

evils. The defect, professors, who, all the use of strong texts of the gospel. I, consequently, been perpetuated, gospel been truly texts been rightly could never have quors; and, con- h, would indeed as and fatal con- as to the world, a justifiable and

total abstinence t. To this pre- the first place be th of that re- we should have ral evils of every ppiness, even in that we should s which are con- every institution gracious design, rnal destination, rveserving of sup- rrcely be denied, or indifference, ing the intem- als, comfort to employment of e. These advan- ly observed, are olent Being who from abstinence mode or degree, s not, of course, or even hinted regard to Bible, evolent institu- beneficial ope- laudably found, vindicating the eed vindication a negative par-

ticular in their favour, that they are not endeavouring to effect, nor are their operations producing, any injury or evil whatever to any of the interests either of individuals or society. They are neither desiring or endeavouring to undermine or alter the laws or the constitutions of governments, or to effect any change in creeds or institutions, formularies or ministrations of religion; or in the least degree to disturb any ecclesiastical or civil regulations; nor can it, indeed, be said that the effects of their operations are ever of an injurious description in any respect whatever. In this particular they are singularly superior to most other institutions of a merely human character. Their operations are for *good*, and the results of them are for *good* alone. They do not, it is true, profess to be religious societies, in the strict sense of the term, but while instrumental in effecting a great moral reform, they are also thereby directly subserving the paramount interests of religion. The advocates and friends of this reform know as assuredly, and will as readily acknowledge as those who refrain from assisting them, that no device or operations of men can, of themselves, be available to change the heart, or radically alter the principles or conduct with regard to religion; but they do contend, and have good reason to do so, that abstinence societies, through the means and operations they employ, may be instrumental, and have been so, in innumerable instances, in placing individuals under more favourable circumstances than they previously were, for attending on the ministrations of religion, and for imbibing its spirit, and being influenced by its precepts. By abandoning the use of intoxicating drink, an individual is just so far complying with the divine exhortations and commands, which say, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord;" "Cease to do evil, learn to do well;" "Forsake the foolish and go in the way of understanding," with numerous others of a similar description. It has already been shown that one good effect of the abstinence reform has been a more general and serious attendance on the ministrations of religion. By forsaking this one dangerous and injurious practice of using strong liquors, very many have been led to abandon other fascinating evils and ways of transgression so generally attending it; and, while acting in this way, have been met with the invitations and encouragements of mercy, have been graciously drawn to read and to hear the message of salvation, and ultimately been brought to experience its regenerating and saving power. In such cases, the gracious promises are realized, which say, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy;" and again, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But a further objection is urged against the societies, with regard to their pledge, which some of our opponents say, or seem to insinuate, is also of an anti-scriptural nature. To this it may be answered, that if a person has found any part of his conduct to be dangerous and hurtful, he certainly ought to abandon it; and previous to doing so, a resolution has in reality always been formed in his mind. Surely, then, there can be nothing improper in putting it in writing, and signing it, even in the presence of others