

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

MAN.

Among the different definitions given of man, there is, perhaps, none so expressive, none so characteristic, as to define him a religious creature. This marks immediately his nature, and separates him essentially from every other animal. He has been defined a rational animal, but we are not sure that this character belongs exclusively to him. Some of the inferior creatures give strong indications of powers and faculties very much resembling reason. There is a docility in the dog, a natural cunning in the fox, and a high degree of sagacity in the elephant. We are at a loss by what name to distinguish these, or to ascertain from what principle they proceed. But by whatever name we designate them, in their reflections and different actions, they approximate very near to what we call reason. But in no one of the lower animals do we see any thing, in any measure, resembling religion. Not the faintest trace of this principle appears in any other creature of this lower world. Such men, therefore, as throw aside this glorious distinction, divest themselves, by this act, of the noblest ornament of their nature, and that which distinguishes them the most effectually from the beast that perishes.

That man is naturally inclined to religion, appears from various considerations. And this is not a new principle, but coeval with man. Wherever you find man, there also you find religion. Go back to the origin of the world, or as far as history can carry your researches, and there you still see man a religious creature. Examine all countries, and all the different ages of the world, and you will find no race, no nation, that can be properly said to be utterly destitute of religion. In some of the lately discovered islands, particularly in New Holland, it has been advanced, that our settlers on that coast have not been able to find, among the natives, any traces of religion. These people, by all accounts, are the most stupid and savage of the species. Whether, therefore, on account of that gross ignorance and stupidity, they may be divested of this distinguishing character of our nature, or whether our historians of that country have had sufficient opportunities to ascertain their true character and manners, must be determined by future and more accurate inquiries. But this and some other exceptions will not destroy the generality of the principle, that man is a religious creature.

If history, then, prove the antiquity and extent of this principle, we find it also arising from his very nature. His hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, direct him equally towards religion. A principle, then, that operates so universally and extensively, can never be found without a cause. This principle must have been implanted in men to answer some wise and good purpose; and it gives us great room to hope and to trust, that there must be objects corresponding to this great principle.

We cannot ascribe this principle to the prejudices of education; because this supposes a general confederacy at all times, and among all nations, the most distant and widely scattered over the various parts of the earth. It supposes an agreement among nations, that never could have any possible correspondence, separated from one another, during all ages, by unpassable oceans and deserts; among nations discordant in government, laws, language, manners, and every thing.

To affirm that this principle is the child of prejudice or habit, is equally reasonable and fair as to affirm conscience, or the faculty by which we distinguish between what is right and wrong, to be the prejudice of education. Religion seems equally a part of man as conscience, as the sentiments of virtue, of justice, and beneficence. These principles are so interwoven with our nature, that we cannot divest ourselves of them at our pleasure. They cannot be thrown aside with the same ease as we can throw aside our coat or any garment.

These reflections, if founded on reason and truth, give us room to hope and to believe, that all the attempts of infidelity to root out the religious principle, and to banish religion from the earth, will prove on all occasions vain and fruitless. Human nature will resume its just rights, and maintain its honours. Men of profligate principles may endeavour to throw off the salutary

restraints of religion; but these attempts must miscarry with the great bulk of mankind. It appears equally plausible as if we were to attempt to rob man of his reason and his understanding. They may be so far successful, as to corrupt religion. This has been done too often; but human nature requires religion, in one shape or other, for its satisfaction and government.

The Christian Mirror.

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CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY.

"Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephus."

This sectarian spirit, which early showed itself in the primitive Church, has unhappily descended to the present time. Fortunately, however, as religious truth, genuine piety, and self-knowledge prevail, Bigotry, with all its attendant evils, is passing away, and a brighter era begins to dawn on the Christian world. The man who, but a few years ago, was lauded, and placed in the most elevated position in his church, because he considered all men in the broad road to perdition who belonged not to his party; is now, to a certain extent, mistruited even by his brethren, and considered very far behind the generality of professing Christians in principles of liberality.

A liberal Christian occasionally goes out of his own party, associates with others, and gains improvement by all. It is a Persian proverb, "A liberal hand is better than a strong arm." The dignity of Christianity is better supported by acts of liberality, than by accuracy of reasoning; but when both go together—when a man of sentiment can clearly state, and ably defend his religious principles—and when his heart is as generous as his principles are inflexible—he possesses strength and beauty in no ordinary degree; and is eminently calculated for winning souls to Christ, and thus extending His kingdom in the earth.

We heartily pity that narrow-minded man who imagines that no excellence is to be found out of the small religious body with which he is connected—who cannot engage in any moral or religious enterprise unless it originates with, or is principally carried on by his ministers—who will not trust himself even to subscribe for a religious paper, or read a religious book, however orthodox either may be, if it be not the production of his church, or stamped with the seal of his body. Alas! that too many of such characters are to be found in almost every Christian society; but they are the exceptions to the general rule, and form, for the most part, the illiterate portion of professors.

Far different are the sentiments with which we regard that noble-minded individual—the man of enlarged views and enlightened intellect—who, bursting through the enclosures of sectarianism, views the wide field of Christian enterprise, and in every labourer beholds a brother—no matter by what name he may be called, or in what peculiar way he does the work of his Master—who holds out to every servant of the Lord Jesus the right hand of fellowship, and feels the influence of that mysterious bond which unites him to the Body of Christ. Such a man we respect—such a man we honour—such a man we love.

The Apostle Paul was a noble example of such a character, in the primitive Church; and we might mention the names of many such worthies of more recent times. Now, thank God, the churches abound with such; in proof of which we

might mention the many noble institutions now in operation for the spread of the Gospel, the evangelisation of the world, and the amelioration of the miserable condition of apostate man. Need we speak of the British and Foreign Bible Society—the various Missionary Societies—the Tract Society—and the Sunday School Union?—in which men of all evangelical creeds are engaged, and to the funds of which they all cheerfully contribute.

May the great Head of the Church hasten the time when all shall be of one heart and one mind—when the general interests of Emanuel's kingdom shall be dearer to all than the aggrandizement of sect or party, and when the designation of the universal Church of Christ shall be—"CHRISTIAN."

We have to acknowledge with gratitude, that since the commencement of the *Christian Mirror*, we have received numerous and highly encouraging testimonies in favour of the spirit and character of our journal. Many of them are of a private nature, and consequently not intended to meet the public eye; others, however, we may safely employ for the purpose of informing our friends of the estimation in which the *Mirror* is held by those respected contemporaries who have so kindly noticed our humble though well-meant efforts to diffuse useful knowledge throughout the community. The following are some of the

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.—We have received two numbers of a very excellent semi-monthly journal of religious and general intelligence, which, under the above title, has been commenced in this city, under the management of one who appears to have brought to the task an excellent judgment and sound religious views. The *Mirror* is not designed to be the organ of a peculiar sect, but is devoted to the interests of religion generally, and is, to a great extent, made up of valuable selections having strictly a moral and religious bearing. We have heard with the sincerest pleasure, that its prospects of support are very flattering, and that it deserves it, none who have read the numbers now before the public will for a moment doubt. As a family journal, it will be found highly worthy of support.—*Literary Garland for September.*

We have received the first number of a paper entitled the *Christian Mirror*, published in this city. As yet we have only been able to give a hasty glance over the contents, which appear to consist principally of useful extracts from different religious works, memoirs of well known and esteemed Christians, and accounts of the progress of Religion, in this and other countries. The leading article is a well written little essay, in which the nature and importance of our holy religion are enforced with much fervour and ability. The *Mirror* is to be published once a fortnight, by Mr. J. E. L. MILLER, St. Nicholas Street, and the terms of subscription are six shillings per annum. We think such a publication to be of eminent service to the cause of virtue, and we therefore heartily wish it success.—*Montreal Gazette.*

The first number of "The Christian Mirror" appears this day, and from the short opportunity we have had of examining its contents, we are led to believe that the anticipations formed from a perusal of the Prospectus will not be disappointed. It contains a careful selection of Religious and General Literature, a summary of political events, and a variety of Missionary intelligence from Polynesia, India, and China, with several columns of Miscellaneous articles of general interest. The design of the publisher, as stated in his editorial remarks, is "to exhibit an undeviating solicitude to promote the interests of scriptural piety," an object so worthy of the co-operation and aid of the religious public, that we trust the publisher will be warmly supported. The mechanical execution of the *Mirror* is good, and it is published on a sheet which will render it an object to preserve the numbers to be bound at the close of the volume.—*Transcript.*