

20.54

The interests of the heathen, must without doubt be deeply impressed upon the heart of every true christian. He can not but feel emotions of the tenderest nature, when he reflects upon the moral degradation in which they are immersed. That such is the case, is evident from the unparal-
lled exertions, which have been, and are now made, throughout the christian world, to spread the light of gospel truth, over those gloomy lands, where superstition and idolatry, have so long reigned triumphantly. But, among those who profess to be interested in the welfare of the heathen, we see adherents to the church of Rome, which, in the opinion of protestant christendom, is engrafted with error, and holds forth principles opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ. But, the fact, that these men have also aided in the amelioration of the heathen, should not lead us to suppose them influenced by that tender compassion, which is felt by the true christian. For after a close examination of their operations, we discover ^{that} some of the most sordid motives, have influenced their conduct. E. G. In South America, a desire of the native's gold predominated in these Jesuitical missionaries. We have them among us; let us view their operations here. They seem not to care for the immortal soul, but their whole aim, is to build up the papal church; to get power and authority into their hands. Precisely such motives actuate them in propagating popery among the heathen. There may be some conscientious men among them, but few indeed. * In South America the priests to this day fight cocks on the sabbath. Where

is the true religion of these professed disciples of Christ? But notwithstanding all this, we are of opinion that the propagation of Popery among the heathen, has benefited them. We therefore proceed to answer the question proposed to us, viz.

"Does the propagation of Popery among the heathen, prove beneficial to them?" by showing that to a certain extent, it does.

It is well known to us, what Popery is. That it comprehends the religious doctrines and practices adopted and maintained by the church of Rome.

With these doctrines and practices, we are also, in general, acquainted. We therefore say nothing about them. Two respects in which Popery benefits the heathen, and which we shall notice, are

I. With regard to morality.

II. With regard to civil affairs.

The heathen are those who know^{ing} nothing of the Christian religion, bow down and do homage to false Gods, to dumb idols, which have neither sensation, nor consciousness. They roam the trackless desert night and day, destitute of almost all the comforts, which civilized man so abundantly, (but often so thanklessly) enjoys. They are plunged in the deepest sinks of vice and immorality. After sacrificing at the shrine of their wretched superstition, those to whom nature binds them by the strongest ties. No law stands up with the sword of Justice in hand, in those regions of moral darkness to restrain the murderous impetuosity, of the

ruce barbarian. True, they may have something like a law, written upon their conscience, but this is so worn off by the long continued stream of ignorance, and superstition, that its influence upon their conduct has almost ceased. And the dictates which remain uneffaced, are ^{often} enough to strike the civilized mind, with indignation and horror. Conscience in a heathen, often looks with complacency, and satisfaction upon that ~~fortune~~ ^{virtue} which virtue and religion shrinks back in consternation and abhorrence. He thinks, I now see one of these blind, deluded mortals, standing ready, to sacrifice himself to a god of his own invention. He looks steadfastly a few moments upon the object of his superstitious veneration, seated upon a huge car just before him, and now falls prostrate to the earth. Infernal is rolled forward and he is crushed to atoms! Such is the effect of heathenish religions ^{upon} its votaries. Such are the dictates of a conscience, unenlightened by virtue and religion. Now under circumstances like these, popery will certainly prove beneficial to the heathen. It teaches them the worship of ~~the~~ ^{one} true God, and that his son Jesus Christ came into the world to teach men ~~wisdom~~ and to atone for their sins. It teaches them to throw away their dumb idols to the weasels and bats, and to fall down in adoration before him, who alone holds the reign of universal dominion. It teaches them, that murder is shocking to humanity, under any circumstances, and that the great Spirit in indignation and wrath frowns upon the perpetrator. It teaches them, that a spark is implanted within

them, which shall never cease to burn. That they have
a soul immortal, and that this is of more value than
10,000 worlds. But here we should remark, that al-
though this is a tenet held by the papal church, and
the papish missionaries teach the heathen so, yet they
are so little interested, under a sense of this impor-
tant doctrine, their influence which it should exert
upon the heathen, amounts to little more than nothing.
Popery teaches them, to act in accordance with those
regulations in the bible, which it viz. Popery, makes
known to them. In short, we may say, upon the whole,
that Popery, at least teaches them morality. Now
it must be admitted, that these things are beneficial
to the heathen. For morality in its lowest modification
is better than barbarism. But let us for a moment com-
pare with these the benefits arising from the propagation
of true christianity, among the heathen. We might however
add, that popery is beneficial to the heathen, in this respect.
It renders them fitter for the reception of true religion.
Being partially enlightened, they will more readily see
the beauty of holiness. Though it may with some de-
gree of plausibility, be maintained that there is more
difficulty in protestantizing a papish heathen, than
one who knows nothing of religion at all. For bigotry
of which we cannot but accuse the church of
Rome, when deeply rooted in the human breast, is
a powerful opponent. But let this be, it may.
True christianity, which, we flatter ourselves prevails
among protestants in general, and actuates them
in their efforts to evangelize the world, teaches the

heathen, that he is a poor helpless creature in the sight of God, and that without a personal interest in the blood of Jesus Christ, he cannot be happy in eternity. It teaches him, that although he deserves eternal misery, God is willing to save him for Christ's sake. It does not encourage him, to commit small sins, by telling him, that these can be removed by the flames of purgatory. No it solemnly warns him, that his probationary state ceases at death. That as the tree falls, so it lies, that death will introduce him, either into the endless enjoyment of God's presence, and that of his holy angels, or into the company of devils and damned spirits, to be tormented forever. True christianity does not withhold from the heathen, that holy and precious book which is given by God himself. It renders it into his native language, and delivers it into his hands, to serve as a light to his feet and a lantern to his path in his journey across the trackless desert of sin. True christianity teaches the heathen, not to confess his sins to priests, and supplicate the intercession of saints in his behalf, but to come with the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite heart, and raise his soul in prayer to God, through the great high priest Jesus Christ, who offered himself a sacrifice for sin. Now what are the benefits resulting from instructions like these? Nothing less than peace and happiness in this world, and in the world to come, eternal, inconceivable joy.

II. We proceed secondly, to consider, the benefits with regard to civil affairs, which the propagation of popery among the heathen has conferred.

We before remarked that Popery moralizes the heathen. This, being effected, is the source of many benefits. And from it would seem to flow the ~~the~~ civil government which now occupies our attention. Civil government is undoubtedly calculated to ameliorate the condition of man. Without it, no society can flourish. Suppose that ^{even} in our country, where light and knowledge have diffused their prolific ~~is~~ radiance over the minds of the people, some infidel demagogue, were to incite the people to throw off the civil restraint that is laid upon them, and persuade them that conscience is a sufficient law. How soon would we be involved in all the horrors of intestine war? The slightest offence would cause the dagger to reach with the heart's blood of him who gave it. Although conscience could not approve so foul a deed, yet man would not refrain from the perpetration of it. Does punishment does not ^{literally} stare him in the face, when conscience tells him, if he be punished at all, it will be beyond the grave, he ^{will} ~~states~~ not to curb the malevolent dispositions which rankle in his breast. Now, the importance of a civil government, among the heathen, will plainly appear. This Popery establishes among them. It is true, that the form of government which it adopts is objectionable, being a union of civil and ecclesiastical power, but upon the whole, it is certainly beneficial. This will appear when we consider the state of the heathen. They wander to and fro in

clans or tribes, bound together by no other ties than those which nature dictate, or if in some countries, they are found to be united as a body in some degree, it is by such ties, of so flimsy a nature, that the benefit arising from it is very small. Amongst the Indians of our western wilds, a custom prevails, of avenging the murder of a deceased relative, ~~by~~ upon the first opportunity that offers, by bathing the scalping knife, or tomahawk, in the blood of the offender. No tribunal of Justice is offered to give the poor wretch an impartial hearing, but die he must. The heathen have no Sanhedrims or ~~legislative~~ assemblies, to plan and devise schemes, for their improvement in the various arts, so well known among us. They are strangers ^{to} the advantages, resulting from civilized society. All these popery, will remedy. It teaches them the importance of gathering together and by mutual consent submit themselves to a code of laws. Though, here, we must notice another shocking error in the principles of the popish church. It teaches that the Pope has authority to grant an indulgence for any sin, whatever be its turpitude, for a certain sum of money. Now the bad tendency of such a principle, will easily be seen. It encourages the heathen to the most licentious conduct. The effects of this ~~error~~ but too visible in North America, where we are told, ship loads of these popish indulgences arrived every year. But to return, popery teaches the heathen, to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. It teaches

them to convert their native meads into fruitful fields, and labour to improve in the agricultural art. — These are some of the moral and civil benefits, resulting from the propagation of popery among the heathen. And after all that has been said, what do we learn? That more regard is paid to things temporal, than to things spiritual. That the concerns of the immortal soul are awfully neglected. Nothing this side the grave is of deeper importance to man, than the religion of Jesus Christ. But these popish missionaries, instead of inculcating its sublime doctrines among the heathen by precept and example, suffer the poor creatures to remain in comparative ignorance. Therefore, we conclude that although popery does in some measure aid in the amelioration of the heathen, yet, taking all things into consideration, it were better that to be propagated among them at all. It is not long since an infidel in this place produced an argument ^{against} christianity like this: "look to Kamshatka," said he. The natives there before the introduction of christianity among them by the Roman catholics, enjoyed peace and happiness, but now there is nothing but war and bloodshed." If this be true, ^{which it is not,} it might easily be replied, we have nothing to do with popish christianity. We are not answerable for its evil effects. Finally, it is our opinion, that protestant christians ^{should} make all the exertions in their power to check the progress which this pest has been and is now making with rapid strides throughout the earth. And from present prosperous appearances on our side, we may admit of a rational hope, that ere long this will be effected.