

has been of the most beneficial kind for the happiness of man. For, the cold inhumanity, which considered war, not as the greatest scourge of the human race, but as the prime business and most exquisite gratification of life ;—the restless ambition, passion for martial achievements, and ferocious rapacity, which produced the most unprovoked aggressions ;—the implacable and vindictive spirit with which wars were carried on, and which consequently, for many ages, overwhelmed the world with bloodshed, ruin, and desolation ;—that relentless cruelty, which condemned the unhappy captive to perpetual slavery, or an ignominious death (sometimes by torture) by the hand of the executioner ;—the desolations of whole countries, together with the utter destruction of flourishing and opulent cities, and that relentless cruelty which spared not from massacre and extermination the unoffending female, the helpless infant, and the decrepitude of old age ;—these are outrages, of which we seldom, if ever, hear in the wars carried on by professing Christians, though nothing was more frequent among the most polished nations of antiquity, and those most celebrated for their private and public virtue. (Such were the *pagan* notions of virtue.)

“ It is the spirit of Christianity alone, which moderating the views of sovereigns and states, and directing the measures of government to the legitimate objects of its institution, viz.—the promotion of the welfare of society and the preservation of its moral interests,—leads to an equitable consideration of the rights and independance of other nations, and to an unremitted regard to the well-being of the community over which it presides. It is the spirit of just and reasonable policy, which inspires rulers with a desire of fulfilling the intentions of God, who appointed them *as a terror to evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well* ; teaching them to promote, upon general and permanent principles, the interests of every class of society, and to ground the confidence of power on the observance of the just claims of every department.”* Hence, the ancient fierceness of despotism, where such a form still exists, has been limited and assuaged. Those arbitrary laws, and that perversion and corruption of justice, which prevailed at Athens, and especially at Rome, during the latter periods of the republic, have disappeared from the codes of Christian states especially in our own country. These great civil blessings, it may be safely affirmed, are in a great degree owing to the influence which the spirit of Christianity has had on our civil constitution, (with which it is so closely and essentially interwoven, that it is part of the common law of England,†) on the temper of

* Dr. Gray's connection of Sacred and Profane Literature, vol. 1. p. 219.

† Blackstone's Commentaries, by Professor Christian, vol. 4, p. 59, and note (5.)