

ply their ambitious schemes under the mask of its name; and to this cause mainly is to be attributed all the calamities which have arisen under the pretence of promoting it. As to the other disorders still existing in christian countries which it has failed to rectify, they have arisen not from christianity, but in opposition to it; and where they have not been fully extirpated, they have been much counteracted in their baneful effect. It is the design of this article to trace all that is good in christian society to the operation of christian principles, and to demonstrate that the evil can in no sense be attributed to it, since it is its natural and professed design to remove it.

This subject may properly be divided into two parts.

First, A view of what christianity has actually done.

Secondly, What it shall accomplish by its ultimate triumph.

I. It is upon individuals in the private walk of life, that the efficacy of the christian system has been first practically felt, in reclaiming the profane and immoral to sobriety, justice and devotion. Having been made free from sin, and become the servants of God, they have their fruit unto holiness; and after a patient continuance in well doing, they are cheered in death with the hope of eternal life.

It extends its blessed influence to the individual in every rank and station of life. Is the christian favoured with temporal blessings?—he is instructed to enjoy them, and to distribute to the necessities of those who are in want. Are his circumstances contracted?—it preserves him from repining. It not only produces contentment, but it confers a certain dignity and authority which the greatest can never acquire without it. The christian is enabled to glory even in tribulation, and cordially to approve all the divine dispensations towards him. He knows that he is the object of a divine love, and what trouble can overwhelm, or fear discompose him who is the object of such a love? What earthly power can make such a man unhappy? Will you take away his riches?—his treasure is in heaven. Will you banish him from home?—his country is above. Will you bind him in chains?—his conscience, his spirit, his affections, are all free. Will you destroy his body?—his body shall be raised incorruptible at the last day, and his soul will immediately return unto God who gave it.

This is the natural effect of christian principles; and we may appeal to history and experience for the actual results of their operation upon mankind. What does sacred history record? Paul thus

speaks "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end, everlasting life,"\* "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."† and Peter thus alludes to the reformation wrought among the Jewish convicts in Pontus, Gallatia, and other places:—"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."‡

And how does this correspond with our own observation and experience of the effects of christian principles upon the individual? Is it not matter of familiar remark among us, when we see a person who professes christianity acting immorally, that he is a hypocrite and insincere in his profession? Thus our condemnation of his inconsistency is an acknowledgement of the holiness of his creed, and we do not simply condemn his conduct as immoral, but our reprobation is the more severe, because we try the inconsistent christian by that holy law which he professes to believe and obey. When, on the other hand, we behold one whose deportment is worthy of his christian profession—a man of humility, devotion, integrity, whose pure and dignified demeanor befits one whose hopes rise to immortality, and whose right of citizenship is in heaven—do we not at once acknowledge that it is Christ's gospel which has transformed his character, and is the very life-spring of all his virtues? And even when we meet with a man in society of unimpeachable integrity, and of unstained honour, who has not founded these qualities on christian principles, we feel less secure in their genuineness and stability. We can see no very strong motives for their continuance, where dereliction might bring gain without exposure. When we look on his amiable or honest character, we feel

\* Rom. 6. 21. 22.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

‡ 1 Peter, iv. 3. 4.