

anity. From the beginning to the end of his life, there is not one noble, generous sentiment expressed. The highest pitch of virtue is to the following effect: "If I had got into Parliament, I might have been of service to myself, and my friends, and perhaps to my country." Let him have the praise of urbanity of manners, of rendering himself agreeable to his friends by his talents and his wit, of paying an attention to his relatives, and expressing himself with kindness and sympathy to them in his letters. But if we pass from these inferior things, to the grand principles of conduct, which reason and revelation conspire to enjoin, we then see a man utterly destitute of all principles of religion, and regardless of an hereafter; discovering no anxiety for the happiness of mankind; eagerly pursuing literary fame; intoxicated with learned pride; panting after the admiration of the great world; and constantly endeavouring to secure to himself as large a portion of gratification as he possibly could.

In his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, he always sneers at Christianity, and endeavours to bring it into contempt. It was at that time the fashion among the literati and philosophers on the Continent, and in France especially, whose praise he coveted and secured thereby. When he saw the effects of the French revolution, and the destruction which followed both of Church and State, he was dreadfully confounded; and, in one of his letters, makes a kind of apology for his conduct.—"Christianity, (says he) at the period to which my history refers, was a *new* religion; it is now *old*; and the same motives which led me to oppose it then, would have influenced me to defend it now."* Such are his ideas; and, according to this rule, systems are to be judged of, not as being true or false, good or bad; but as being new or old. Could any thing more unprincipled be exposed to public view? In short, I never read a life where the hero was more absorbed in self, and felt less concern for the happiness of his fellow-creatures; reverence for God is entirely out of the question. Such publications as this, shew us the hearts of infidels. They lead us into their tempers, their views and pursuits, and teach us fully what manner of men they are.

The result is glorious for the gospel of Christ. When we read the life of a poor disciple of Jesus, perhaps a labouring man, we see him mourning over evil thoughts and dispositions; aiming

* Is this Mr. Gibbon?—the polite and famous Gibbon? Observe his real motives. During the reign of infidelity in France, the popular breeze influences him to oppose Christianity and join the laugh, ridicule, and wild rationalism of infidelity; but soon as religion becomes a little more respectable in society, Mr. Gibbon is prepared to change, not his principles, but his voice, for the sake of popularity.—For the fame of infidels, when infidelity is popular, he writes against religion; and when religion is popular he bows to the shrine and writes in its favour.