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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

THE EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AN EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

In order to the right illustration of this argument it is necessary to premise that the Christian religion has substantially existed, and does substantially exist, under a variety of distinctive systems, differing from each other on some important points, yet agreeing in the doctrines that essentially constitute the christian faith. Christianity is a system comprehending a great variety of truth. Although we were sure therefore that we could point out one denomination in the Christian Church that holds all revealed truth without any mixture of error, we would be very much disinclined to call this the only church, or to affirm that other denominations, less enlightened and less pure, were not comprehended within the pale of the Church Catholic. The utmost, perhaps, that we could affirm, would be, that those who departed from this standard had admitted in various degrees some portion of error into their respective systems, which counteract in various degrees the moral efficacy of a pure gospel. But in so far as they adhere to what the gospel teaches, they will be efficient instruments for regenerating the world.

In this view of the case we separate the gospel from those who profess it; we view it abstractedly as it is in itself; we behold different classes of men drawing from its pure treasure-house in different quantities; we discover what is pure producing its proper effect under the various encumbrances with which it is loaded; and of the combined result we are able to say—this has been effected by the christian religion.

In tracing out the proper effects of christianity, it seems essential that we should keep this in view; for it enables us to explain the causes of success and failure in different communities, and to refute objections alleged against its beneficial influence on account of certain abuses which have grown up under its venerated name. It has sometimes been alleged, for example, that christianity has promoted persecution, and what have been termed religious wars. It is perfectly evident to those acquainted with the genuine spirit of the christian religion, that it is opposed to both; and if under its hallowed name persecution and wars have arisen, this could only be from the darkness and corruption which its professors had contrived to mix up with it. After it had gained an extensive footing in the world, worldly men began to