

## IS THIS ENLIGHTENED PIETY ?

BY AN INQUIRER.

There is no subject more essential than the nature, duties, acts, and benefits of true piety. There is none more lucidly and authoritatively stated in the Scriptures. There is not one more allied to man's happiness, and the amplest extension of religion in the world. It follows, therefore, that in no field of observation is regret more unexpected and pungent than when a spiritual observer is met by spiritual delinquency. Knowing man's infirmities of mind and body, I readily make every allowance for human inaptitude, newness of christian duties to a recent convert, lawful domestic and other anxieties, and, sometimes, scantiness of means and leisure; yet the essential matter being so plain that a "fool" need not err, and Divine light and grace ever being accessible to the assiduous believer in Christ, I have several serious questions to ask.

The illumination and conversion of a man are, by the Spirit, the effect of Scripture reading, or of instruction from the Scriptures, and the gradual enlargement of his mind, and the invigoration of it, can be justly attributed only to the same cause. Scripture truth has removed barbarian superstition, and given to classic minds light and beauty; while its tendency is not only to make the soul the seat of light, but the tongue the publisher of God's will and mercy. When, after all, a professor of religion week after week, and year after year, makes the same worn-out remarks on the Scriptures, as if he had read nothing, learned nothing, since he last spoke, is his an ardent, devotional, improving Bible piety ?

Genuine religion is love, and I have been accustomed to think of love as being warm, willing, and communicative; rich in its thoughts, hopes, trials, wishes, and joys, notwithstanding the difference in natural temperament; confident of the benefits it confers, and even voluble on certain occasions in praising Him from whom it came. The formal and freezing communications of some professors have surprised me; and they were precisely the same as they uttered ten years ago, in words and tone, as if the love of God in them were not a plastic grace, but adamant, and could not be expanded; or as if the Christian's words were stereotype, without change, diversity, or fire: so that twelve months before you go to a meeting again with them you know what they will say. Is this an edifying, affectionate piety? Such a spirit of mannerism and monotony would not be reckoned very affectionate even by a shanty fire-side.

I know not that there is a more unshackled principle than the spirit of prayer, taught by the Bible, by providence, by experience, and given and