

From Society, generally; let us ascend to the influence of Christianity on the religion and government of states and countries.

Wherever the Gospel has spread, we have the most satisfactory evidence of its mighty efficacy as a means of improving the present condition of man. Polytheism and idolatry, together with human sacrifices, and all their attendant cruelties and profligate immoralities, have been abolished. And as soon as nations and governments became Christian, they were actuated by that mild, benevolent, and generous spirit, which the early believers had displayed even in the midst of calumny, insult and persecution. Those princes who embraced Christianity, became more humble than their heathen predecessors; blended Christian morality with their civil institutes; and transcribed into their political codes the humanity and benevolence inspired by their religion. Fewer Kings were murdered, and fewer revolutions took place in Christian than in Pagan states. It is the power of the Gospel alone, that has greatly reformed the laws of nations, and has diminished the horrors of war. That it has not hitherto been sufficient to banish unjust wars from the earth, is true; and, as an acute writer has forcibly remarked, "it would have been wonderful if it had, seeing it has never yet been *cordially* embraced by the majority, nor perhaps by the preponderating part of any nation. Nevertheless it *has* had its influence :"* and that influence

is killed, let his friends prosecute for a wanton and unprovoked murder. I knew a gentleman, who had fought many duels, receive a challenge for a trifling offence; he made an apology, which the challenger did not accept of, but insisted on a meeting. When the challenged went to the ground, he carried a paper, stating the offence, his offer of an apology, his private resolution not to fire, with a direction to his friends to prosecute for murder, if he should fall. The challenger fired without effect; his antagonist did not fire, but prosecuted him at law, and caused him to be imprisoned. Though the challenger was thus punished for firing, it is probable he would have escaped unpunished if he had killed his opponent, as juries are in the habit of perjuring themselves in support of this practice. They find a man guilty of a breach of the peace who sends a challenge, or fires without hitting, but acquit him if he kills in consequence of that challenge! Their usual verdict, that the survivor killed in his own defence, is *generally false*, because self-preservation seldom requires a man to kill his antagonist. Where the combatants are supposed to fire at the same instant, each stands as good a chance of escaping where he reserves his shot, as where he discharges it, provided his opponent is not aware of his intention. He defends his honour by standing his adversary's fire, and his reserved shot protects his own life and that of his antagonist. He, therefore, who unnecessarily kills, has no claim to impunity on the plea of self-defence, and juries who urge that plea are absolutely perjured. The juryman, however, has precedents for disregarding his oath: most juries perjured themselves in the same way, and he is satisfied, as if he was not accountable to God, and to society for his perjury, and for the evils which generally arise from the encouragement of duels." Dr. Ryan's History of the Effects of Religion on Mankind, pp. 121. 122.

* Fuller's Gospel its own Witness, p. 134.