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Miscellaneous Articles.

THE EVILS OF IGNORANCE.

(Concluded from page 327.)

We have already shown, in some measure, that ignorance stands very much in the way of the true and best happiness of the present life. We now proceed to another, and still more important, view of the subject, namely,

II. That ignorance is altogether adverse to the attainment of a proper religious character—that noblest distinction of man. Of course we are to speak here of want of acquaintance with religious truth, especially with the Bible, the great fountain of that truth.

Now, nothing should be plainer than this, that previous to possessing the qualities of a really good man, they must be known and understood, at least to some degree. There is no such thing as their being obtained in some secret, mysterious way, without any conception how. It is true, the Spirit of God, by His gracious influences, is their great author in our fallen nature; and it would be very wrong to suppose that any amount of mere knowledge could render us truly religious, independent of His operations on our hearts. But in producing the various parts of the Christian character, He does not operate in the absence of *means*; and these means are the truths of religion, which He applies and makes effectual, by giving them their proper influence upon the rational and moral principles of our nature, which requires His renovating energies to make it right again. But the Spirit of God, in creating a clean heart and a right spirit in men, and thus fitting them for holy conduct, makes use of truth, introduced into their minds in the shape of knowledge, as his instrumentality; and it is the grossest enthusiasm to expect the possession of any one constituent of real religion before an acquaintance with at least its elementary principles. How irrational would it be to suppose that a man will be enabled to believe in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, ere ever he has heard of the necessity of faith in Him, or has any idea of what it is; or to imagine that He will give obedience to the will of God until he know it! How can he keep the divine commandments while he does not understand them? How can he act under a constant regard to their great extent of meaning and applicableness, if he has not learned that the law of God claims the control of the heart, as well as of the actual behaviour?

Very clear, then, should it be that a huge obstacle lies in the way of the ignorant man becoming a true Christian. By remaining in ignorance, he neglects