

and had only thought of spiritual results, should have had to make his way to those results through the thronging and grateful ranks of those who had been healed, and who insisted on presenting themselves first, as a part of the fruits of that mission. And, indeed, what was the character of Christ, but the character of his dispensation?—and what was the design of his divine mission, but that it should be the source and type of all the good attending the march of his Gospel through the earth?

Accordingly, we find, that even where Christianity has, for obvious reasons, produced but slender spiritual results, the inferior benefits which it has scattered have rendered its progress through the nations as traceable as the overflowing of the Nile is by the rich deposit, and consequent fertility which it leaves behind. This is a well-known subject of devout exultation in many of the inspired epistles. The apologies of the fathers prove it; and the records of profane history unintentionally, but abundantly confirm it. Every city which the Gospel visited presents itself in proof of its corrective influence; and every nation we enumerated in the preceding chapter stands forward as a witness to the same effect. It produced charity even in Judea, humility at Athens, chastity at Corinth, and humanity at Rome, cleansing her imperial amphitheatre of human blood, and evincing that her boasted civilization had been only a splendid barbarism. Softened by its influence, the Armenian, says Jerome, lays down his quiver, the Huns learn to sing the praises of God, the coldness of Scythia is warmed by the glow of faith, and the armies of the Goths carry about tents for churches. Theodosius and Justinian took much of their codes from its inspired lips; and thus the Gospel may be said to have read laws to the Visigoths and Burgundians, the Franks, and Saxons, Lombards and Sicilians. On the Irish, as well as on many other nations, it bestowed a written language, and made Ireland for centuries the university of Europe. It raised the German barbarian into a man; and elevated the wandering hordes of the Saxons, Marchomani, and Bohemians, into civilized communities. It approached the Dane, and he forgot his piratical habits; and the Swede and Norwegian stayed within their own boundaries, and ceased to be a general terror. It called the Russians, Silesians, and Poles to take rank among the nations, won the Livonians and Portuguese from their idols, and taught the Lithuanians a worship superior to that of reptiles, or of the sun.

Virtue went out of it in every age, and wherever it came. The Roman empire was rushing to ruin; the Gospel arrested its descent, and broke its fall. Nearly all the nations of Europe which we have named were sitting at a feast on human flesh, or immolating human victims to their gods: it called them away from the horrid repast, and extinguished their unholy fires. The northern invasion poured a new world of barbarism over Christian lands; the spirit of Christianity brooded over the chaotic mass, and gradually gave to it the forms of civilized life. Where it could not sheathe the sword of war, it at least humanized the dreadful art. U