which, by its principles and laws, has been given to many parts of the earth, we have strong evidence of its Divine origin; that it is God-given, God-sent, and God-supported and blessed, and that it has a power and vitality invulnerable by time, or change, or opposition.—but it is when its nature is examined that then it stands erect, and high, and bright, and pure above every other system, and discloses the evidence of its Heavenly origin, its inspiration, and its perpetual adaptation to man in every place and phase of his being; and when thus viewed, reason must bow to it as declaring the wisdom of God. We can readily conceive it possible for a wise man to frame a system of what he considers to be moral duty, and which may be suitable for one people, and for a short period; but, as nations differ from each other in manners, customs and religion, the system which might be applicable for one would be unsuitable for another, and thus the sage of one country, would be esteemed a fool, in propounding his system to another:—and further, as every nation, sooner or later, changes in its character, relative position, and intercourse, it must be obvious that no man, of even the most exalted intellectual capacity and foresight, could make a code of morals and a religion which would suit all nations equally well, which would benefit them all, and which, in every place and age of the world, would be as practicable and valuable as at

another. This, reason and experience teach us, is a fixed truth, that unaided reason cannot make a uniform universal religion;—and even Moses, Divinely-inspired as he was, did not attempt it. But if we find a religion adapted for all the world, then we say that "a greater than Moses is here," and that it must be divine in its author, and consequently, divine in its authority. And such is Christianity, the Gospel of the Son of God. It claims to be for all, qualified to bless all, and capable of surviving in every clime, in every nation, and to the latest period of this world's duration.

In drawing the contrast we shall consider the universal adaptation of Christianity to the SPIRITUAL, MORAL, and PHYSICAL conditions of man.

1st. THE UNIVERSAL ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF MAN. By this is meant its adaptability to him as a being unable intuitively to know, or find the true religion; yet feeling his need of it, and its fitness for him in every circumstance, and in every condition; and by which he may be taught to know and worship the true God, and be brought from ignorance, superstition, and degradation; and from the prison-house of Satan's slaves to the liberty of the sons of God; and to the enjoyment of the clear shining of Heaven's own orb of Spiritual Illumination—the Sun of Righteousness—and by which the naturally-darkened understanding shall become radiant with its glory.

We have already shown the nature and consequences of pagan religions, and it must surely be granted that they were not adapted to benefit men, and the proof is, that they never did so. But Christianity is not simply different from, but directly opposed to all past systems. Were it to aim at making a universal uniformity of conventional customs, and habits, and government, and to accord with the natural corrupt reason and disposition; were it to come down to the level of man, and be a thing like himself, instead of drawing him up to its own high eminence, it would utterly fail. It is on these rocks that men have struck when they became religion-makers. They attempted too much in relation to what was social, and accommodated in what was moral to what was immoral; sanctioned vice rather than reformed it; tried to control rather than remove it; and thus, whenever a change took place in the government, customs, or intercourse of the nation where such religion had been established, that religion either perished at once, or was altered to suit new opinions, new times, and a new political and social state of things. The religions of men are changed by men to suit circumstances. the religion of Christ changes men, and controls circumstances into a conformity to its spirit and designs. Mohammedanism is an example of the former. It has been long upheld, and with a degree of unvarying regularity, but the lands in which it is not one whit more advanced to-day, under its influence, than they were a thousand years ago; and because it has been, so far, unchanging, we can argue nothing from that in its favor, for, for many centuries there has scarcely been the least constitutional or social change in the countries in which it predominates, as, for instance, in Turkey and Persia. They have stood still, and consequently so has the religion.—But when once—as will be ere long—they are either subverted by other powers, or by revolutions have the governments popularised, and human intercourse and commerce become more extended from without and within, Islamism must then fall, and be crushed among the wrecks of former delusions, idolatries and deceptions. But this is the peculiarity of Christianity—its wisdom, its power, and the spirit of its eternity—that it is silent on governments, customs, and habits, and aims only at stamping on the world great principles for belief and practice. It aims not at the rule of a nation, in the first place, but at the subjection of a man's own heart. It aims at the man, not at the mass. It divests itself, too, of every ceremonial by which it may be bound down to place, and to time. The Jew thought that it was at Jerusalem where he could only especially worship—that was the great fixed locality for his God; the Samaritan thought that it was on Mount Gerizim; the heathen thought that it could only be in their temples, and before their gods; but this is the great spiritual truth which Christianity unfolds, the truth that the wisdom of the world never could search out, the truth which liberates man from all ritual bondage, the glorious truth which brings him always to his God, and makes every spot a temple, and every house a house of prayer; it is the main truth, the first principle in our religion, that "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" and thus it frees itself from place and visible objects, and draws