

**THE POLITICAL
ECONOMY OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT**

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The Political Economy of the New Testament by William Innes

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WILLIAM INNES

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"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—
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PREFACE.

THE following pages may be considered as an illustration of the text we have chosen for our motto, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." At a period when so many plans are proposed by philosophers and politicians for improving the character, and ameliorating the condition of the species, we have endeavoured to direct the attention of the reader to that mode of accomplishing both these objects which Revelation points out. We have first adverted to the manner in which the Christian character is formed, and then endeavoured to show the various ingredients of that social happiness that will be produced by it. The connexion between the existence of this character and that happiness, appears susceptible of the clearest demonstration; and if so, it will follow that the extent of that happiness must be proportioned to the degree in which such characters are to be found.

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Recd. M.P. 11-28-39

The leading maxims of the political economy of the New Testament are comprised in two sentences: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," or according to our Lord's explanation of this precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so to them;" and "It is more blessed to give than to receive." We have endeavoured to point out the bearing of these maxims on some of the most important questions which occupy the attention of the political economist, as Education, Pauperism, and Public Instruction. We have shown how many of the evils that afflict society, and sometimes are in danger of breaking the social compact altogether, would be avoided by the dissemination and cultivation of them; and, on the other hand, how much positive happiness would be the result of their general diffusion. We have attempted to illustrate their salutary operation, not only on individual communities, but on the intercourse of nations. On these points, it is only general principles we have stated, and for which we contend, without entering into a question on which many differ, and which does not affect the importance of the principles themselves: I mean the best way of applying

them in practice. At a time when men are beginning to see the evils of war, or at least are more deeply impressed with these than they were formerly ; when peace societies are formed in various quarters, it is, we conceive, of consequence to direct the public attention to the only principles, by the general dissemination of which, we may expect civil commotions in any particular country to be prevented, and wars between nations to cease to the ends of the earth.

In illustrating the power of moral influence, the cases of Howard and Wilberforce are selected, and it will be clearly seen from the extracts taken from the lives of these eminent men, that the high moral influence they possessed, was in a great measure founded on their conduct being so decidedly regulated by those great maxims of the Christian economy already mentioned. The extracts from the lives of these individuals are the more copious, not only because they bear most distinctly on the illustration of the great general truth, in support of which, they are adduced, but also because many may not have access to those more expensive works from which they are taken.