

onable. But in forming our views of religion, there is a danger of no trifling magnitude against which it becomes us to be specially on our guard. While the great majority of human pursuits have little connection with the heart of man or his conduct in life, it is the professed and leading design of religion to control the will and regulate the conduct. Now, speculations on the theory or abstract system of religion, have a natural tendency to induce a forgetfulness of this great fact, and to make us lose sight of the grand concern which each of us has, in the sublime realities of religion. We view the interesting doctrines of christianity merely as parts of a theological system, and attend not to the practical results which they are intended to produce in actual life.

Habits of beneficence while they enable us to form proper conceptions of the actual character and state of man, enable us also to see the admirable adaptation of the Gospel to his natural condition. Long did philosophy brood over the miseries of her children, and long did she amuse herself in devising schemes for their relief. In the religion of JESUS we find what all "the wisdom of the world" could never disclose,—a remedy for all the diseases of our nature, a balm for the bleeding heart, a substitute for the want of human comforts, a pillow for the bed of death. Its treasures enrich the cottage of the poor. Its vivifying energy communicates new life to the decrepitude of age. Its consolations support the fainting spirit when surrounding objects can no longer charm. Its hopes irradiate the vale of death.

The solitary inquirer may form just, and accurate, and scriptural views of religion. He may trace with correctness its leading features, and mark its discriminate excellencies. He may compare it with what he knows of the actual condition of man, and descry the traces of divine wisdom which it displays. But it is the man of active benevolence alone who brings it to the test of experiment, who sees it in actual use, and witnesses its practical application. He discovers the influence of real religion elevating