TWELVE
DISCOURSES,

COMPRISING A

SYSTEMATICAL DEMONSTRATION

OF THE

DIVINE ORIGIN

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS;

DESIGNED FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS: AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND EDIFICATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE; TO ESTABLISH THEM IN A RATIONAL AND FULL PERSUASION OF THE TRUTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES; TO EXCITE THEIR EARLY AND EARNEST PURSUIT OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, AND AWAKEN THEIR HIGHEST SOLICITUDE TO WALK WITH THE WISE, AND FLY THE WAY OF EVIL MEN.

BY BENJAMIN TRUMBULL, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NORTH-HAVEN.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.
1 PETER iii. 15.

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DEDICATION.

To the church and congregation under my paſtoral charge, eſpecially the young people.

Beloved brethren and friends,

THE relation ſubſiſting between us is ſolemn and momentous. Its conſequences will be vaſt and eternal. The awards of the great day, the happineſs or miſery of our endleſs exiſtence depend on the manner in which its duties ſhall be diſcharged. Theſe weighty conſiderations, with the numerous endearments, which for the term of nearly forty years have paſſed between us, combine their influence to engage my utmoſt watchfulneſs, labors, and prayers for your inſtruction, edification, and ſalvation. It has indeed not only been the ſtudy and labor, but the pleaſure of my life to impart unto you ſpiritual good things, to the end you might be edified and eſtabliſhed.

THE uncommon growth of infidelity and licentiouſneſs, within a few years paſt, and the increaſe and ſpread of books fraught with miſrepreſentation, bitterneſs, and blaſphemy againſt the eternal and almighty SAVIOUR, and his holy religion, have awakened in me a deep concern, *leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in* CHRIST. My fears were further awakened from this conſideration, that the common people, and eſpecially the youth were very little acquainted with the deiſtical controverſy, and on this accoun· vere the more expoſ-

ed to be *toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Next to the power of divine grace in the heart, it was conceived that a thorough indoctrination in the evidences of Chriſtianity would be the moſt effectual preſervative againſt the ſophiſtry of deiſtical principles, and all the arts and miſrepreſentations of the infidels of the preſent age. Therefore, in the beginning of the year 1795, I propoſed to inſtruct you in the evidences of Chriſtianity, and upon your deſire, in a courſe of lectures, delivered to you the following diſcourſes. Several reaſons have ſince induced me to reviſe and publiſh them.

I WAS not inſenſible, that it would be impoſſible to retain them barely on hearing them once, and that the impreſſions made at the time of hearing would gradually wear off, and be very much loſt unleſs you could review the ſubject. But preſenting them to you from the preſs, would enable you fully to examine and digeſt them, and in a good meaſure to make yourſelves maſters of a ſubject, the knowledge of which is ſo fundamental to your preſent and future well being. The benefit of them might alſo deſcend to your children, and to your childrens' children. You and they would have an abiding pledge of my love and labor for you, and I might ſpeak to you both when my voice ſhall be ſilent in the duſt.

THE opinion of a number of my worthy brethren in the miniſtry, who have ſince heard moſt of the diſcourſes either preached or read, that they were calculated to be of general ſervice to the churches, at the preſent day, and their advice and deſire that they might be made public, has been a further, and very conſiderable inducement to their publication.

THOUGH many books have been excellently written on the ſubject, yet they have been generally much too voluminous for common people. They have alſo rather been employed in ſtating and anſwering deiſtical objections and cavils than in exhibiting, in a connect-

ed and forcible point of light, the evidences of Chriſtianity. Others have been written with great judgment and ingenuity on detached parts of the argument, and on the authenticity of the New-Teſtament; yet none have come to my knowledge, in which the neceſſity of a divine revelation, and the evidences of the divine origin and importance of every part of the ſcriptures, have been ſo ſyſtematically, connectedly, and familiarly exhibited. I cannot therefore but entertain a pleaſing hope that the publication may, through the divine benediction, be of advantage not only to you and your poſterity, but to the people of this and of the neighbouring ſtates: eſpecially to young clergymen, to candidates for the miniſtry, and to young people in general.

That the argument might be more full and the work more complete, the diſcourſes have been conſiderably enlarged, eſpecially on the internal evidence of the divinity of the ſcripture, and in ſtating and anſwering objections. For this reaſon ſeveral of the diſcourſes are too long for one reading in public or in the family. You will therefore divide them in ſuch places as ſhall beſt ſuit your convenience.

To enlarge your acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and enable you with greater facility to turn to the various paſſages adduced, in the diſcourſes, and judge of their pertinency to the ſubject, the books, chapters, and verſes, are generally expreſſed in the marginal notes.

I have attempted to make the language familiar, and the arguments clear and ſtriking, that they might be underſtood and felt even by perſons of an ordinary capacity. In ſome inſtances I have ſuffered myſelf to be more diffuſe than is neceſſary for the learned, for this purpoſe, that the diſcourſes might be more uſeful among common people. Though the ſubject is generally argumentative, yet I have endeavoured to treat it in ſuch a manner, and ſo to enliven the language, as that neither might be dull and unentertaining even to the warm feelings and ſprightly imaginations of young

people. The preparation of the diſcourſes has indeed been a work of conſiderable reading and labor. But I eſteem no labors nor exertions too great to ſerve the intereſts of your ſouls. He who ſearcheth our hearts knows the inexpreſſible deſires with which I labor for your ſalvation; and how often I would have gathered you even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. Nothing, except the joys of religion and the ſalvation of my own ſoul, can give me ſuch pleaſure, as your becoming wiſe, uſeful, and good, and your advancement in knowledge and holineſs.

WHILE others therefore dedicate their works to nobles and men of fame, with great pleaſure and the moſt cordial affection, I dedicate this to you, and the ſervice of your ſouls. I beſeech you by all our friendſhip and endearments, by the mercies of GOD, and the immenſe importance of the ſubject, that you read with candor and impartiality, willing to know and receive the truth. Study the arguments and evidences of our holy religion until they become familiar to you, until, upon all proper occaſions, you may with readineſs produce them, and give a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſs and fear. May you be effectually guarded againſt infidelity and eſtabliſhed in the truth. May you avoid the way of evil men, and walk with the wiſe. Nay, may you poſſeſs that wiſdom which is the principal thing; which ſhall make your faces ſhine among men upon the earth, and which ſhall qualify you, through the grace of GOD, to ſhine forth as the ſun in his ſtrength in the kingdom of our heavenly FATHER. This, beloved brethren and friends, ſhall be the conſtant prayer of him, who has been long watching, and ſtill watcheth for your ſouls, as one who muſt give account.

BENJAMIN TRUMBULL.

North-Haven, May 3, 1799.

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DISCOURSE I.

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PROVERBS iv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

GET wiſdom, get underſtanding; forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forſake her not, and ſhe ſhall preſerve thee: love her and ſhe ſhall keep thee. Wiſdom is the principal thing, therefore get wiſdom, and with all thy getting get underſtanding. Exalt her and ſhe ſhall promote thee, ſhe ſhall bring thee to honor, when thou doſt embrace her. She ſhall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory ſhall ſhe deliver thee.

ONE principal deſign of the UNIVERSAL PARENT, in all his works and diſpenſations, has been the communication of divine knowledge to mankind. This hath been the labor and ſtudy of patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles and wiſe men, whom, in the various ages of the world, he hath ſent unto them. Eſpecially, it hath been a principal object to inſtruct them in the early periods of life, and to make young

men wise and good. Their religious instruction and education is important beyond all description. To themselves and their families, to posterity, to the church and commonwealth it is of the highest moment. To this Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, paid a special attention, and summoned the laborious care of all the people of GOD. *And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.** This was the design of the royal preacher, *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.*† For this purpose the SON of GOD came a light into the world and made a revelation from the bosom of his FATHER. Nay, for this he purchased, with his invaluable blood, the instructions of his word and of his house, and appointed all the means of salvation. This divine lawgiver commands, *Feed my lambs ;*‡ and by his apostle, *Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD*§ In what a forcible point of light, in these views, does the duty and importance of obtaining divine knowledge appear? and of employing all our exertions and opportunities to communicate and instil this heavenly wisdom?

WITH what remarkable energy is the duty and importance of obtaining divine knowledge, and the excellency of it represented in our text! *Get wisdom, get understanding : Get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding.* In what close connection is it here four times expressly enjoined, that we should get wisdom? That we should get it though we get nothing else? Nay, though we should obtain it at the expense of all other enjoyments? It is not only thus forcibly enjoined upon all to get wisdom, but it is commanded, *Forget her not.* Never forget this duty. Be always im-

* Deut. vi. 6, 7. † Prov. i. 4. ‡ John xxi. 15.
§ Eph. vi. 4.

portunately ſeeking ſpiritual underſtanding. By what an accumulation of words, by what a repetition of the command is the duty and importance of obtaining divine knowledge, here enjoined and repreſented? Yet as though this were not ſufficient, in a matter of ſuch immenſe conſequence, it is added, Wiſdom is the principal thing. It is the moſt excellent and bliſsful enjoyment. Its conſequences are moſt permanent and glorious. *She ſhall preſerve thee. She ſhall promote thee to honor, give to thine head an ornament of grace*, and crown thee with glory! With what energy are we here commanded, with what inimitable ſweetneſs allured to the purſuit and practice of heavenly wiſdom? Shall we not then hear theſe commands and promiſes of GOD? Shall not every ear be open, and every heart attentive, while we contemplate, The nature of the wiſdom we are commanded to ſeek; The manner in which it is to be ſought; and its ineſtimable worth and conſequences?

I. THE nature of the wiſdom we are commanded to ſeek.

BY wiſdom and underſtanding, in the text, we are not merely nor principally to underſtand the wiſdom of this world, which cometh to nought; but divine wiſdom, conſiſting in the knowledge, love, and practice of true religion. By wiſdom, in the writings of the Old Teſtament, eſpecially of David and Solomon, we are to underſtand the knowledge and fear of GOD. The wiſdom which Solomon taught was the principal thing. The very beginning of it conſiſted in the fear of the LORD. *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wiſdom, and the knowledge of the HOLY is underſtanding.** The ſum of all he taught in the Proverbs and Eccleſiaſtes was the wiſdom which conſiſted in the fear and knowledge of GOD, and in obedience to his will. Says he, Let us hear the concluſion of the whole matter, Fear GOD and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.†

* Prov. ix. 10. † Eccl. xii. 13.

DIVINE wiſdom therefore conſiſteth in the knowledge of GOD and his adorable perfections: eſpecially, as they appear and ſhine forth in the face of JESUS CHRIST:—in the knowledge of the doctrines taught, and duties commanded in the divine word:—in an acquaintance with its promiſes and threatenings, and the various motives which it exhibits to allure, or awaken us to obedience. It alſo compriſes in it an acquaintance with the true mode of worſhipping GOD, and the nature and deſign of the ordinances.

IT conſiſts more eſpecially and eſſentially in the knowledge of the lovelineſs and beauty of divine truths and objects: In a ſenſe of heart of the exceeding greatneſs, majeſty, and glory of GOD and the REDEEMER, filling it with a profound and childlike reverence, and commanding its ſupreme affection. There is always in divine knowledge a ſenſe of heart of the excellency of the divine law, of the glory of the goſpel, and of the beauty of holineſs. In divine illumination the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST, ſhines in upon the heart.* The wiſe have been renewed in knowledge† They love and embrace wiſdom. Underſtanding is pleaſant to him who findeth it. It is preferred to all other enjoyments. *Yea doubtleſs, I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD.*‡ The law and goſpel appear divinely excellent, and the obedience they require reaſonable and lovely. The language of the heart, in the exerciſe of wiſdom, is this, *O how love I thy law? How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte? Yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth. I eſteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every falſe way.*|| *Wherefore the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good. I delight in the law of GOD after the inward man.*§ *It is a faithful ſaying and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief.*¶ The hearts of the wiſe thus according with

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Col. iii. 10. ‡ Phil. iii. 8. || Pſalm cxix. 97, 103, 128. § Rom. vii. 12, 22. ¶ 1 Tim. i. 15.

the law and goſpel, they embrace the terms of ſalvation, take the yoke of CHRIST upon them, and render a cheerful obedience, in all things, to whatſoever he hath commanded them. Having taſted the ſweetneſs of wiſdom they thirſt for it more and more, and they follow on to know the LORD. Hence wiſdom *is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.** We proceed

II. To contemplate the manner in which this wiſdom is to be ſought.

IT may be obſerved in general, that when GOD commands us to get wiſdom, it implies an attendance upon him, in all the ways, which he hath appointed for the communication of wiſdom. It muſt therefore be ſought in a conſcientious, diligent attendance on all the inſtituted means of grace: In a heedful laborious attention to parental inſtructions and admonitions; to the advice of our inſtructors, and the examples and counſels of good people. Eſpecially wiſdom is to be ſought by a laborious, conſtant, and prayerful ſtudy of the ſcriptures. Theſe are the great ſources of divine inſtruction. An early and intimate acquaintance with theſe is a principal means of obtaining ſpiritual underſtanding. By the ſtudy of theſe David became wiſer than his teachers, and knew more than the ancients. Hence our Saviour commands, Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me. We ſhould laborioufly ſtudy the whole ſyſtem of doctrines which they teach, and the duties which they enjoin, as they reſpect GOD, our fellow-chriſtians, and fellow-men, in all the relations and conditions of life. The duties of temperance and ſelf-government ſhould be made familiar to all chriſtians. It behoves them alſo to be well acquainted with the evidences of chriſtianity; that they may be chriſtians not merely by cuſtom and education, but upon the moſt rational and ſubſtantial evi-

* James iii. 17.

dence. This is abſolutely neceſſary, that they may obey that apoſtolic direction; *And be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.** Chriſtians ſhould ſeek divine knowledge by a familiar acquaintance with the ſcriptures and the doctrines and duties which they contain; they ſhould be fixed in them, and underſtand the arguments by which they are proved. GOD commandeth that men attend to theſe great concerns as to a matter of life and death. Deut. vi. 6, and xxxii. 47. *And theſe words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart. For it is not a vain thing for you: becauſe it is your life.* It is written, *Let the word of GOD dwell in you richly in all wiſdom.*† GOD requires that his people be eſtabliſhed in the faith and zealous in its defence. *Rooted and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith.*‡ This is of the higheſt moment; eſpecially to young people, *That they may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Eſpecially, is it neceſſary at this day when vice and errors of every kind are, in ſuch a degree, exalting and ſpreading themſelves among us. Without doctrinal knowledge perſons will be ſhaken with every new and plauſible error, and be even laughed out of their religion. As the flowers therefore expand themſelves to receive the gentle dews and ſhowers, ſo the young mind ſhould be opened to inſtruction, and eagerly imbibe divine truth.

IN ſeeking divine underſtanding, men ſhould ſpare no pains to know the true character of GOD, as exhibited in the ſcriptures; the character of the MEDIATOR, his offices, the deſign of his mediatorial undertaking, and the nature and deſign of the atonement. They ſhould alſo be careful to know their own character, as it is drawn by the ſpirit of GOD in his word. Juſt apprehenſions of theſe will have great influence in their obtaining right ſentiments in all points of chriſtian doctrine; but ſo far as they err with reſpect

* 1 Peter iii. 15. † Col. iii. 16. ‡ Col. ii. 7.

to theſe, ſo far they will be expoſed to error in almoſt all other points.

THAT they may know theſe, as they are really exhibited in the ſcriptures, they muſt read them with meekneſs and impartiality, willing to learn of CHRIST, and deſirous to know the truth, and not to eſtabliſh ſome preconceived and favorite notions of their own. It is *the meek* whom *GOD will guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way.*§ Would men be wiſe, they muſt be careful to form all their religious ſentiments, and regulate their faith and practice entirely by the divine word. *To the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word it is becauſe there is no truth in them.*‖

FURTHER, knowledge is to be ſought by a conſtant, ſerious attendance on the word preached. This is one principal means of the inſtruction and ſalvation of men. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD.¶ When the *world by wiſdom knew not GOD, it pleaſed GOD by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.** This he has ordained to be in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon. Hence it is the duty of the people to attend in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and by no means to neglect the aſſembling of themſelves together as the manner of ſome is. CHRIST walketh in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, diſpenſing light and life, pardon and peace. He makes wiſe the ſimple, cauſes the deaf to hear, and the dead to live. The church is the birthplace of the ſaints. *Of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, this and that man was born in her.*† There is a great bleſſedneſs in a conſtant devout attendance on divine ordinances. *Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, waiting daily at my gates, and watching at the poſts of my doors.*‡

THAT public inſtructions may be profitable, they muſt be attended with meekneſs and deſires to hear the uncorrupted goſpel. The truth muſt be received in the love of it. *As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.*§§ *Wherefore*

§ Pſalm xxv. 9. ‖ Iſai. viii. 20. ¶ Rom. x. 17. * 1 Cor. i. 21. † Pſalm lxxxvii. 5. ‡ Prov. viii. 34. §§ 1 Peter ii. 2.

lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word which is able to ſave your ſouls.‖

DIVINE knowledge is alſo to be ſought by reading and learning catechiſms, ſtudying confeſſions of faith, and ſummaries of chriſtian doctrine: By reading expoſitions of the ſcriptures, ſound and experimental ſermons and other books of piety, morality, and devotion. Much knowledge may alſo be obtained by converſing with miniſters and chriſtians of knowledge and experience in religion; and by a careful attention to the voice of GOD in the diſpenſations of his providence. In all theſe ways GOD communicates wiſdom to the ſons of men, and in them it ſhould be laboriouſly and diligently ſought.

2. IT is to be ſought as a matter of the firſt concern and importance, with the greateſt zeal and earneſtneſs. It is the principal thing, with all our getting we muſt get this. *This is the whole of man*, the *one thing needful.* With this men may be completely and eternally happy, though ſtripped of every other enjoyment. Without it, though the whole world were theirs, they would be fools, wretched and miſerable without end. This therefore is to be ſought firſt, without the leaſt delay. It ſhould be ſought in the earlieſt periods of life. Children and young people, as ſoon as poſſible ſhould obtain a good underſtanding of the ſcriptures, and of chriſtian doctrines and duties. They ſhould be eſtabliſhed in them and be chriſtians indeed. A great proportion of mankind die in childhood and youth, and if they neglect to obtain knowledge they are undone. Knowledge is to be ſought with the greateſt importunity. Every other concern is to be ſubordinated and even ſacrificed to this. How preſſing is the language of heaven on this ſubject? *Remember now thy CREATOR in the days of thy youth.** *Labor not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſt-*

‖ James i. 21. * Eccleſ. xii. 1.

*ing life.** *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of* GOD.† *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gait.*§ The words might well be rendered, *be in an agony to enter in.*

3. WISDOM is to be ſought prayerfully. CHRIST directs us to aſk that we may receive. We are entirely dependent on GOD for knowledge. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights.*‡ In all our ſearches after wiſdom we ſhould feel our dependence, and cry importunately to GOD, through JESUS CHRIST, that he would give us underſtanding. He only can open our underſtandings, as he did the diſciples, to underſtand the ſcriptures, and our hearts, as he did the heart of Lydia, to attend to the word. This is the apoſtolic direction, *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of* GOD, *that giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.*§ In this manner the Pſalmiſt ſought after knowledge. *Teach me, O* LORD, *the way of thy ſtatutes; Give me underſtanding and I ſhall keep thy law.*¶ In this manner ſhould young and old be conſtantly wreſtling with GOD in ſecret, private, and public; praying always with all prayer and ſupplication, and with all perſeverance.

4. WISDOM ſhould be ſought in the love of it. Then it will exalt men, and give them an ornament of grace. *Love her and ſhe ſhall keep thee; ſhe ſhall bring thee to honor when thou doſt embrace her.* As ſhe is *the principal thing*, moſt valuable and lovely in herſelf, ſhe is to be exceedingly loved. The apoſtle *counted all things loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of* CHRIST JESUS *HIS* LORD. Until the heart delights in wiſdom no man can ſincerely aſk it of GOD. Until he loves it, all his ſeekings will be ſelfiſh and hypocritical.

IN a word, chriſtians ought ever to be ſeeking and progreſſing in knowledge to the end of life. There is great room for this. Chriſtians too generally are very deficient in their knowledge of the ſcriptures, and of the doctrines and duties of the chriſtian ſyſtem, and of the evidences of the divinity of the ſcriptures.

* John vi. 27. † Matth. vi. 33. § Luke xiii. 24.
‡ James i. 17. § James i. 5. ¶ Pſalm cxix. 33, 34.

They are ſtill more deficient in an heart-felt ſenſe of the exceeding excellence of wiſdom itſelf, and of the glorious objects which it reſpects and contemplates. With what propriety is it written, *Giving all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.** *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our* LORD *and* SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.‡

III. LET us contemplate the ineſtimable worth and conſequences of wiſdom.

THESE various expreſſions in our text, Wiſdom is the principal thing; She ſhall preſerve thee; She ſhall keep thee; She ſhall promote thee to honor; A crown of glory ſhall ſhe deliver unto thee; import her ineſtimable worth and glorious conſequences. They ſtrongly repreſent the preference of divine knowledge to every other acquirement, which can be an object of human purſuit. With what expreſſive and beautiful language, is the excellency of it declared in other paſſages of ſcripture? *Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth underſtanding. For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canſt deſire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days are in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.*† The wiſe man is repreſented as far more excellent than other men. *Who is as the wiſe man?* Wiſdom gives him a dignity, and makes him uſeful above other men in his family, in all the relations and circumſtances of life, in church and commonwealth.

THE objects of divine knowledge are far more noble than any other: The glorious GOD, his adorable perfections, word and works; his love to mankind, the peerleſs ſcheme of redemption by JESUS CHRIST, his offices, work and glory; the perfection, dignities

* 2 Pet. i. 5. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 18. † Prov. iii. 13—18.

and bleſſedneſs of heaven. Theſe are objects and beauties in compariſon with which ſtars and ſuns looſe their luſtre. Before them the glories of nature all fade and vaniſh like the ſtars before the ſplendors of the meridian ſun. Theſe ennoble the ſoul, and transform it more and more into the image of GOD and of his SON JESUS CHRIST. *Beholding, as in a glaſs the glory of the LORD,* wiſe men *are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the LORD.** Theſe are objects which attract the admiration, and are the ſtudy of angels. *Which things the angels deſire to look into.*† In the ſtudy and knowledge of them, we become fellow-ſtudents with angels, and participate in their knowledge and joys. We are growing wiſer and better, and qualifying for their bliſsful ſociety and enjoyments. Wiſdom therefore is ſurely the principal thing. But this will further appear

1. As it is the moſt effectual preſervative from evil. *Forſake her not and ſhe ſhall preſerve thee; Love her and ſhe ſhall keep thee.*

MANKIND in their natural ſtate of ſin and blindneſs are expoſed to all manner of temptations, ſins, errors, and calamities. They are in conſtant danger of being led away with their own luſts and the allurements of this evil world; of hardening under the means of grace; of being taken captive by Satan at his pleaſure; of being given up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies, that they might be damned. In a ſtate of nature there is nothing infallibly to preſerve them from any of theſe evils: to prevent their making ſhipwreck of the faith, becoming apoſtates, infidels and atheiſts, denying the LORD who bought them. They are expoſed to all the judgments of GOD in this life, to die under his curſe and ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire. *Becauſe of theſe things the wrath of GOD cometh on the children of diſobedience.*‡ But wiſdom is the moſt effectual preſervative from theſe tremendous evils. *The*

* 2 Corinth. iii. 18. † 1 Pet. i. 12. ‡ Eph. v. 6.

fear of the LORD *is a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.**

It preſerves men from ſin and ſhame; from the ſnares of evil company, and of error. It makes them *ſtedfaſt* and *immoveable*; ſo that *they are not carried about with every wind of doctrine.* It is the moſt effectual preſervative from groſs ſins: From the vices which mar the beauty, enervate the bodies, impair the underſtandings, deſtroy the characters, eſtates, lives, and ſouls of men. It makes them ſober, chaſte, contented and peaceable; and determines them to ſuch a government of their paſſions and appetites as is moſt productive of health, natural happineſs, and long life. Proverbs iii. 7, 8, 18 *Fear the* LORD *and depart from evil. It ſhall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her. Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*† It preſerves men from apoſtacy and everlaſting puniſhment. Nothing, on the whole, ſhall harm the wiſe, or finally offend them. *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?*‡ *Great peace have they, that love thy law: and nothing ſhall offend them.*§ *The righteous ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.*‖ *Nothing can ſeparate them from the love of* GOD *as it is in* CHRIST JESUS *our* LORD.

2. As it implies in itſelf or influences the ſubjects of it to every thing which is honorable. *She ſhall bring thee to honor when thou doſt embrace her. A crown of glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee.*

Divine knowledge involves in it the love of God, of mankind, of holineſs, divine truth, and all honorable conduct. It makes men profitable hearers of the word, ſo that it is to them a ſavor of life unto life, and they are bleſſed in their deeds. It diſpoſes them to ſeek and intermeddle with all wiſdom, which may make them uſeful in their day. In the exerciſe

* Prov. xiii. 14, and xiv. 27. † 1 Tim. iv. 8.
‡ 1 Pet. iii. 13. § Pſalm cxix. 165. ‖ Job xvii. 9.

of it they ſeek all knowledge with right views and ends, the glory of GOD and the good of men. In conſequence of it they become the ſons of GOD, and have communion with him and with the mighty REDEEMER. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST.** They are brought into a ſtate of holy incorporation and fellowſhip with angels and ſaints in glory. *But ye are come unto mount Zion, unto the city of the living GOD, and to the innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born.*† Their faces ſhine, their examples and their works ſhine before men, and glorify their FATHER who is in heaven. They do the greateſt imaginable good to men. They *are the ſalt of the earth*, and *the light of the world.*‡ How honorable is this? It is the honor which cometh from GOD. It gives a name which is better than precious ointment, an everlaſting name, that ſhall not be cut off. Nay, *If there be any thing true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there be any virtue or any praiſe*, wiſdom will diſpoſe its happy ſubjects to think upon, ſtudy, and practiſe them. Indeed, through the grace of GOD, wiſdom will introduce men to all the dignities of the heavenly Jeruſalem: To the plaudits of angels and all the redeemed nations: To the plaudit and bleſſing of their judge, in the preſence of the aſſembled univerſe. It will deliver to thoſe who will be wiſe, a crown, not of gold and diamonds, but of life and glory, which fadeth not away. *The wiſe ſhall inherit glory.*§

3. WISDOM is the principal thing and of moſt glorious conſequence, as it brings men into a moſt bleſſed ſtate, and cauſeth them to inherit all things.

WISDOM is eternal life begun in the ſoul. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou haſt ſent.*‖ They who are the ſubjects of this knowledge are pardoned, adopted, and progreſſively ſanctified. They are bro't

* 1 John i. 3. † Heb. xii. 22, 23. ‡ Matth. v. 13, 14.
§ Prov. iii. 35. ‖ John xvii. 3.

into a ſtate of peace with GOD and all things, ſo that nothing, on the whole, ſhall harm them. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with* GOD, *through our* LORD JESUS CHRIST.* They are *in league with the ſtones of the field, and the beaſts of the field ſhall be at peace with them.*† What bleſſedneſs is this! *Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee* GOD. *Bleſſed is the man unto whom the* LORD *imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile.*‡ Wiſdom cauſeth every thing to unite its influence to make men ſafe and bleſſed. The covenant of grace ſecures to the wiſe, the benefit of adverſity and proſperity, of life and death, of all events and things in the univerſe, in time and eternity. *For we know that all things ſhall work together for good to them that love* GOD, *to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.*§ *The peace of* GOD *which paſſeth all underſtanding keeps their hearts.* They are *heirs of* GOD *and joint heirs with* CHRIST. Indeed heaven and all things *are theirs. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours.*‖ *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his* GOD, *and he ſhall be my ſon.*¶ This includes all poſſible good! How *happy is that people whoſe* GOD *is the* LORD?

4. THAT which further illuſtrates the excellency of this wiſdom, and crowns all, is, that the bleſſings of it are eternal. All other enjoyments are not only exceedingly unſatisfying, but momentary. As to this world, the faſhion and the things of it paſs away. *The things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.*** *The gift of* GOD *is eternal life through* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleaſures forever more.*††

* Rom. v. 1, 2. † Job v. 23. ‡ Pſalm xxxii. 2.
§ Rom. viii. 28. ‖ 1 Cor. iii. 22. ¶ Rev. xxi. 7.
** 2 Cor. iv. 18. †† Pſalm xvi. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. How great is the madneſs and ſin of neglecting to get wiſdom? What ineffable blindneſs is fallen upon mankind that they are not penetrated with the moſt lively ſenſe of the immenſe worth and importance of divine knowledge? That all are not lifting up their voices and crying after it? That all are not ſeeking it as ſilver and ſearching for it as for hid treaſures? What reproof does our ſubject adminiſter to us all? What conviction does it afford us of the enormity of our guilt, that we have ſtudied the ſcriptures no more, that it has been with ſo little concern and earneſtneſs to know the truth as it is in JESUS? That we have with ſuch low degrees of zeal, delight, and perſeverance attended the reading and ſtudy of books of inſtruction, piety, and devotion? That many of us have been ſo inconſtant in our attendance on the preaching of the word and other divine ordinances? That you have been ſo far from attending with ſerioufneſs on all occaſions, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, according to the divine will? That you have prayed and wreſtled ſo little with GOD to give you this divine underſtanding, which is more precious than rubies; far more valuable than the whole world? Some of you, perhaps, never once ſeriouſly aſked wiſdom of GOD, or ſo much as liked to retain him in your knowledge. Who can expreſs the aggravations and magnitude of the guilt of ſpending ſo much precious time, as many of you have ſpent in idleneſs, in paſtimes, in vanity, and in purſuit of the unſatisfying and momentary enjoyments of this life, when the *principal thing*, *the one thing needful*, *the whole of man*, has been in a great meaſure if not totally neglected? How great is the ſin of parents, maſters, and of all who have the care of inſtructing others, and of chriſtians in general, that they take ſo little pains to diffuſe knowledge, and inculcate the love and fear of GOD? And that there is not a greater degree of conſtancy and importunity in

their prayers that GOD would give them, their offſpring, and neighbours underſtanding to keep the law of GOD. How great is the ſin of children and young people, that they are ſo backward to receive inſtruction? So careleſs and inattentive to a concern of ſuch inconceivable moment to themſelves and to ſociety? How ought they to know and love their CREATOR without delay? Would you attend to theſe matters with a proper ſerioufneſs, how would you be aſtoniſhed at your guilt and madneſs in theſe reſpects? How would it alarm your conſciences and harrow up your very ſouls? Let all be ſenſible of their faults in theſe reſpects and receive the reproof which the ſubject adminiſters.

II. Is wiſdom in its nature and effects what hath been repreſented, let every one with ſerioufneſs, put this momentous queſtion to himſelf, Am I wiſe? Does my heart love wiſdom? Am I pleaſed with the glorious objects and truths which are ſeen in the light and exerciſes of it? Do they attract and transform my ſoul! Do I count all things loſs for the excellency of this knowledge? Do I find, by daily experience, That *the law of the wiſe is a fountain of life to depart from the ſnares of death?* Are the effects of it in my heart and life, purity, peace, gentleneſs, a propenſity to forgive and be reconciled, mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocriſy? Am I indeed *ſeeking wiſdom as ſilver, watching daily at her gates and waiting at the poſts of her doors?* Theſe are diſtinguiſhing queſtions. It muſt be left with your conſciences, as in the preſence of GOD, to make the reply? Happy indeed are ye, if ye can anſwer in the affirmative. Theſe things are far from the views and conduct of fools, who hate knowledge.

III. WHAT encouragement and joy does our ſubject afford to the wiſe, who have been, and are ſtill ſeeking divine knowledge? What wonderful things hath GOD done for you? Of fools he hath made you wiſe? Of wretched, miſerable ſinners, he hath made you heirs of GOD and joint heirs with JESUS CHRIST!

Your names are written in heaven, you are journeying to that bleſt abode, and the ſpirit and counſel of GOD ſhall guide and ſupport you, and his angels miniſter to you on your way. O how honorable, ſafe, and bleſſed is your ſtate? Your warfare will ſoon be accompliſhed, and *ye ſhall come to Zion with ſongs and everlaſting joy upon your heads: Ye ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.** *Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.*† Let thoſe glorious proſpects animate your ſouls amidſt every diſcouragement, and rouſe you to all holy living. *O love the* LORD, *all ye his ſaints.*‡ *Rejoice in the* LORD *evermore.*‖ *Bleſs his name at all times: let his praiſe be continually in your mouth.*§ Let the language of the Pſalmiſt ever be ours. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul; and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.* Bleſs the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion: Bleſs the LORD, O my ſoul.¶

IV. LET all be exhorted to get wiſdom, and with all their gettings to get underſtanding. Let there be the greateſt ſolicitude, the moſt zealous and united exertions among people of all ages and characters to obtain wiſdom; and, as far as poſſible, to give it an univerſal diffuſion. Let thoſe who have experienced its bleſſedneſs follow on to know the LORD. Too many profeſſing chriſtians are lamentably ignorant even in points of doctrinal knowledge, and with reſpect to the evidences of the chriſtian religion. After all their advantages for knowledge, they are like the Hebrews, of whom the apoſtle complained, *That when for the time they ought to have been teachers of others, they had need to be taught again what were the firſt principles of the oracles of* GOD.** Be unwilling to be babes in CHRIST, who can feed on milk only. O my brethren awake to duty. Grow in grace and in the knowledge

* Iſai. xxxv. 10. † Heb. xii. 12. ‡ Pſalm xxxi. 23.
‖ 1 Theſ. v. 16. § Pſalm xxxiv. 1. ¶ Pſalm ciii. 1, 2, 22.
** Heb. v. 12.

of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Be men in wiſdom. While you taſte the ſweetneſs of it, pity and pray for others. Wreſtle with GOD, that the ſpirit may be poured out, from on high upon your children and neighbours, that they may have that bleſſed anointing by which they may know all things. Spare no pains in teaching your children and domeſtics the things of the kingdom of GOD. Furniſh them with good books and all means of inſtruction. Give them time, and by all means encourage them to ſeek wiſdom. Let the language of your converſation and example to all with whom you are converſant be that of the ſpirit and bride. Say, Come, know the LORD; *Come, take of the water of life freely.**

I BESEECH all who have, until this time, lived in folly, now to hear the language, and obey the authority of GOD, in our text, and get wiſdom, and with all their getting get underſtanding. *How long, O ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity and fools hate knowledge. Turn ye at my reproof, that GOD may pour out his ſpirit unto you.* Awake to the moſt earneſt, diligent, and prayerful attention to all the means by which knowledge may be obtained. Feel your eternally undone condition without wiſdom. Feel your entire dependence on GOD for it, and aſk of him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Seek wiſdom in the love of it. Then will it keep and promote you. Embrace her and ſhe will deliver to you a crown of glory.

ESPECIALLY, I moſt earneſtly and affectionately intreat the young people, and young heads of families to receive theſe counſels. Hear, ye children, the inſtruction of a father; nay, the counſels of your glorious CREATOR. Keep his commandments and live. It has been with a view to your benefit, in particular, that I have compoſed and now deliver this diſcourſe. It has been the deſire of the brethren of this church that I would introduce the inſtructions which I deſigned to give you, by a ſermon on the duty and

* Rev. xxii. 17.

importance of obtaining divine knowledge. We wiſh you to accept it as a pledge of our eſteem and affection for you, and of our deſires that you might be wiſe, uſeful, and eternally happy. Conſider the neceſſity and worth of divine underſtanding, and the unſpeakable weight of the inſtructions which have now been given: With what commands and authority GOD has bound, and is preſſing you, and with what aſtoniſhing motives he is alluring you to the love and practice of wiſdom. What can you deſire more than is to be found in the enjoyment of it? Are not all her ways peace and pleaſantneſs? Do you wiſh for ſafety, ſhe will keep you? For riches? Will ſhe not cauſe you to inherit ſubſtance and fill your treaſures? Are there not with her durable riches and righteouſneſs? Do you thirſt for honor? Will ſhe not deliver to you the ornaments of grace, and crown you with glory? For life and pleaſure? Are there not with her length of days and pleaſures forever more? Will you for the guilty pleaſures of ſin for a moment, deprive yourſelves of all this good? Blaſt all theſe glorious proſpects, and dwell with devils and loſt men, in eternal darkneſs and deſpair? Will you not rather flee youthful luſts, evil men, and evil practices? Will you not redeem your time from every vanity, and devote yourſelves to the knowledge and ſervice of GOD? Encourage your miniſter and parents, glad heaven and earth by your early piety and good conduct? Furniſh able and good men in church and ſtate? Be bleſſings in your day and generation. Delay not a moment. Death and eternity are haſtening upon you. *Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth. Seek firſt the kingdom of GOD. Know that the wiſe ſhall inherit glory; but ſhame ſhall be the promotion of fools.*

DISCOURSE II.

ON the neceſſity of a divine Revelation.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 21.

THE world by wiſdom knew not GOD.

IT is highly important in the deiſtical controverſy, to prove the neceſſity of a ſupernatural revelation, that man might know and enjoy GOD. For if this be not neceſſary it can hardly be ſuppoſed that GOD hath ever made ſuch a revelation. The deiſts univerſally deny the neceſſity of it, and maintain that the works of GOD are amply ſufficient to give man all the information which he needs.

THE deiſts are men who renounce the ſcriptures, and treat them and the SAVIOUR of the world, with the utmoſt abuſe, contempt, and ridicule. They call themſelves deiſts from the Latin word DEUS, GOD, importing their belief of his being and perfections. Their firſt appearance was in France and Italy about the middle of the ſixteenth century. They did not appear in England until the preſent century, about ſeventy years after their origin in France.* They have

* Leland's view of the deiſtical writers, Vol. I. p. 2, 3.

written abundantly and ſpared no pains to invalidate the holy ſcriptures, and deſtroy the chriſtian religion. Their books have been widely ſpread, and, within a few years, many have been imported into theſe American ſtates. Numbers, in one place and another, have imbibed their ſentiments, lamentably turning apoſtates, denying and blaſpheming the LORD who bought them.

THOUGH the deiſts are agreed in diſcarding revealed religion, yet they are much divided, as to their opinions in other reſpects. Though they profeſs to believe the exiſtence of a GOD, yet ſome of them doubt of his moral perfections, and neither worſhip him, nor believe his providence. Some of them acknowledge a future ſtate, but others, perhaps the greateſt number, like the Sadducees and Epicureans, believe neither angels nor ſpirits, rewards nor puniſhments. As theſe ſentiments enervate all the great motives to virtue, they have generally, in all countries and places, been men of exceedingly debauched lives. Some of them, nevertheleſs, have expreſſed ſtrong expectations of happineſs; as though they imagined GOD was a friend of infidels, debauchees, and blaſphemers of his name.

To guard, as far as poſſible, againſt ſentiments and practices ſo horrible, ſo deſtructive to perſonal and domeſtic, to civil and religious happineſs; and to eſtabliſh you in a full and unſhaken belief of chriſtianity, I ſhall attempt your inſtruction and entertainment, in a ſyſtematical courſe of ſermons on the neceſſity of a divine revelation; on the various evidences we have, that God hath given us ſuch a revelation; on the inſpiration and excellency of the ſcriptures; and on their ſufficiency for all the purpoſes of our inſtruction, comfort, and ſalvation.

IN this diſcourſe, I ſhall attempt, with a view to ſubvert the very fundamentals of infidelity, to evince the abſolute neceſſity of a divine revelation, that men may truly know and worſhip their CREATOR.

THIS point is as fully decided in our text, as it can be by the authority of an apoſtle. He affirms, in the

moſt expreſs terms, that the world by wiſdom knew not GOD. After all the manifeſtations which he had made of himſelf in his works, which he had made with ſuch aſtoniſhing magnificence and wiſdom, after all the obſervations which mankind had made upon them, in the courſe of more than four thouſand years, with all the aſſiſtance of literature, and the utmoſt ſtretch of human genius, not one of the ſages of Athens, nor any of the wiſe men of Rome, nor of any other place or nation, had been able to obtain the true knowledge of GOD and of the way of ſalvation. The ſchools, and the moſt renowned cities of Greece and Rome, were full of poets, philoſophers, and worldly wiſemen; yet they knew not GOD. Men of the greateſt learning and genius, the moſt celebrated ſchools and cities were as really ignorant of him, and eſtranged from him, as the moſt barbarous nations. Indeed they were generally the greateſt idolaters and the moſt depraved in their morals. Their wiſdom effected nothing, of any benefit, with reſpect to religion. All the wiſe men, in the ſchools, and in the world, had not been able to determine a point of the firſt importance for man to know; what was the chief good. There were hundreds of opinions concerning it, and nothing could be concluded upon it with any certainty.* How to worſhip GOD acceptably, or what would be after death, they had no knowledge. Moſt certainly therefore, they needed a divine revelation to direct them.

BUT this may be further illuſtrated,

I. BY philoſophical principles.

IT is of great importance to man to know what is his chief good, what is the moral character of GOD, and what is his own; what are the principles and ends of good moral conduct; and what are the grand deſigns of the moſt High, in the creation and government of the univerſe. But it will appear, that mankind have, in all ages, been ſo ignorant of theſe great points, as to ſtand in unſpeakable need of a ſupernat-

* Varro recounts 288 opinions relative to this point

ural revelation. But further, it is eſſential to the happineſs of man to know whether GOD will be worſhipped by ſinners. How they may come before him with acceptance. Whether there is with him forgiveneſs for tranſgreſſors? And on what terms rebels againſt heaven may receive a pardon. What is the ſtate of the dead, and whether an eternity of pleaſure or pain will be the future portion of man are moſt neceſſary to be known. But on theſe momentous points the heavens and earth are ſilent as the grave. There is not, in the works or providence of GOD, the leaſt intimation of them. It is impoſſible to know the mind and thoughts of a neighbour without ſome communication from him by word, writing, or ſome other perſon, to whom he had made them known. How much leſs can men know the mind of GOD without a revelation? Could the wiſeſt ſubject in a kingdom decipher the deſigns of a prince by ſeeing his palace and equipage? Could he, by the bare ſight of them, without any other information, determine, that he would pardon certain rebels, who had committed innumerable treaſons againſt him? How much leſs can any man, by a view of the footſtool of his CREATOR, know that he will pardon tranſgreſſors? Would it not be the height of madneſs for a rebel, who had committed a thouſand treaſons, to conclude, that his offended ſovereign would forgive him, and that it was ſafe to venture into his preſence, without ſo much as hearing, that he had ever granted a pardon, or made the leaſt proviſion to extend mercy to the guilty? Eſpecially, if he had ſeen thoſe who had rebelled againſt him in numerous inſtances deſtroyed? How then can the philoſopher know that GOD will pardon him or any other ſinner? He can produce no inſtance or intimation of it. On the other hand, he ſees ſinners ſwallowed up by inundations, earthquakes, and volcanoes, deſtroyed by ſword, famine, peſtilence, conflagrations, and fire from heaven? Nay he ſees the whole race of man, the wiſeſt and the beſt, at laſt dying in great agonies and under apparent tokens of divine diſpleaſure. Pardon

is no doctrine of the Philoſophers or of the religion of nature. Some of the heathen philoſophers taught revenge, and that injuries ought not to be forgiven.* Did the pagan emperors and kings forgive their enemies? Did they pardon thoſe who rebelled againſt them? By no means. They burnt them alive: Gave them to be torn in pieces by wild beaſts, or to be put to death by the moſt cruel tortures! What therefore can be a greater abſurdity than the arguing of pardoning mercy from the light of nature? What greater preſumption than for an infidel to venture into the divine preſence? But

II. Let an appeal be made to facts. Let us take a ſurvey of mankind without a revelation, in the beſt countries, and in their beſt ſtate. This will abundantly confirm the preceding obſervations, and ſhow the neceſſity of a divine revelation, in a ſtriking and affecting point of light. Facts are ſtubborn things, far more to be depended on than abſtract reaſonings. Would we know what fallen man can do, by the mere light of nature, we muſt conſider what thoſe nations have done on whom the light of revelation never ſhone.

If we look as far back upon the various ages of mankind, as ſacred or prophane hiſtory will carry us, we ſhall find them, in all places, where they have been left merely to the light of nature, miſerably ignorant of God, of themſelves, of futurity, of pardoning mercy, or any acceptable way of worſhipping God. How much ſoever the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth is filled with his riches, it does not appear, that fallen man ever, in one inſtance, by the force of his own reaſon and the works of nature, diſcovered even the exiſtence of God. The probabil-

* Zeno maintained, that pardon is never to be granted to any one who offends or injures us. One of the philoſophers ſpent his laſt moments, in giving directions how to revenge on his enemy. Our modern deiſts practiſe on the ſame principles. Only to revenge a little inſult, or offence reſpecting ſome punctilio, they will even riſk their own lives. Nothing but a duel can decide the matter. Revenge ſeems to be dearer to them than life. This is the glorious religion of nature.

ity, from facts, is that the idea was never obtained in this way. That there was a revelation from the beginning is far more probable. That GOD ſhould create a world like this, and ſuch perſons as the firſt man and woman, and leave them to themſelves, without any inſtruction, muſt have been ſtrange indeed. How could they have known what would refreſh and what would deſtroy them? How could they have known the deſign of their creation, or the uſe of the creatures? Could we ſuppoſe a perſon to be born with the full ſtature, ſtrength, and natural reaſon of a man at twenty years of age, and left in the wilderneſs, what would he know, or what could he do? Would he be able to find the poiſe of his body? To ſtand or walk? Would he be able to ſpeak any language? Would he not as readily feed on ſtones, ſand, and pebbles, as on fleſh, apples, or berries? How could he prepare his food, or preſerve himſelf? Why would he not as readily feed on poiſon, as on ſtrawberies, or a pine apple? Suppoſing that he might learn to walk and eat before he was famiſhed with hunger, and that he might ſubſiſt, for a time, on the ſpontaneous fruits and productions of the earth, which perhaps is more than a reaſonable ſuppoſition, what could premoniſh him of the autumnal froſt and wintry cold, which would deſtroy the fruits and herbage, and at once deprive him of all the means of ſubſiſtence? Would he not periſh at laſt with hunger and cold? How exceedingly would he need inſtruction and aſſiſtance? Would the compaſſionate father of his creatures leave the rational and innocent workmanſhip of his own hands in ſuch a ſituation? Would not their creation have been in vain?

FURTHER, if there were not a revelation from the beginning, whence came the univerſal tradition of a ſabbath, and the cuſtom of offering ſacrifices, among all the ancient nations of the world? This muſt have been from revelation, as the nations could not have all diſcovered the duty of celebrating a ſabbath, and agreed upon the ſame day, as they moſt certainly did,

by the mere aſſiſtance of nature.* Much leſs could they have diſcovered the duty of ſacrificing to appeaſe the Deity. This was the univerſal practice among all nations, from the earlieſt ages of which hiſtory gives us any information. But reaſon could give no information, on this ſubject; as it is not reaſonable in itſelf, or of any ſignificancy or benefit, only as it had reference to a ſuffering and atoning Saviour. This cannot therefore be accounted for on any other ſuppoſition, than that of a ſupernatural revelation.

If no revelation has been made to man, where did Moſes obtain that ſublime and rational account which he has given us of the origin of things? The deiſtical writers ſay, that he obtained it from tradition. But if there had been no previous revelation, how came the tradition. If there was no ſuch thing as a divine revelation, how came Moſes to give ſo much better an account of the origin of nations and the peopling of the earth than any other writer?

Further, ſuch perſons as have never been able to obtain the idea of the exiſtence of a God, either from revelation or tradition, appear never to have had the remoteſt apprehenſion or thought of it. Many perſons have been born deaf, and conſequently have been dumb from their birth to manhood, and from all that could be known concerning them they never have had the knowledge or even a thought of God. When in any inſtance any ſuch perſon has come to his hearing

* Bedford, from a variety of authors, both Chriſtians and Heathens, ſhows that a ſabbath was univerſally obſerved, in the patriarchal ages, among all nations. See his chronology chapter I. p. 7. Biſhop Patrick acquaints us, from Philo, That a ſeventh day was ſo univerſally obſerved all over the world, that it was called the univerſal feſtival. Patrick on Geneſis ii. 3. Heſiod, one of the moſt ancient Greek writers, has a ſentence in which he declares the ſeventh day to be holy. Steuchius, eſteemed one of the moſt learned men, who ever flouriſhed in Italy, affirms, That a ſeventh day was every where, and in all ages, accounted venerable and holy. Pool obſerves, That Heſiod, Homer, and Linus taught, That the ſeventh day was holy, and that on that day all things were perfected. Synopſis on Gen. ii. 3.

and learned to talk, it has appeared, that he never had a thought of the divine exiſtence until it was communicated in converſation. Some inſtances there have been of Pagans who have been brought into proteſtant countries and converted to Chriſtianity, who have declared, that they had no idea of a GOD until they had been inſtructed in that truth.†

SOME whole nations, who have been entirely removed from the revelation or tradition of a GOD, have had not the leaſt idea of him, nor ſo much as the name of him. A late writer, who lived among the Hottentots, and learned their language, affirms they have not the leaſt idea of a GOD. Mr. Lock gives the ſame account of them in his time.* Modern writers give us no better account of ſeveral Pagan nations at this day. Dr. Robertſon obſerves, That "ſeveral tribes have "been diſcovered in America, which have no idea "whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of re-"ligious worſhip."‡

† Preſident Clap, in his eſſay on the nature and foundation of moral virtue, ſays, "I was well acquainted with a Negro, who was a man of ſuperior natural powers, and made a profeſſion of religion; who told me he was born in the iſland of Madagaſcar, and lived there till he was about thirty years old: and in all that time he never had thought of the being of a GOD, a CREATOR, or GOVERNOR of the world, or of a future ſtate after death."

An inſtance of this nature, no leſs remarkable, is given by Dr. Willots, in a ſermon of his on the light of nature. He relates a ſtory of a man in France, who was born deaf and dumb: yet was very knowing, active, and faithful in the common affairs of life. Upon a ſolemn trial before the biſhop, by the help of thoſe who could converſe with him, he was judged to be a knowing and devout Chriſtian, and admitted to the ſacrament of the LORD's ſupper, which he attended for many years, with all the ſigns of high devotion, ſuch as elevation of hands, eyes, &c. "At length a large quantity of hard wax was taken out of his ears; upon which he could hear, and after a while, could ſpeak and read. He then declared, that while he was deaf, he had no idea of a GOD, or maker of the world, or of a future ſtate; and that all he then did, in matters of religion, was purely in imitation of others."

* Lock on the human underſtanding, vol. I. chap. IV. page 50 to 58.

‡ See his hiſtory of America, vol. II. 4th edition page 168.

FURTHER, that the idea of GOD was obtained by revelation and not by abſtract reaſoning, from the mere light of nature, is evident in that the knowledge of the firſt philoſophers concerning GOD, was wholly from the traditions and cuſtoms which they found among the nations, and not from any reaſoning or theories of their own. Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato were the fathers of the Greek philoſophy, and the great originals of the Grecian literature. But they obtained their knowledge not by ſtudy and argumentation, but by travelling. Thales travelled into Egypt, and through various countries and nations, and collected all the knowledge which he could find in Egypt, and among the wiſe men in the ſeveral countries which he viſited. He adviſed Pythagoras to ſeek wiſdom in the ſame manner. He accordingly ſpent forty years in travelling. He made the tour of Greece, Phœnicia, and Babylon. He converſed with all the men of eminence for learning in the countries which he viſited, and made a collection of all the traditions which he could find and judged worthy of notice. In this way he collected a great ſtore of ancient traditions and knowledge.

THESE he taught as he had learned them, but made no attempts to prove the truths he had received, by reaſoning from the works of creation or providence. Plato, after his example, inſtructed in the ſame manner, and confeſſed, that his knowledge was derived from a collection of traditions.‡

THESE philoſophers did not flouriſh until after the diſperſion of the ten tribes among the nations of the Aſſyrian empire, and the Jews and their religion were known among all the nations of that part of the world. Thales was born about the ſecond year of the reign of Joſiah, and flouriſhed, as a philoſopher, in the latter part of his reign, and during a conſiderable part of the reign of Manaſſeh. Pythagoras was born about forty years after the capture of Jeruſalem, by Nebu-

‡ This fact may be ſeen very clearly illuſtrated in Shuckford's preface to his Connection of ſacred and profane hiſtory.

chadnezzar, and ſeems to have travelled to Babylon at the time of the captivity, while Daniel was prime miniſter, either in the court of Babylon or of Darius the Median. The Jews, at this period, their prieſts and rabbies were diſperſed among all the nations of the Chaldean and Perſian empire. Pythagoras lived more than eighty years, until after the return of the Jews and the building of the ſecond temple. It would therefore have been admirable indeed, if he had not ſeen and converſed with many of the Jews, and learned as much, at leaſt, from them and others with whom they were converſant, as the tradition of the creation of the world, of Adam and Eve, and of the exiſtence of one GOD, of the inſtitution of the ſabbath, and of ſacrifices. He had all the advantages which he could have for collecting the traditions reſpecting them, not only from among the Pagan nations, but from the Jews themſelves. Socrates was about a century after Pythagoras, and Plato did not flouriſh until about three hundred and ninety years before CHRIST. Before this time the Jews had been ſcattered all over the Perſian empire. Eſther had been queen and Mordecai prime miniſter in the Perſian court. Hence it is very evident, that all the juſt ideas which the Greek philoſophers had concerning GOD and religion, were from revelation, or traditions originating from that ſource. It cannot be ſhown, or even made probable, by any deiſt, or philoſopher, that ſo much as the exiſtence of a GOD has ever, in one inſtance, been firſt diſcovered by the light of nature. Hence, as it cannot be ſhown, that mankind in their lapſed ſtate, in which they like not to retain GOD in their knowledge, and none ſeeketh after him, have in any inſtance diſcovered even his exiſtence, by the light of nature, or that they ever would, it moſt certainly follows that a divine revelation was abſolutely neceſſary.

FURTHER, the neceſſity of a divine revelation appears evident from this, that the Pagan world made no advances in religion by reaſoning from the works

of God; but the more they ſpeculated, the farther they wandered from the truth.

It is exceedingly evident, not only from ſacred, but profane hiſtory, that mankind had, after the flood, ſome right notions of God and of the acceptable mode of worſhipping him. The ſons of Noah and ſome of his deſcendants, in ſeveral of the ancient nations, appear to have worſhipped the one true God, in the manner in which Noah and Abraham worſhipped him.* But whatever right notions they had, in thoſe early ages, it is moſt evident, that they made no advances in religion, by reaſoning upon it, but conſtantly declined, and corrupted themſelves more and more, until all true notions of God and his worſhip were loſt, in every nation upon earth, except among the ſeed of Abraham, to whom God was pleaſed to reveal himſelf.† The Chaldeans ſoon began to worſhip the ſun and moon; and, in proceſs of time, erected images and had their penates, or houſehold gods. In a little more than four hundred years after the flood, Abraham, as profane hiſtory relates, was perſecuted for his religion, and God ſaw it neceſſary, to prevent his church from being totally corrupted and ſwallowed up in the idolatry and pollutions of the world, to call him and his family from Chaldea into Canaan; to give him particular inſtructions, and covenant with him and his ſeed. In about ſeven centuries and an half from the deluge, the nations in general loſt all true knowledge of God and his worſhip, became groſs idolaters, and were moſt filthy and abominable in their morals. They worſhipped all the hoſt of heaven; and made images of wood and ſtone, and bowed down to them. The Egyptians worſhipped bulls, dogs, cats, the elements, the river Nile, and almoſt every thing which

* See Shuckford's Connection, Vol. I. from page 280 to 352: alſo Joſephus' Antiquities.

† Bedford's Chronology, Book II. Chap. VI. and Shuckford in the volume and pages above quoted, on the riſe and progreſs of idolatry.

they imagined did them good. They alſo, with other nations, ſacrificed their children to their gods.‡

GOD therefore ſaw it to be neceſſary to redeem his people from Egypt, and ſettle them in Canaan, as a diſtinct and ſeparate people from all the reſt of mankind, that he might prevent the total loſs of the true religion.

DURING this period of more than two thouſand and five hundred years, mankind had great advantages to make advances in religious knowledge. Their longevity, eſpecially after the flood, is witneſſed by profane as well as ſcripture hiſtory. Adam lived with his poſterity nine hundred and thirty years, to inſtruct them in the nature, works, and worſhip of GOD. No man perhaps had greater advantages than he, from the mere force of reaſon, experience, and obſervation, to obtain the true knowledge of GOD and his worſhip. Whatever he knew, from GOD, or his own obſervations, he doubtleſs communicated to his poſterity. His pious ſon Seth lived an hundred and twelve years after the death of his father. Methuſelah who was contemporary one hundred and forty years with Adam, and a much longer period with his grand-father Seth, and his godly father Enoch, continued with the inhabitants of the old world, to inſtruct them, until the very year before the flood. Within this period, if we may admit the ſcripture as a credible hiſtory, Enoch flouriſhed, preached righteouſneſs more than three hundred years, and was tranſlated. Noah had lived about ſix hundred years to inſtruct the world, and give them an example of holy living. Under theſe advantages of longevity and inſtruction, it ſeems mankind might have looked deeply into religion and have been univerſally acceptable worſhippers of GOD, if the mere light of nature, even, with ſome ſmall degree of divine inſtruction, had been ſufficient for the aſſiſtance of fallen man.

‡ Bedford's Chronology, Book II. Chap. VI. and Dr. Henry Owen's ſermons at the Boyle lecture; eſpecially ſermon X. on the miracles wrought in Egypt. See alſo Pool's Synopſis, and Dr. Guyſe on the firſt chapter of Romans.

But inſtead of making any progreſs in divine knowledge, all fleſh had corrupted his way upon earth, and it was filled with violence. God for the wickedneſs of men deſtroyed them with a moſt memorable deſtruction.§

If we trace the hiſtory of mankind down through the whole patriarchal age, until the giving of the law at mount Sinai, and the writing of the five books of Moſes, and downwards for a thouſand years from the flood, we ſhall find the nations who had no written revelation conſtantly corrupting themſelves and departing farther and farther from all true notions of God and his worſhip.

Yet in this period great events happened to awaken and call up the attention of all men to religion, and they had many advantages for religious improvement. The ſtory of the deluge, the confounding of languages at Babel, the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the overthrow of Pharaoh, and the planting of Iſrael in Canaan were calculated to excite the moſt earneſt enquiries after God, and to teach men his nature and perfections.* Noah continued three hundred years after the flood to teach his poſterity; and Shem lived until after the death of Abraham. Before the cloſe of this thouſand years from the flood, great advances were made in literature, both in Egypt and Babylon. But it does not appear that the nations, by all their reſearches and human wiſdom, had obtained, or advanced one new and juſt idea of God and his worſhip. How ſtriking therefore is the evidence, that the world by

§ Profane hiſtory records the univerſal deluge, as a fact known to all nations. Pagan writers alſo declare that it was for the great wickedneſs of mankind. The evidences of it are to be found in all parts of the earth. Bedford's Chronology, Chap. VI. 52, 53, and Chap. XII. 151, 152. Joſephus, in his Antiquities, quotes many authors to this purpoſe. It appears, that traditions of Noah's piety, and of his ſalvation by the ark were among all the ancient nations of the eaſt.

* Theſe events were noticed by Pagan hiſtorians. See Shuckford, Bedford, and Dr. Owen, in his ſermons at the Boyle lecture.

wiſdom knew not GOD, and that a ſupernatural revelation was abſolutely neceſſary!

FROM the time of Iſrael's taking poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, until the promulgation of the goſpel was about fifteen centuries. During this period GOD, in his providence, ſuffered mankind to try all the powers of human literature and wiſdom. Within this time the Babylonian, Perſian, Grecian, and Roman empires, the four great monarchies of the world, flouriſhed in their greateſt magnificence and ſplendor. Human wiſdom and literature were carried to the higheſt degree of eminence in the Pagan world. Greece and Rome abounded with men of human wiſdom and ſcience. Their ſchools and cities were replete with poets, orators, philoſophers, and worldly-wiſe men. But they were even in the height of all this worldly wiſdom totally ignorant of the true knowledge of GOD, and of any acceptable mode of worſhipping him. They had not corrected any of their wrong notions of him, nor obtained one new ſentiment or idea which was juſt concerning him. Not only the common people, but the philoſophers, the moſt learned and famous men, and the moſt renowned cities worſhipped a whole rout of gods. Some were male and ſome female; and both the philoſophers and common people aſcribed to them all the paſſions, luſts, and crimes to be found in the worſt of men. They imagined that Jupiter, their ſupreme god, was the ſon of Saturn, that he rebelled againſt him and drove him out of his kingdom. The wiſeſt men among the Romans ſuppoſed, that the gods could be bribed, and conſidered it as a chief point of policy, when they were about to make war with a nation, in the firſt place to bribe their gods by promiſing them more worſhip than they received from the nations over whom they preſided, and to whom they granted their protection.* What horrid ideas were theſe of GOD! Of what poſſible advantage could they be to mankind?

* Deiſm revealed, vol. I. See alſo Watſon's Apology.

THE philoſophers, even the beſt of them, Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, and Cato taught the moſt filthy and abominable doctrines and practices, were polytheiſts in practice, at leaſt maintaining among a multiplicity of inferior deities, two ſupreme, one infinitely good and the other equally bad.*

THAT affecting character of the Heathen world given by the apoſtle in the firſt chapter of the Romans is abundantly witneſſed by prophane hiſtory. The philoſophers were abandoned to every ſpecies of wickedneſs which can debaſe human nature. They were knaves, idolaters, ſodomites, murderers, ſuicides, and haters of the Gods.†

* Deiſm revealed.

† Cicero in a letter to a friend, after the death of his daughter Julia, declares, "I hate the very gods, who hitherto have been ſo profuſe in their favors to me." He maintained, That men were ſuperior to the gods, becauſe they acted freely, but the gods neceſſarily. He alſo taught the lawfulneſs of ſimple fornication and ſays that it was never found fault with. Plato taught the lawfulneſs of the ſame, and in his book of laws recommends a community of women. He adviſed that ſoldiers ſhould not be reſtrained from any wanton indulgence, not even from the unnatural ſin. Cato turned an oppreſſor and public robber, and when he came to be preſſed with calamity was ſo diſſatisfied with divine providence and the world, that he murdered himſelf. Indeed ſelf-murder was recommended and practiſed by the beſt of the philoſophers; by Zeno, Cato, Brutus, and others. Brutus, after all his mighty heroiſm and ſhow of virtue, concluded his life with this exclamation: "Virtue, I have purſued thee in vain, and found thee to be an empty name;" and then killed himſelf. Lycurgus encouraged tricking and ſtealing by an expreſs law. Theſe were ſome of the moſt excellent and famous among the Heathen philoſophers. Socrates, who is ſo much celebrated, it has been obſerved, was a polytheiſt in practice, and he ordered a cock, at his death to be ſacrificed to Eſculapius. Though both he and Plato ſometimes talked obſcurely of one GOD, yet at others they ſpake favorably of a plurality of deities, and recommended it to their diſciples to worſhip the gods of their country. It is repreſented by the writers of their lives, that they, as well as the other philoſophers, took long journies by land, and made dangerous voyages by ſea to viſit the moſt celebrated proſtitutes of their age. The philoſophers kept miſtreſſes, let out their wives for hire, and committed crimes ſtill greater than it was poſſible to do with women.

THE laws not only encouraged, but in ſome inſtances obliged the people to commit groſs wickedneſs. The Greeks and Romans in the higheſt ſtate of their refinement and literature encouraged and enforced lewdneſs by law. In ſome of the cities of Greece, ſodomy was allowed of by law, and every woman was obliged once in her life to proſtitute herſelf in honor to Venus.*

THE Heathen nations not only ſacrificed their children to the gods, but ſuch as they did not like they threw to the wild beaſts, into pits or water, or left them to periſh without their care. Both the Greeks and Romans did this in their beſt eſtate. The fathers had, by law, the power of life and death over their children, and ſuch as were not left to periſh without their care, were treated as ſlaves. Some of the Heathens, when their parents grew old killed and ate them; others fatted and ate their captives, nay their own children, eſpecially by their concubines, and when they were paſt their teeming age, fatted and ate them. In Athens, Rome, Corinth, and other principal cities, all manner of obſcenity was practiſed without ſhame. Their unrighteouſneſs, falſehood, and inhumanity were not leſs flagrant than their filthineſs.

EVEN at Rome, the kings and generals, who had been conquered, loaded with chains were driven into the city, before their conquerors, to the capitol. As they paſſed through the ſtreets, they were inſulted, in their misfortunes, by mimicks and buffoons. When the Romans had finiſhed this inhuman triumph and inſult, they led them to their priſons and ſtrangled them. It was their common practice, to ſuffer their old and

* The iſle Cyprus was devoted to Venus, and hiſtorians relate that the women proſtituted themſelves to foreigners. Strabo acquaints, that at Corinth there was a temple dedicated to her, belonging to which there were more than a thouſand prieſteſſes, all common ſtrumpets, trained to lewdneſs. She was worſhipped in the moſt impure manner. The feaſts in honor of Bacchus and Saturn were celebrated with drunkenneſs and every ſpecies of debauchery; and at theſe times they were reckoned among the greateſt virtues.

uſeleſs ſlaves, who had been worn out in their ſervice, to ſtarve upon an iſland in the Tyber. Their exhibitions of gladiators, for common ſhow and diverſion, was another horrid ſcene of inhumanity and murder, calculated to inſpire the ſpectators with the worſt feelings and to train them to blood. The ſwordſmen were ſworn to fight until they were killed: If they did not they were put to death by fire or ſword, or in ſome other cruel and violent manner.†

SUCH was the religion of nature, in the moſt civilized and learned parts of the Pagan world, many ages before, and at the time of the promulgation of the goſpel. Never was the world in a ſtate of greater darkneſs and corruption, than at the commencement of the goſpel era.

THE ſtate of the Pagan nations, on whom the light of revelation has never ſhone, is no better at the preſent time. The ſame ignorance of GOD and the ſame vices, in general, are to be found among them.* The Chineſe, thoſe ingenious people have no juſt ideas of GOD, or any right mode of worſhipping him.

INDEED there appears, in all the Heathen world, not one juſt thought of the moral perfections of GOD, nor even of ſome of his natural ones: Not a thought of his infinite purity, truth, and faithfulneſs, of his omniſcience and immutability: Not the leaſt idea that he was to be ſupremely loved for his own infinite amiableneſs, nor of repentance of ſin, as againſt him: That they were under obligations to love their neighbour as

† The Stoics condemned all compaſſion, and ſome philoſophers recommended revenge. Plato acknowledges that forgiveneſs was contrary to their doctrine. Theſe facts and much more of the ſame kind may be found in the book entitled Deiſm revealed, in Mr. Lock on the human underſtanding, in Pool's Synopſis on Romans firſt, and in Dr. Guyſe's paraphraſe and notes on the ſame chapter: Alſo in Dr. Whitby on 2 Tim. i. 10; and in Dr. Edwards' ſermon before the General Aſſembly, May 8th, 1794.

* Mr. Lock on the human underſtanding, vol. I. from page 34 to 35, and from page 50 to 58. And Dr. Robertſon's hiſtory of America. Let us alſo view the ſtate of the Indians in North America.

themſelves; love, forgive, and do good to their enemies: Not the leaſt idea of the duty of truſting in GOD, of ſubmiſſion to him, of the forgiveneſs of ſins, a reſurrection, or judgment to come. After all the boaſtings which there are of the clear light of nature there does not appear to have been one right ſentiment of piety and righteouſneſs in all the Pagan world: Not the moſt diſtant hint or notion of the principles and ends of moral action. How forcible and ſtriking therefore is the evidence, that the world by wiſdom knew not GOD, and that a divine revelation was abſolutely neceſſary.

BUT if we ſhould allow, that the philoſophers had ſome right ideas reſpecting GOD and morality, this will by no means invalidate the argument in favor of revelation; becauſe they might have eaſily obtained, and probably did obtain, theſe originally from revelation. That the firſt philoſophers obtained their knowledge from this ſource, is evident from the ſtate of the world, at the time when they lived, and from their own confeſſions as has been already noticed. That the more modern ones derived theirs from revelation, or traditions originating from it, is ſtill more probable. The Pagan nations became more acquainted with the Jews and their religion, the more they approached towards the goſpel era. The Jews were well known both to the Greeks and Romans from the time of Judas Maccabeus. They were greatly oppreſſed, and their temple was polluted, by the former; and they were in league with the latter, or in ſubjection to them, from that period until after the promulgation of the goſpel. Three hundred years before the public miniſtry of our bleſſed SAVIOUR, the Hebrew bible was tranſlated into Greek, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus. It was depoſited in the grand library at Alexandria, and ſpread among the nations. There were therefore great numbers of men, in the various nations of the Roman empire, well acquainted with the ſcriptures, and devout worſhippers of the true GOD, before the aſcen-

ſion of our LORD. It muſt therefore have been next to impoſſible for them to learn nothing from revelation, or from thoſe to whom it had been made. It is matter of aſtoniſhment that they obtained no more than they knew. We have need only to look upon the Pagan nations in all paſt ages, on the American Indians and other Heathens of the preſent age, to give us the moſt affecting evidence of the neceſſity and ineſtimable worth of a divine revelation.

III. THE moſt illuminated philoſophers of the Pagan world have acknowledged their need of a divine revelation. They could not by reaſoning ſatisfy themſelves, whether the traditions which they had received reſpecting GOD and religion were true. The more they attended to the ſubject of prayer, the way of acceſs to GOD, the immortality of the ſoul, or any thing beyond the grave, the more they found themſelves embarraſſed, and to need aſſiſtance from GOD. They appear greatly to have wiſhed for immortality, ſociety, and communion with good men after death; but acknowledged themſelves to be in a ſtate of entire uncertainty with reſpect to them. Socrates, Plato, Cato, and Cicero all doubted with reſpect to theſe points. Iamblichus, in the life of Pythagoras, ſpeaking of the principles of divine worſhip, ſays, "It is manifeſt that thoſe things are to be done which are pleaſing to the gods; but what they are is not eaſy to know, except a man were taught them by GOD himſelf, or by ſome perſon who had received them from GOD, or obtained them by ſome divine means." Plato has a remarkable paſſage in his ſecond Alcibiad, in which he repreſents Socrates meeting Alcibiades as he was going to the temple to pray. Upon which he proved to him that he knew not how to perform the duty, and that it was not ſafe for him to make the attempt; but that he ſhould wait for a divine inſtructor to teach him how to behave towards the gods and men; and that it was neceſſary that GOD ſhould ſcatter the darkneſs which covered the ſoul, that it might be put into a condition to

diſcern good and evil.* With reſpect to the immortality of the ſoul, Semias is repreſented as ſaying to Socrates, "We muſt put up with the beſt arguments we can get, until ſome promiſe or revelation ſhall clear up the point to us."† Cicero treats of the immortality of the ſoul as very doubtful, and having ſaid all in his power in favor of it, acknowledges that many great philoſophers contradicted his opinion; and concludes by obſerving, which of theſe opinions is true ſome God muſt tell us; which is moſt like truth is a great queſtion. Seneca ſaid it is what our wiſe men promiſe but do not prove. Socrates ſaid he was not confident, and that it did not become a wiſe man to be.‡ Thus theſe great men, the greateſt and beſt of whom the Heathen world could ever boaſt, after all their ſpeculations, groped in darkneſs. How ſafely therefore may we adopt the language of the apoſtle, *The world by wiſdom knew not* GOD.

IV. SHOULD it, after all be granted, which doubtleſs cannot be conſiſtently with truth, that there has been ſome wiſe man, or wiſe men, one among a thouſand or ten thouſands, who, having devoted themſelves to reading and ſpeculation, have by the light of nature obtained ſome juſt ideas concerning GOD and religion; this would by no means ſuperſede the neceſſity of a revelation. The world would be little altered by one or two men, riſing up once in an age, or in ten or fifteen ages. The great maſs of the common people cannot give themſelves to ſtudy and ſpeculation. Few men are capable of accurately tracing the relation between cauſe and effect, and of riſing from the latter to the abſtruſe and profound idea of a GOD. The maſs of mankind know little about cauſe and effect and reaſon little from one to the other. However eaſy it may be to a mind, illuminated with ſcience and reve-

* Leland's view vol. 1. p. 11. Addiſon's Evid. p. 171.

† Edwards' Miſcellanies p. 245.

‡ Dr. Whitby on 2 Tim. i. 10. Where he hath made large quotations from the philoſophers in their own language, where are to be found moſt of the conceſſions above; and many others by which it appears that moſt of the philoſophers denied a future ſtate, and all were in doubt concerning it.

lation to argue a CREATOR from his works, yet it requires conſiderable learning and obſervation before men can enter into abſtruſe reaſoning. How then could the common people be convinced of truths which one or two men in the world, or in a number of ages might diſcover by abſtract reaſonings? How could thoſe few men eſtabliſh their authority above that of all the other great and wiſe men, who would oppoſe them? How would they be able to enforce and propagate their opinions and morals in oppoſition to all the pre-conceived opinions, prejudices, and luſts of mankind? There would be no laws nor ſanctions to enforce their opinions or the morals which they might recommend? The world of mankind, after all they might diſcover, would be left in the ſame ignorant and miſerable condition in which they were before. What effect had the opinion of Pythagoras and Socrates reſpecting the unity of the deity to reclaim the world from its polytheiſm? What have ſpeculative opinions and natural religion ever done to reclaim mankind or to meliorate their condition? It has been found, that even true religion cannot, for any time, be ſupported, its doctrines and morals kept alive among mankind without a ſtanding revelation, and a conſtant public inculcation of them, and celebration of divine ordinances. The experience of all ages, and the obſervation of wiſe men in all places, wherever the true religion has been enjoyed, abundantly teach us this truth. It was by conſtant inſtruction that the knowledge of the true GOD, of his worſhip and of religion were kept up in the family of Abraham, and in the Jewiſh church. In this way only have they been preſerved in the chriſtian church. In proportion as divine revelation and inſtruction, and the chriſtian ordinances have been neglected, in any country, or place, the knowledge of GOD, and the knowledge and practice of religion have declined or been loſt. Chriſtians, who have been carried into Heathen countries, or loſt upon iſlands where they have not had the bible and Chriſtian inſtruction, in one or two generations, have loſt all re-

ligon, and become Heathens. Indeed ſuch as have been educated in Chriſtian families and enjoyed all the means of grace, only removing into new ſettlements where the means of inſtruction are not ſtatedly enjoyed, ſoon looſe all ſenſe of the ſacredneſs of the ſabbath, turn it into a day of mirth and paſtime, neglect prayer, and live like Heathens. But natural religion, if any ſuch thing there be, has inſtituted no means of inſtruction, has no ordinances, nor ſanctions, never has ſerved nor ever can ſerve the great intereſts of piety or righteouſneſs. All its maxims, ſo far as they can be learned from the Heathen philoſophers, are directly oppoſite to both. Hence after the faireſt conceſſions, and every view which we can take of the ſubject, a ſupernatural revelation appears to be of the higheſt neceſſity.

FROM what has been diſcourſed we are naturally led to reflect,

I. How miſerable and hopeleſs our condition would have been, had not the light of the glorious goſpel ſhone upon us. We ſhould have been covered with groſs darkneſs, and ſitting in the region and ſhadow of death. We might have been changing *the glory of the incorruptible* GOD, *into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beaſts and creeping things*;* bowing down to dumb idols and worſhipping the work of our own hands. We might have been the murderers of our tender babes inſtead of nurſing and training them up to manhood and uſefulneſs: The deſtroyers of our parents inſtead of the props and ſolace of their withering years. Nay, we might have been the ſlaves of every luſt which can debaſe human nature, and render it miſerable. Without the knowledge of our guilt or danger, or of any way of eſcape, we might have been plunging into the bottomleſs pit, into an eternity of endleſs puniſhment and deſpair.

* Rom. i. 23.

II. How ſhould we prize a divine revelation and preached goſpel, and rejoice in them? With what ardors of love and gratitude ſhould we receive them and inceſſantly bleſs GOD for them? Theſe remove the curtain which hangs over the grave and intercepts eternity from our view. Life and immortality are brought to light through the goſpel. This brings us the knowledge of a glorious reſurrection for the juſt. It ſhows us, that this mortal ſhall put on immortality, and that death ſhall be *ſwallowed up in victory*. The law of the LORD is perfect, imparting light to the eyes and converting the ſoul. How much more valuable is it than thouſands of gold and ſilver? How much ſweeter alſo than honey and the honeycomb? Here we ſee the glorious things which many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee and hear, and yet never enjoyed the privilege. Who can expreſs the obligations which we are under to praiſe and new obedience from the enjoyment of the goſpel? O how ſhould we bleſs the LORD, with all our powers, for the holy ſcriptures? Let our hearts and tongues, our lives, all our intereſts and opportunities, heaven and earth be forever employed in praiſing him for this ineſtimable bleſſing!

III. How ſhould we pity and pray for the poor Heathen? For millions made of the ſame blood, capable of the ſame holineſs and happineſs with ourſelves; and yet periſhing, without GOD, without CHRIST, and without hope in the world? How cheerfully and zealouſly ſhould chriſtians employ their money, their wiſdom, labors, and prayers, that the gathering of the nations may be to the divine SHILOH, and that they may know by experience that his reſt is glorious?

IV. WE are taught in a ſtrong and affecting point of light the falſehood and criminality of deiſm.

IT appears, that the very leading ſentiment of infidels, that a revelation from GOD is unneceſſary, is utterly falſe and groundleſs. It contradicts the cleareſt arguments from reaſon, is wholly inconſiſtent with experience and the plaineſt facts, upon the trial of

thouſands of years: Nay, with the ſentiments and confeſſions of the moſt famous philoſophers of the Pagan world. It is ſtrikingly contradicted by the preſent ſtate of all nations now upon earth on whom the light of revelation has not ſhone. There is not one which appears to have any true and conſiſtent ideas of GOD or his worſhip. It is repugnant to the faith and practice of the wiſeſt and beſt men, in all ages of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian church, who have embraced divine revelation and ventured their eternal all upon the truths of it. It contradicts the whole tenor and deſign of the ſcripture, and all the evidence which we have of its divine original.

THERE is alſo in deiſm intolerable haughtineſs and preſumption, as infidels ſet up themſelves and their ſentiments not only againſt the opinions of the greateſt ſages of the Pagan world, but againſt thoſe of all the great and learned characters among Chriſtians, and of the whole Chriſtian world; and as they refuſe to be taught by GOD himſelf. Their preſumption appears inconceivably great, as they run the riſk of infinite loſs and puniſhment, and venture endleſs happineſs upon mere conjecture and whim. They expect either to be deprived of exiſtence, at death, or that GOD will ſave them, without the leaſt evidence. They have not the leaſt promiſe or intimation from GOD, that he will pardon and ſave ſinners, but many intimations of his wrath againſt them, in the diſpenſations of his providence, excluſive of the awful threatenings of his word.

DEISM is ineffably criminal and cruel. Criminal, as it makes GOD a liar, as it treats his ſon and the holy ſcriptures in the moſt blaſphemous manner. It treats the SAVIOUR of the world as an impoſtor, his holy apoſtles and prophets as the greateſt deceivers, and the ſcriptures as a mere fable and impoſition. It robs GOD of the honor of all that worſhip which he hath inſtituted, and of his wiſdom, power, and mercy in the ſalvation of ſinners. It tends directly and totally to fruſtrate the darling ſcheme of the heavenly

Father, and to deſtroy his rational creatures. It tends not only to weaken, but entirely to ſet aſide all the great motives to virtue. It leads to a total corruption of manners, and to reduce us back again to the ignominy and wretchedneſs of heatheniſm. It is entirely inimical to domeſtic and civil order and happineſs, as it deſtroys the ſocial virtues and introduces all the vices by which the community is made weak, contemptible, and miſerable.

In all theſe reſpects it is cruel. Cruel, as it deprives men of all the inward pleaſures and joys of holy living: Of the external peace and ſafety, originating from righteouſneſs, truth, mercy, and faithfulneſs. It is cruel, as it robs men of the nobleſt ſupports and the moſt glorious proſpects amidſt all the trials of life, and in the awful moments of diſſolution. It is cruel, far more cruel, than the grave, as it deprives men of the dignity and bleſſedneſs of eternal life, and leads directly down to the dreary regions of endleſs deſpair and woe.

In a word, how ſhould we pity and pray for the unhappy men who are fallen into this fatal deluſion; and employ all means in our power to reclaim them? How ſhould heads of families, miniſters, teachers of ſchools and colleges employ their united exertions to refute and by all means guard againſt, principles ſo fatal to our churches; ſo inimical to perſonal, domeſtic, civil, and religious order and happineſs? Love to God and concern for his honor, and the welfare of his kingdom; to individuals, to the community at large, to the preſent generation, and to poſterity, challenge, that our warmeſt zeal and moſt ſpirited efforts ſhould be perſeveringly directed to this great point.

DISCOURSE III.

On the Divinity of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament.

HEBREWS i. 1.

God, who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets.

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſe, attempted to ſhow the neceſſity of a divine revelation, I ſhall now proceed to evince, that God has indeed given to mankind ſuch a revelation, and laid a ſure foundation for the reviving and bleſſed hope, which the good man entertains of eternal life. The words which have been read are a noble atteſtation to the truth and divinity of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament. They affirm, that in all thoſe numerous ways, and different times in which the ſcriptures were communicated, and in the various parts of them, God ſpake to the fathers, by the prophets. All that was ſpoken to the patriarchs before Moſes, to Moſes himſelf, and by him to the people; all that was ſpoken by ſucceeding prophets, before the coming of Christ, God ſpake. They were his words ſpoken by the prophets. Therefore the text confirms all the parts of the Old

Teſtament, as a book of divine truth, written by the direction and inſpiration of the GOD of truth. In other paſſages of the New-Teſtament, we have declarations to the ſame effect. The prophets are repreſented as governed wholly by the ſpirit of CHRIST, in all their reſearches after truth, and in all they delivered to the church. *Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired, and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto you: ſearching what, or what manner of time, the ſpirit of CHRIST which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified before hand the ſufferings of CHRIST, and the glory which ſhould follow.** To the ſame purpoſe is 2 Peter i. 21. *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of GOD ſpake as they were moved by the Holy GHOST.* In theſe paſſages, all which the prophets foreſaw, predicted and wrote is declared to have been foreſeen and ſpoken by the Holy GHOST. It is affirmed that it came not by the will of man, not according to the will of the prophets themſelves, or of any other men, not by any contrivance, deſign, or private purpoſe of theirs, or to ſerve any human, or ſiniſter ends; but was delivered wholly by the influence and direction of the divine ſpirit.

FROM the text and theſe parallel paſſages of ſcripture, I am warranted to make the following remark.

THAT the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are a divine revelation, given by GOD himſelf, and moſt certainly to be depended on in all matters of faith and practice.

FOR the further illuſtration of this truth we will attend particularly to the divine legation of Moſes, and the evidence that the pentateuch, or five books written by him, are of divine authority; and then contemplate the evidence that other parts of the Old Teſtament are a divine word.

THAT Moſes was commiſſioned and ſent of GOD, and that the pentateuch is of divine authority may be proved,

* 1 Peter i. 10, 11.

I. FROM the facts related, and the circumſtances attending them, which ſhow that they could not but be true.

THAT mankind had a revelation from the beginning is very certain from ſeveral things obſerved in the preceding diſcourſe. As man is a rational creature, capable of moral government, and a ſteward of his great maſter, entruſted by him with many of his goods, ſo it appears exceedingly neceſſary, that there ſhould be an expreſs law, with proper ſanctions, to direct his conduct and animate him to duty; to awaken his fears of rebellion againſt his CREATOR, and of unrighteouſneſs and cruelty towards the human kind. As the divine mind is unſearchable and infinite, and his counſels and ways cannot be ſearched out; as man has no innate ideas, but obtains all his knowledge by experience, obſervation, inſtruction, and his own reaſoning upon what he obſerves and learns; and as the progreſs of the mind in knowledge is, at firſt, very ſlow and gradual, it ſeems abſolutely neceſſary that man, at the firſt, ſhould have been inſtructed by GOD himſelf. He had no human being to give him information. His duty to GOD, to mankind, and to the irrational creatures, in the various relations which he ſuſtained, or might ſuſtain, in the peculiar circumſtances in which he was created, or in which he ſoon might be, was exceedingly extenſive and various. To ſuppoſe that he could at once know this, without inſtruction, experience, or any kind of intimation from GOD is the height of abſurdity. How much time and inſtruction, under all the advantages enjoyed even by Chriſtians, are neceſſary to bring perſons, even of a good genius, to a tolerable underſtanding of the various branches and vaſt extent of duty? How little of this would a man know who ſhould be born in a wilderneſs and ſecluded from all human ſociety, even to the cloſe of a life of an hundred years? From theſe conſiderations it appears moſt rational to ſuppoſe, and exceedingly probable, that GOD revealed himſelf to man in the day of his creation.

But waving all conſiderations of this kind, I proceed to ſtate a number of facts and circumſtances relative to the legation of Moſes, and the divinity of his books.

That there was very anciently ſuch a nation as the Jews, ſuch a perſon as Moſes, and ſuch books as thoſe of the pentateuch written by Moſes, and that they are the moſt ancient of any writings with which mankind have any acquaintance is abundantly evident from a great variety of teſtimony

Moses led the Iſraelites out Egypt in the year of the world 2513, 1487 years before the birth of our bleſſed Saviour.* The five books, called the pentateuch, were written between this time and his death, which was in the year of the world 2553. That Moſes wrote theſe books is evident from their contents, from the teſtimony of the whole nation of Iſrael from that time until the Jews ceaſed to be a church; and this is witneſſed by the book of Joſhua, and by far the greateſt part of the ſucceeding writers of the Old Teſtament.

In the books themſelves, it is written, *And Moſes came and told the people all the words of the* LORD, *and all the judgments: And Moſes wrote all the words of the* LORD. *And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people.*† *Theſe be the journeys of the children of Iſrael which went forth out of the land of Egypt; and Moſes wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the* LORD.‡ *Theſe are the commandments, and the judgments which the* LORD *commanded by the hand of Moſes, unto the children of Iſrael, in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho.*‖ *And it came to paſs when Moſes had made an end of wri-*

* This is according to the common computation, ſee Prince's and Bedford's chronology. This is fixed by the lives of the Patriarchs, by eclipſes of the ſun, changes and fulls of the moon and a great variety of facts and circumſtances which cannot with any color of reaſon be gainſayed. See Bedford's elaborate, ingenious, and learned calculations and tables.

† Exodus xxiv. 3, 4, 7. ‡ Numbers xxxiii. 1, 2.

‖ Chap. xxxvi. 13.

ting this law in a book, until they were finiſhed; that Moſes commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, *ſaying, Take the book of the law, and put it in the ſide of the ark of the covenant of the* LORD *your* GOD, *that it may be there, for a witneſs againſt thee.*§ Thus the books of Moſes claim him for their author, and to have been ſpoken and written by him according to the commandment of the LORD; and to be in fact no other than the commandments of the moſt high GOD. Joſhua, who was the conſtant miniſter of Moſes, and immediately ſucceeded him in the command of the choſen tribes, often refers to this law of Moſes; on various occaſions, repeats many things from the pentateuch, and in the worſhip of GOD, in the diviſion of the land, in the appointment of the cities of refuge, and all other matters of civil and religious importance, he conducted every thing according to the commandment and law of Moſes. In his laſt addreſs to the people, in the cloſe of his life, he moſt earneſtly enjoined it upon them to keep the law of Moſes, and not to turn from it to the right hand or the left.¶ How the law and writings of Moſes are confirmed by the other ſacred writers, and by the whole Jewiſh church will be more particularly ſhown in a ſucceeding part of this diſcourſe.

SPECIAL attention ſhall now be paid to certain other facts and circumſtances related in theſe books. They affirm, That upon Moſes' ſtretching out his rod the rivers, ſtreams, ponds, and pools of Egypt became blood, and that there was blood in veſſels both of wood and ſtone throughout all the land of Egypt; and that the river Nile ſtank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water: That at his word frogs were ſent, the duſt of the earth was turned into lice, and the whole land plagued with ſwarms of flies: That he ſent a murrain upon their cattle, and plagued them with thunder and hail, locuſts and darkneſs; and ſlew

§ Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26. ¶ Joſhua xxiii. 6.

all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt: And, that by theſe mighty wonders, he brought the Iſraelites out of the houſe of their bondage, and led them ſafely thro' the ſea: That upon the ſtretching out of the hand of Moſes, it returned to its ſtrength, and drowned Pharaoh and all his hoſts. They declare, that while all the plagues abovementioned fell upon the Egyptians, the Iſraelites were in perfect ſafety; and that, at the prayer of Moſes, the plagues, in various inſtances were removed from the Egyptians.* They alſo relate that GOD went before the Iſraelites in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night: That in that great event of paſſing through the ſea, the pillar of the cloud removed, *and came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Iſrael; and was a cloud and darkneſs to them, but gave light by night to theſe; ſo that the one came not near the other all the night.*† Theſe books further witneſs that GOD came down upon mount Sinai in a moſt majeſtic and awful manner in the ſight of all Iſrael. *And it came to paſs on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud: ſo that all the people that was in the camp, trembled. And Moſes brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with* GOD, *and they ſtood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a ſmoke, becauſe the* LORD *deſcended upon it in fire: And the ſmoke thereof aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet ſounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moſes ſpake, and* GOD *anſwered him by a voice.*‡ *And the ſight of the glory of the* LORD *was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Iſrael.*§ *And the* LORD *talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire.*‖ Another very remarkable fact is recorded in theſe ſcriptures, That Moſes gave the Iſraelites manna from heaven, and water from the rock, and without ſowing or harveſt, ſuſtained their

* Exodus vii. to xiv. incluſively. † Exodus xiv. 20.
‡ Exodus xix. 16, 17, 18, 19. § Chap. xxiv. 17. ‖ Deut. v. 4.

numerous armies forty years in a barren wilderneſs. *And the children of Iſrael did eat manna forty years until they came to a land inhabited; They did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*¶ *And thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moſes did ſo in the ſight of the elders of Iſrael.**

THESE are ſome of the wonders wrought by Moſes, the ſervant of the LORD, or rather by GOD himſelf, through his inſtrumentality, to confirm his miſſion, and the divinity of what he ſpake and wrote. They were events concerning which the people could not be deceived, and of which a child of ten years was capable of giving a ſubſtantial evidence. All Iſrael, from the child to the man of grey hairs, could certainly know whether they walked through the ſea, as upon dry ground; whether they ſaw the Egyptians, in the morning dead upon the ſea ſhore; whether they ſaw mount Sinai all on a flame and quaking to its centre, and were filled with quaking and aſtoniſhment themſelves, when the trumpet ſounded louder and louder, and GOD gave the law with ſuch ſigns of majeſty and glory. It is impoſſible but that they ſhould know whether they fed forty years upon manna, and whether they and their flocks drank waters from the rock of flint. Theſe, with many other things which have been noticed, were calculated to awaken all their attention, and to make the moſt deep and laſting impreſſions on the feelings and memories of old and young. They could no more be deceived with reſpect to them, than they could with reſpect to their ſight of the ſun and ſtars, or their knowledge of their own exiſtence. Theſe alſo were all works of the greateſt notoriety, wrought before a whole nation, conſiſting of millions of people.† Some of them were of long continuance, and their effects viſible, great, and permanent.

¶ Exodus xvi. 35. * Chapter xvii. 6.

† Moſes relates, that there were 600,000 men; the whole number of men, women, and children therefore cannot reaſon-

MOSES has not only recorded these and other similar events, as they took place in Egypt, at the red sea, and in the wilderness; but in his last address to the Israelites just before his death appeals to them, as to the truth of his history, and the works he had related, and the divine authority of his law. He declares to them, that their eyes had seen those great things; and hence urges them to keep all the law which he had given them. *Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the* LORD *your* GOD *which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the* LORD *did because of Baal Peor. Take heed to thyself, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen: Specially the day when thou stoodest before the* LORD *thy* GOD *in Horeb, and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of Heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the* LORD *spake unto you out of the midst of the fire.*† *Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not.*§ Had not these been facts most certainly known, and believed by the Israelites, nothing could have been more absurd than this appeal to them, and the injunction of obedience from a consideration of such marvellous events. It would have been the highest affront to the understandings of the people; it would also have ruined the character of Moses, and made him appear like a deceiver and a madman.

FURTHER, Joshua, at the close of his life, appeals in the same manner to the people that these facts were true, and that they themselves had seen and known them; and they at the same time solemnly attest them. *I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt: And the Egyptians pursued after your fathers, and when they*

ably be estimated at less than two millions and an half or three millions.

† Deut. iv. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12. § Chapter viii. 15, 16.

cried unto the LORD, *he brought the ſea upon them and covered them; and your eyes have ſeen what I did in Egypt. Now therefore, fear the* LORD, *and ſerve him in ſincerity and truth. And the people anſwered and ſaid, The* LORD *our* GOD, *he it is that brought us up, and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage, and which did thoſe great ſigns in our ſight.**

THUS the deliverance of Iſrael from Egypt their paſſage through the ſea, and the wonderful events attending them in the wilderneſs and their ſettlement in Canaan are atteſted by millions of people. Moſes, Joſhua, and the whole nation of Iſrael muſt all have been the moſt notorious liars, and there muſt have been ſuch a combination in falſehood as has no parallel upon earth, or elſe the facts recorded muſt have been true.

BESIDES, there were many circumſtances attending and moſt intimately connected with this hiſtory of facts, and incorporated into the laws of the nation, and became parts of their worſhip and polity, which were ſtanding memorials and atteſtations of theſe facts. Particularly the paſſover, the days of unleavened bread, the Jewiſh ſabbath, and the redemption of the firſt-born. The celebration of theſe inſtitutions, and the attention given to the redemption of the firſt-born, from the days of Moſes, during the whole period of the Jewiſh church, cannot be accounted for upon any other rational ſuppoſition, than that the great events to which they had reference were known to be true, and moſt certainly believed. Nations do not appoint and celebrate days and particular rites, from age to age, as memorials of events which never happened, and in which they are not deeply intereſted. The appointment and celebration of the fifth of November, by the Engliſh nation, was a public atteſtation of the truth of the powder plot; and the celebration of the fourth of July, of the Inde-

* Joſhua xxiv. 6, 7, 14, 17.

pendence of America. How much more ſo, conſidered in their peculiar circumſtances, do thoſe Jewiſh rites and inſtitutions evince the truth of the facts to which they have reference. Were not the ſong of Moſes at the red ſea, the pot of manna laid up before the LORD, and the annual feaſt of tabernacles public atteſtations of the ſame facts?

BUT it ought further to be obſerved, That they are recogniſed by a number of the ſubſequent writers of the Old Teſtament. They are particularized in the moſt ſolemn acts of confeſſion and praiſe, and in numerous Pſalms which were conſtantly ſung, in the Jewiſh church, to the honor of GOD, as a pious celebration of his glorious majeſty, power, and goodneſs, diſplayed in them.* This inſtead of honoring GOD muſt have been a ſolemn lying to him, contempt and mockery of him, had not the facts been true. We have therefore ſtrong and abundant evidence of their certainty. This is the only rational ground upon which the Jews could believe them at that time and eſtabliſh ſuch laws, cuſtoms, and worſhip.

IMPORTANT is it further to obſerve, that it would have been impoſſible for the Jews to have believed them at any time afterwards, during the life of Joſhua, or of any of their judges and kings, had they not been true. Joſhua and all the multitude whom he led into Canaan would have been able to atteſt, that no ſuch things had ever happened. Had they not known them and taught them to their children, their poſterity could never have known or believed them. They would have ſaid our fathers who lived before us knew of no ſuch events, they never taught, nor once mentioned them to us. Certainly they can be nothing but a mere forgery. We never heard of the paſſover, days of unleavened bread, the ſabbath, the feaſt of tabernacles, the ſong of Moſes at the red ſea, or the pot of manna, recorded to have been contemporary with theſe great events and memorials of them. There

* Nehemiah ix. Pſalm lxxviii. cv. cxxxvi. and in ſome other Pſalms.

never were any such institutions or days celebrated in Israel nor had we ever any such code of laws civil or ecclesiastical as that of Moses. It would have been absolutely impossible to have made a whole nation believe that they had known these things, kept passovers and sabbaths, had a civil and religious constitution fifty, or an hundred, or three hundred years before they had ever known or heard any thing of them, without a miracle totally changing all the powers and senses of the human mind.

The high priesthood, with the Urim and Thummim, its duties and ceremonies, is related to be contemporary with these great events. Now could books be imposed upon the Israelites as true, which recorded the institution and existence of an high priest, with such singular and wonderful garments and duties, from the time of Moses, when in fact they had never known or heard of such an high priest until some hundreds of years after that time? Or can it with any greater appearance of reason be pretended, that the Jews had their passover, sabbath, and feast of tabernacles, the custom of redeeming the first born, without any knowledge of the reason or institution of them? And that some centuries after, they received the books of Moses as true and genuine; though they related that these were all appointed by him, in his time, as memorials of the miraculous works which he had recorded? Nay, notwithstanding it was declared that they were all matters of great notoriety, wrought in the sight of all Israel? Nothing can be more absurd than such suppositions. We must therefore admit the facts recorded by Moses. Admitting them, we must necessarily admit his divine legation, and that what he delivered to Israel was by the commandment of the Lord. For surely, the turning of the rivers of Egypt into blood, making a way for his people through the sea, guiding them by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the appearance at mount Sinai, and the feeding millions of people with manna, forty years in the wilderness, and causing that their clothes during this period

ſhould not wax old upon them, were no leſs divine works than the creation and preſervation of the world. In the ſame way that we prove the exiſtence of a GOD from his works, we certainly prove that Moſes was ſent of GOD, that the things which he ſpake and wrote were the words and commandments of JEHOVAH.

JOSHUA and all Iſrael knew that Moſes was ſent of GOD, and that what he ſpake were the words of GOD, from another fact, or conſideration, the accompliſhment of all that he had told them concerning their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, their ſupport in the wilderneſs, the deſtruction of the kings of Canaan, and their ſettlement in the promiſed land. Moſes circumſtantially predicted theſe events, and Joſhua could in the moſt ſolemn addreſs thus appeal to the whole nation, *Ye know in all your hearts and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the* LORD *your* GOD *ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.* This is evidence alſo that the law of Moſes was of GOD. The writings of Moſes further carry with them the faireſt appearances of impartial truth and genuineneſs. He relates not only the great and numerous faults of the Iſraelites, but thoſe of his own brother and ſiſter, and of his brother's children Nadab and Abihu. Nay, he relates his own, and the particular one which prevented his going over Jordan and ſeeing the goodly land which was ſo much the object of his deſire. What ſtrong impreſſions ought theſe facts to make upon the mind of every perſon who reads them, of the integrity of Moſes, and the divinity of his legation!

II. The other books of the Old Teſtament have the ſame marks of divine authority as the books of Moſes. Thoſe who ſpake and wrote them were eſtabliſhed to be prophets of the LORD becauſe he let none of their words fall to the ground.

To Moſes ſucceeded Joſhua. Before him, as he had predicted, the waters of Jordan were cut off, and ſo parted from one another, that ſix hundred thouſand armed men with a greater number of women and chil-

dren paſſed over on dry ground. *On that day God magnified Joſhua in the ſight of all Iſrael, and they feared him, as they feared Moſes, all the days of his life.** Twelve men by ſpecial appointment from their ſeveral tribes took ſtones from the bottom of the river and made of them a monument in perpetual remembrance of this great work: *And Joſhua ſpake unto the children of Iſrael ſaying, when your children ſhall aſk their fathers in time to come, ſaying, what means theſe ſtones? Then ye ſhall let your children know, ſaying, Iſrael came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your GOD dried up the waters of Jordan from before you.*† Joſhua ſaid in the ſight of all Iſrael, *Sun ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the ſun ſtood ſtill, and the moon ſtayed, until the people had avenged themſelves upon their enemies.*‖ The prophets raiſed the dead, made their enemies blind, and cauſed them to be taken captive; revealed to the kings of Judah and Iſrael the ſecret counſels of their enemies, where they would pitch their camps, and the very places where they would lay wait for them. At their prayers, the LORD thundered upon them, and gave his people the victory. At their word, fire came down from heaven and conſumed the wicked; and upon their prayers, the heavens were both ſhut and opened.

THE other ſacred books teach the ſame morality taught in the books of Moſes, give the ſame ideas of GOD and his worſhip, and have the ſame appearances of truth. The ſacred hiſtorians have recorded the rebellions and ſtubbornneſs of the people, no leſs than their virtues; and though unpopular and at the expenſe of their lives reproved them, and teſtified the judgments of GOD againſt them. They have recorded their own faults, and appear to have ſacrificed honor, eaſe, intereſt, and all worldly conſiderations to the ſervice of GOD and their generation. They appear to have been the moſt zealous worſhippers and faithful ſervants of GOD; the moſt diſintereſted lovers of the

* Joſhua iv. 10, 14. † Joſhua iv. 21, 22, 23.
‖ Joſhua x. 12, 13.

church and nation of which they were members. They spared no pains to reform the people, and make them good. They were inceſſant in their prayers for them. One prays, *Yet now, if thou will forgive their ſin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee out of thy book which thou haſt written.** Another, *As for me, GOD forbid, that I ſhould ſin againſt the LORD in ceaſing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.*† A third appeals to GOD in this ſolemn manner, *I have not haſtened from being a paſtor to follow thee, neither have deſired the woful day, thou knoweſt: that which came out of my lips was right before thee. They have digged a pit for my ſoul: remember that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.*‡ *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughter of my people.*§ They denounced the curſe of GOD againſt every ſin, and againſt every man who confirmed not all the words of the law to do them. They promiſed bleſſings immenſe and glorious to the obedient. They were exemplary in life and obtained the character of holy men of GOD, of whom the world was not worthy. Now is it agreeable to the courſe of human events, is it the language of common ſenſe, that ſuch men ſhould be impoſtors and liars?

III. THE divinity of theſe writings further appears, from the grand deſign at which they aim, from their harmony, though written at a great many different times, by different men, of very different gifts and tempers, of different modes of education, and in a vaſt variety of circumſtances. They were, in general, wholly unconnected with each other, and moſt of them entirely unknown to the reſt. They flouriſhed in ages disjoined from each other, by many centuries,‖ yet one grand deſign and ſcheme of doctrines and duties run through the whole.

* Exodus xxxi. 32. † 1 Sam. xii. 23.
‡ Jeremiah xvii. 16, and xviii. 20. § Chap. ix. 1.
‖ The ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament were nearly eleven hundred years in compiling, and they were written by about forty different perſons. The five books of Moſes and the book

THE grand design is to exalt GOD, condemn sin, humble man, and promote piety, righteousness, and universal good. The tendency of all their writings is to make man honorable and happy in all relations and circumstances in this life, and to guide him to glory in that which is to come. They all harmonize in the character which they give of GOD and mankind, in the morality they teach, and in the awful and glorious motives which they exhibit. Never were there any other writings which pointed mankind to these great ends, in the same harmonious and powerful manner. No other ever taught, that the chief good of man consisted in the love, service, and enjoyment of GOD. No other, before or since, founded religion in the great principle of love, and excluded from it all selfishness. The sacred writers of the Old Testament perfectly harmonized in teaching a totally different and far more excellent religion, than any then upon the the earth. In what possible way could this have been effected without a supernatural influence!

THE different style in which they wrote, the different gifts, geniuses and tempers which they exhibited, and the manner in which they adapted themselves to the times in which they respectively lived, further evince the truth and genuineness of their writings.

EVERY prophet appears with a style peculiar to himself, and exhibits peculiar gifts and feelings. All the

of Job, which was probably written by him, as well as the pentateuch, were written between the years of the world 2513, the year in which the law appears to have been given at Sinai, and 2553, the year of Moses' death, at least 1450 years before the commencement of the Christian era. The book of Joshua was written about 1430 years before Christ; the principal part of the book of Psalms, the first book of Samuel, the Proverbs, Solomon's Song, and the book of Ecclesiastes about 1000 years before. The book of Joel was written about 800, that of Hosea about 780, and the book of Isaiah between 6 and 700 before Christ. The book of Amos was written about the same time with that of Hosea. Jeremiah wrote his prophecies about 600 years, and his Lamentations about 588 years before Christ. The book of Ezekiel was about 574, and that of Daniel 534 years before; and Malachi, who closes the Old Testament was nearly 400 years before our SAVIOUR's incarnation.

ſacred writers appear to have adapted themſelves admirably to the times in which they lived, to the peculiar circumſtances of their church and nation, to the ſins which prevailed in them, and to the dangers and calamities with which they were preſſed. Their preaching, the prophetic and hiſtorical parts of their writings appear entirely to accord with the ſtate of the Iſraelites, and of the two kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah, and the neighbouring nations, at thoſe reſpective periods in which they flouriſhed. It is imagined that no impoſtors have appeared, or ever can appear, with all theſe circumſtances of credibility.

In a word, not only the books of Moſes, but all the books of the Old Teſtament are witneſſed by the whole church and nation of Iſrael, during their exiſtence as a church, and by multitudes of Jews in all parts, and among all nations of the earth unto this day.

The books of Moſes were not only received and believed by them, as divine; but the wonderful events recorded in them are narrated and celebrated in the Pſalms, and expreſſed or referred to in moſt of the ſacred books until the ceaſing of prophecy under the Old Teſtament. They are not only witneſſed by the writers of the Old Teſtament, but by Christ and his apoſtles in the New. All the other books of the Old Teſtament were received and uſed, as of divine authority in the Jewiſh church ſo long as it continued. Theſe they produced as their ſcriptures, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and, by his order, tranſlated them into Greek. This tranſlation is termed the Septuagint, becauſe it was made by ſeventy Jewiſh rabbies or doctors. Theſe ſcriptures they delivered to the world as a divine revelation, a little more than three centuries before the promulgation of the goſpel. Joſephus and the writers of the ſeveral Talmuds witneſs, that they were the Jewiſh ſcriptures, and were venerated as divine oracles. Theſe the Jews ſtill keep, in the various nations whither they are ſcattered upon the face of the earth, and acknowledge them to have

been the laws and ſcriptures of their ancient church and nation. This certainly gives us ſtrong evidence that they are true. Every nation and people know their own laws and cuſtoms, their own religion and manner of worſhip. We know the charters and conſtitutions of theſe ſtates, the books and ſacred pſalms and hymns uſed in our worſhip, and even our children know them. The Jews moſt certainly knew their moral, municipal, and ceremonial laws, their high prieſts and ſacred books. They enjoyed prophets and inſpired teachers in their church, about a thouſand years, to direct and aſſiſt them in matters of faith and worſhip. It cannot therefore, with any color of reaſon, be ſuppoſed, that they were impoſed upon, and uſed books, as divinely inſpired, which had not the ſtamp of divinity. In theſe views, Chriſtians may challenge all the philoſophers and infidels upon earth to produce any ancient books or writings ſo ſubſtantially and abundantly authenticated as the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament: writings, like them, ſo admirably circumſtanced that there is even a moral impoſſibility, but that they ſhould be true. After all the boaſts and blaſphemies of unbelievers, we are not aſhamed to adopt and believe the words of the apoſtle and of our bleſſed LORD, *GOD at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets. If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded though one roſe from the dead.*

ONE or two remarks ſhall cloſe this diſcourſe.

I. IT is natural to remark, the inconſiſtency and madneſs of deiſm. Nothing is more inconſiſtent than the conduct of deiſts. They ſtrongly believe in the abundant ſufficiency of natural religion without any ſubſtantial evidence, nay againſt evidence; againſt the moſt indiſputable facts; againſt the experience of mankind for nearly ſix thouſand years; againſt the opinions of the greateſt men both in the Chriſtian and Pagan world; and contrary to the flagrant and ſtanding evidence which all Heathen nations, in every part

of the globe, exhibit againſt them. They readily give credit to Cæſar's Commentaries, though a hiſtory of his own exploits, and to other hiſtories and writings which are not authenticated with an hundredth part of the evidence which they have of the divine original of the ſcriptures. But theſe they will reject though witneſſed by many thouſands and in ſome inſtances by millions of people! Though to prove their divinity the ſea has been divided and Jordan driven back; though millions have been fed forty years in a barren wilderneſs with bread from heaven, and they, and their flocks were ſupplied with water from the rock of flint; though the ſun ſtood ſtill in the midſt of heaven and numbers have been raiſed from the dead to atteſt their divinity. They can ſee GOD ſufficiently in the works of nature, but they can ſee no trace of him in theſe glorious events in which the ſame power, wiſdom, and goodneſs are exhibited. There is not, perhaps, an infidel in Great-Britain or France, but what believes the American revolution and independence, on reading our declaration of it, our conſtitutions and laws; nor one in America, but what believes the independence of France. But though they have the records and hiſtory of Iſrael, their civil and religious polity, and the great events which they relate are commemorated by feaſts, ſabbaths, and laſting monuments and cuſtoms, yet they have no faith in them. Admirable inconſiſtency! Madneſs in proportion to the degree of light reſiſted, in the one caſe, and of credulouſneſs in the other! In proportion to the infinite magnitude of the caſe, and the eternal, momentous conſequences depending! Are theſe, all theſe, O my ſoul, the rational ſons of men? *Doubtleſs they are the people, and wiſdom ſhall die with them?* Have not they indeed conducted us to the AGE OF REASON! Are not theſe the wiſe men, whom the prophet thus addreſſes, *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter?**

* Iſaiah v. 20.

Alas, *If the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?*†

II. In what a ſtrong point of light, in a review of our ſubject, do the weakneſs and abſurdity of a number of the deiſtical objections againſt divine revelation appear? Indeed all objections againſt clear light and ſtrong evidence are weak and abſurd. Objections againſt the ſhining of the ſun, when he pours his light in full ſtrength upon every eye, are abſurd A blind man only would make them. Is not ſuch the objection of deiſts that Moſes was not the writer of the pentateuch when it is ſo abundantly atteſted by the books themſelves, by the Jewiſh prophets, rabbies, hiſtorians, and the whole nation from that time to this? Equally weak and ridiculous is this, that Moſes could not be the author, becauſe they are written in the third perſon. But Cæſar's Commentaries and other hiſtories ancient and modern are written in the third perſon, yet they are equally credited, as true and genuine, with other hiſtories. No objections have been made againſt them on that account, either by infidels or any other perſons.

Of the ſame nature is the inſinuation, that the books of Moſes and the other ſacred books were written and impoſed on the church, many ages after the time in which the writers are repreſented as living and after the facts they record took place; and after the great events they predicted were accompliſhed. How morally impoſſible it is, that this ſhould have been the caſe, appears from the preceding obſervations. It appears ſtill more weak, uncandid, and contemptible, as infidels can ſhow no time, ſince the days of Moſes and the prophets, in which thoſe books were not extant; no perſon by whom, nor time when the impoſition was made, nor any circumſtance which gives it the leaſt appearance of probability.

The objections againſt Moſes and his writings, on the account of the paſſage inſerted in a parentheſis,

† Matth. vi. 21

Numbers xii. 3. *Now the man Moſes was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth*, and the hiſtory of his death in the laſt chapter of Deuteronomy, are not leſs weak and futile, and perhaps more uncandid and malicious, than the other. The prophets were extraordinary men, obliged to write and ſpeak whatever GOD commanded, whether pleaſing to their natural feelings or not? Might not Moſes, if it were the divine will, as well have recorded a ſingular virtue of his own, as his faults? The one might have hurt his modeſty as much as the other did his pride. It might juſt as well be argued from the one, that he had no pride, as from the other that he was vain.

WITH reſpect to the hiſtory of the death and burial of Moſes, why could not Moſes as well write the hiſtory of his own death, as foretel to the Iſraelites, that the ſea would divide before them, and that they ſhould march ſafely to the Arabian ſhore, that all the generation, who came out of Egypt, and rebelled, ſhould die in the wilderneſs; and that Caleb and Joſhua ſhould go into Canaan, and poſſeſs the land which they ſpied out? One, were it the pleaſure of GOD, was no leſs difficult than the other. But it may be further obſerved, that as the church of Iſrael enjoyed a ſucceſſion of prophets, for about a thouſand years, they might have inſerted the paſſage in Numbers and have written the hiſtory of the death and burial, and given the character of Moſes. This could not in the leaſt detract from the authenticity of his writings. Should ſome faithful hiſtorian, at the cloſe of Governor Hutchinſon's or Dr. Ramſay's hiſtories, inſert their deaths, burials, and reſpective characters, would it in the leaſt degree affect the truth and genuineneſs of their reſpective hiſtories? Certainly it would not.

THE objection of the Deiſts againſt the ſcriptures, that they are not ſupported by collateral evidence is not leſs unreaſonable than the preceding ones.

WHEN there are two or three ſubſtantial witneſſes to prove a fact, it is ſufficient, though there be not fifty or an hundred. So there may be abundant evidence

of the truth of the ſcriptures, though it be poſſible, that there ſhould have been more.

BESIDES, the bible is by far the moſt ancient book now extant. The firſt letters and writings among men, of which we have an account were thoſe written by the finger of GOD, on the two tables of ſtone. This was probably ſome centuries before any writings among the Heathen. The firſt poets, Heſiod and Homer, did not flouriſh until about the year of the world 3135 about 480 years after Moſes; and Herodotus, of Greece, the moſt ancient hiſtorian, whoſe works have eſcaped the ruins of time, was more than a thouſand years after the death of the Jewiſh lawgiver. He had therefore no contemporary writer, and the demand of collateral evidence from contemporary hiſtorians is unreaſonable. Profane hiſtory, however, affords conſiderable evidence of the truth of many principal parts of the Moſaic hiſtory. The firſt poets and hiſtorians, as has been ſhown, have atteſted the ſeventh day ſabbath, the univerſal practice of offering ſacrifices, from time immemorial. They give a ſimilar account of the parents and derivation of mankind, of the longevity of the patriarchs, and evince that there were ſuch perſons as Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, Joſeph and Moſes. They relate the eminence of Abraham, the ſtory of his coming out of Chaldea, of his defeating the kings who carried away Lot and the ſpoil of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. They relate the hiſtory of Noah's flood, and the preſervation of men in a veſſel, the ruins of which, ſome of them repreſent to have been viſible a long time after.* They notice the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and have references to the long day, and great heat in conſequence of it, in the time of Joſhua.† They have preſerved the ſtory of Joſeph, of his advancement in Egypt, of his wiſe adminiſtration, and the preſervation of that country in a

* Bedford's Chro. chap. VI. p. 53, and chap. XII. 151 and onward, where he ſhows that the hiſtory and tradition of the flood was among all the eaſtern nations. † Ibid. Book V. p. 489.

time of remarkable famine. They have alſo preſerved many things concerning Moſes, his great wiſdom and valor, his conducting Iſrael out of Egpyt and leading them to Mount Sinai, and giving the law from God. They have noticed his prohibition of the worſhip of images and the difference between his laws and religion and the laws and religion of all other nations.‡ Shuckford in his connection of ſacred and profane hiſtory, and Bedford in his chronology have ſhown that there are traces of almoſt all the remarkable parts of the hiſtory of Moſes to be found in profane hiſtory.§

The general ſtate of mankind, their ignorance of God, their idolatry and abominable works, are witneſſed by profane hiſtory. That ſuch kings reigned in Judah and Iſrael, and in the neighbouring kingdoms, and that ſuch wars were waged, as Moſes and the prophets repreſent, and in the times and places which they relate, is clearly evident from Jewiſh and Pagan writers. Profane hiſtory therefore is ſo far from invalidating, that it ſerves greatly to confirm the truth of the ſacred books.

How wretched is the cauſe which needs ſuch help as infidels have recourſe to? To what pitiful ſhifts are they driven? Their objections upon examination vaniſh like miſts and darkneſs before the ſplendors of the morning ſun.

‡ Grotius in his truth of the Chriſtian religion has collected many of theſe things, Book I. Sec. 16.

§ Dean Prideaux, Dr. Henry Owen, in his diſcourſes on the nature and extent of the ſcripture miracles, and the ingenius Mr. Bryant on the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, and on the journeyings of the Iſraelites have alſo thrown further light upon this ſubject.

DISCOURSE IV.

On the Divinity of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament.

DEUTERONOMY iv. 8.

AND what nation is there ſo great, that hath ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous, as all this law which I ſet before you this day?

HAVING, in the preceding diſcourſe, attempted to exhibit what clear and abundant external evidence there is of the truth of the Old Teſtament ſcriptures, it will now be natural, as we proceed, to bring into view ſome of the internal evidence of their divine original. Both unite in atteſting this momentous point. The latter, perhaps is no leſs clear and convincing than the former. As the rays of the ſun afford demonſtrative evidence of its exiſtence, ſo the light of the ſcriptures, the ſublime and wonderful things which they teach, the piety and morals which they enjoin, the alluring and awful motives by which they are enforced, with numerous circumſtances attending them, evince their heavenly origin. They teach a religion worthy of GOD, ſafe and bliſsful for man; a religion

totally diverſe from all other religions, and as much ſuperior to them as the heavens are above the earth.

THE paſſage which has now been read imports this ſuperior excellency of the religion taught by Moſes, and of the law by which it was enjoined. Moſes, having given the law to Iſrael, by GOD's direction, declares unto them its exceeding excellency. His words ſtrongly imply, that there was no other nation upon earth, which had a law ſo pure and righteous, and every way ſo adapted to individual and national happineſs: No law, or worſhip in conſequence of obedience to which, GOD would be ſo well pleaſed, and be ſo near to them in every thing which they ſhould need, and for which they ſhould call upon him, as he would be unto them. The text implies, that in the enjoyment and practice of ſuch a law they would enjoy GOD, and be great and happy beyond all other nations upon the earth.

IN further diſcourſing upon the words it will be natural to ſhow the ſuperior excellency of the law of Moſes, and the religion enjoined in the Old Teſtament, to every other law or religion which then was, or which has ſince been in the world, and conſequently that they muſt have been of divine original. The ſuperior excellency, uſefulneſs, and divinity of the law of Moſes and the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament may appear,

I. FROM the rational and intereſting account they give us of many important matters, which are no where elſe to be found, and which none but GOD could have revealed.

THE books of Moſes contain a rational and ſublime account of the creation of the world, of Adam and Eve, the parents of the human race; of their originally innocent and bleſſed condition; of the inſtitutions of marriage and of the ſabbath; of the apoſtacy and its extenſive and doleful conſequences. They teach us that toil, diſappointment, pain, tears, and death are all the bitter fruits of ſin. The pentateuch and ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament contain the promiſe and glad tidings of a SAVIOUR, the predictions and types

of this glorious antitype; describe him in his offices, humiliation and sufferings, in his resurrection, and triumph over death and all evil. *And the* LORD *said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.** This promise was more clearly and fully made afterwards to Abraham. *In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*† The ceremonies of the levitical law, the sacrifices, the high priest, the day of atonement, the altar, and the temple, were all types of the MESSIAH, and preached him to the people, during the existence of the Jewish church and polity. In the Psalms and prophets, his characters, offices, work, exaltation and its glorious consequences are fully exhibited.‡ The light respecting them increased more and more through the whole age of prophecy. These were matters of the highest concern for mankind to know.

THE history of the creation is calculated to inspire the human heart with the most sublime, venerable, and adoring ideas of GOD; to impress it with a sense of his greatness and power, and to excite to universal reverence, gratitude, and praise. It teaches men their entire dependence on GOD and obligations to him. But GOD only could give us the history of this great event.

THE creation of woman out of man, so that she should be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, the institution of marriage and the divine ordination that they twain should be one again, as they were originally, with the CREATOR'S benediction of the innocent pair, puts the highest dignity upon marriage, and above every thing else teaches its utility and importance. With an energy and tenderness, which language has no power to express, it teaches the correlates the most entire oneness, and ever to regard each other as their

* Genesis iii. 15. † Chap. xxii. 18. ‡ Psalm ii, xxii, xl, and lxix. Isaiah ix. 6, 7, and chapters lii, liii, and lxi. Dan. ii. 44. and chap. ix. 24 to the end. Micah v. 2. Haggai ii. and Malachi iii. 1.

own flesh. This is adapted with consummate wisdom and goodness to preserve the chastity and dignity of man; to secure his comfort and life in infancy and childhood. In connection with the injunctions in the Mosaic law, that they should constantly instruct and govern their offspring for GOD, it was most happily adapted not only to promote natural convenience and the social virtues, but to serve the great designs of religion, the glory of GOD, and the endless dignity and blessedness of man. No institution has a more favorable aspect upon the present and future happiness of human kind.

THE religion of nature has nothing comparable with this. Among all Pagan nations the woman is treated as a slave, children are little regarded, inhumanly neglected, or murdered. Instead of being tenderly nursed and formed to virtue and righteousness, they are trained to idolatry, vice, and the most abominable passions. They grow up for mischief and destruction.

THE sabbath is another institution of the greatest utility, and of all others, in connection with its instructions, public and private ordinances, has the most benevolent influence upon all the interests of man, and has a merciful regard even to the beast. This has a powerful tendency to promote cleanliness and health, civilization, mutual acquaintance, esteem and friendship, knowledge human and divine, industry, economy, and enterprise. It teaches subordination in families, church, and commonwealth, charity and universal goodness to all the human race. It powerfully inculcates all the social virtues. It above all other institutions is calculated to inform and keep alive the consciences of men, to prevent secret wickedness, to guard against the midnight debauch, robbery, and assassination, and those atrocious crimes against which human laws cannot effectually provide. It brings into view the most alluring and awful motives to persuade men to every thing which can make human nature and society great and honorable in the present world. It alleviates the toils of man and beast, gives the servant,

the poor, and the oppreſſed reſt from their labors. But what is ſtill of infinitely greater importance, it purifies, exalts, and ennobles the mind. It is the brighteſt reſemblance of the reſt of heaven, and worſhip of the church of the firſt-born; and above all other inſtitutions adapted to prepare men for that perfect and bleſſed ſociety. Does not ſuch an inſtitution bear the ſignature of heaven? Would men, to whom the ſabbath is a wearineſs, whom no laws human or divine have been ſufficient to engage properly to ſanctify it, have inſtituted ſuch a day, with all its ſtrictneſs and holy inſtitutions? Is there the leaſt probability that without a ſupernatural revelation it would have been enjoined with ſuch reaſons, and enforced with ſuch ſanctions as it is in the ſcriptures?

But how neceſſary and important ſoever this and the inſtitution of marriage are, and how much ſoever they wear the ſtamp of divinity, the religion of nature has no ſuch inſtitutions, nor does it afford any certain or rational account of them. The Pagan nations have nothing reſpecting them, unleſs it be ſome corrupted or fabulous traditions originally derived from revelation. With reſpect to the fall of man, the origin of ſin and death, the intimations and promiſes of a SAVIOUR, of pardon and life through his name, the religion of nature has not the moſt diſtant ſuggeſtion. They are truths which GOD only could originally know, and which he only could reveal. There is not the leaſt probability that the human mind would have ever ſuggeſted them. They are high and wonderful, far beyond the ken of human knowledge. The character which the ſcriptures give of man, and the way of ſalvation which they exhibit, are ſo humiliating to the human heart, as render it totally improbable, that they ſhould have been a human production, entirely unaſſiſted by ſupernatural light and influence.

THE ſcriptures give us a conciſe and accurate account of the origin of nations, and of their diſperſion after the flood; the genealogy of the fathers of the ſeveral nations, and the age of man before and after

the deluge. Theſe are of great importance and utility, as by them only we are enabled to aſcertain the age of the world, the chronology and ſituation of the ancient nations, and the divine diſpenſations towards them. Without theſe we could not have known the accompliſhment of many important prophecies concerning them: and conſequently could not have had ſuch abundant and convincing evidence of the truth of our holy religion. They are not only highly uſeful in other reſpects, but eſpecially as they have no ſmall influence both on faith and practice.

THE genealogies of the ſeveral tribes of Iſrael and of the houſe of David were of ſtill greater importance and uſefulneſs. Theſe were of the utmoſt conſequence to the Iſraelites, that they might enjoy their inheritance, every man in his own tribe, and that each tribe might be kept diſtinct. They were moſt important to the tribe of Levi, and the houſe of Aaron, that the Levites, Aaron and his deſcendants might enjoy their reſpective titles, attend their reſpective ſervices, and that the high prieſthood and holy ſervices might not be polluted, but attended according to divine appointment. To the royal houſe of David they were important, that it might retain its royalty, and that the accompliſhment of the promiſes and the faithfulneſs of GOD, in keeping covenant with David and his ſeed, might appear. To the Chriſtian as well as Jewiſh church they were of abſolute neceſſity and importance, that both Jews and Gentiles might be able to determine, that JESUS CHRIST is indeed the MESSIAH, of the ſeed of Abraham and of the houſe of David, his ſon and his LORD, according to the ſcriptures.

THE ceremonial law, types and ſacrifices, which have been already noticed, in connection with the prophecies of the MESSIAH, in ſo many ways preached CHRIST and him crucified, riſen and glorified; and were all ſo directed with the whole Jewiſh ritual, or temple ſervice, as to concentre and be finally accompliſhed in that one moſt wonderful perſon and charac-

ter, as affords the ſtrongeſt evidence, that none but GOD was or could have been the author of them and of that book which contains them.

FURTHER, the writings of Moſes and the prophets, in perfect conſiſtence with the doctrine of human corruption, which they teach, inculcate the doctrines of regeneration, repentance towards GOD, ſanctification, and remiſſion of ſins. Of theſe there are no diſtant traces or intimations in the religion of nature.

THIS is the language of Moſes and the prophets, *And the LORD thy GOD will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live.** *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you. Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings which were not good, and ſhall loathe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities and abominations.*† It is an important part of the name of GOD, as proclaimed before Moſes, that he will forgive ſin. *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity tranſgreſſion and ſin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.*‡ *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own name ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.*‖ Theſe ſame ſcriptures alſo teach, that the penitent was to be forgiven not on the account of his own righteouſneſs or excellency, but wholly on the account of the LORD, MESSIAH. *Surely, ſhall one ſay, In the LORD have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength. In the LORD ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified,* and ſhall glory.§

THESE ſcriptures alſo reveal a general judgment and future ſtate, in which every man ſhall be rewarded according to his works, and that the wicked ſhall not ſtand in the judgment. *He ſhall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*¶

* Deut. xxx. 6.
† Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 31.
‡ Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7.
‖ Iſaiah xliii. 25.
§ Iſaiah xlv. 24, 25.
¶ Pſalm l. 45.

For GOD *ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil.** *I the* LORD *ſearch the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*† *The ungodly ſhall not ſtand in the judgment.*‡ Who but GOD could reveal theſe great points? How could Moſes and the prophets teach them, while the book of nature was wholly ſilent on theſe ſubjects, and all other nations, except the Iſraelites, were ignorant of them? They were ſo foreign from natural religion and all the apprehenſions of mankind, at that period of the world, that there is not the leaſt probability, that any man, or number of men, would ever have conceived or ſuggeſted them, unleſs they had been the ſubjects of ſupernatural teaching and influence. Surely they muſt have been divinely inſtructed, or we muſt acknowledge ſomething no leſs miraculous than inſpiration.

II. THE ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament appear to have been of divine original from the exalted, conſiſtent, and glorious character which they give of the one living and true GOD.

THEY, in the ſtrongeſt terms, aſſert the unity, eternity, omnipotence, infinite knowledge, omnipreſence, immutability, holineſs, juſtice, and goodneſs of GOD. While all other nations and people worſhipped a multiplicity of ſupreme gods,‖ the language of the Jewiſh lawgiver and prophets was this, *Hear, O Iſrael the* LORD *our* GOD *is one* LORD.§ *I am the* LORD, *and there is none elſe, there is no* GOD *beſides me.*¶ They do not repreſent him as confined to any place, as the titular GOD of this family, city, or nation, but as the CREATOR, abſolute PROPRIETOR, and LORD of the Univerſe; *the moſt high* GOD, *the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth.*** When they ſpeak of his majeſty and greatneſs, *He is clothed with honor and majeſty, and covereth*

* Eccl. xii. 14. ‡ Jeremiah xvii. 10. ‡ Pſalm i. 5.

‖ According to Varro, they had 300 Jupiters, or ſupreme gods.

§ Deut. vi. 4. ¶ Iſaiah xlv. 5, 18. ** Gen. xiv. 19.

*himself with light as with a garment.** *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.*† *Before him all nations and worlds are as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity.*‡ If they speak of his dominion, it is universal and uncontrolable. *He doth his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.*‖ Yet he is without the least injustice or partiality. *He is good unto all. The* LORD *is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.*§ What a majestic, consistent, and glorious character is this of the great, eternal GOD? How ineffably superior is it to all the descriptions, which the poets and philosophers have given of their gods? Every thing impure and inglorious is removed, at an infinite distance from GOD, in the scriptures; and every thing great, august, and glorious, becoming the Creator and governor of the universe, is ascribed to him. But the gods of the heathen were base and contemptible. They ascribed even to Jupiter, their supreme deity, the worst passions, and the most horrid crimes. How did Moses and the prophets obtain this knowledge of GOD? How were they enabled, or what could influence them to give such an adorable character of him? A character which wicked men and devils hate: A character which the workers of iniquity like not to retain in their knowledge. May not all the philosophers and infidels upon earth be challenged to give any rational, or probable account how Moses and the prophets should give such a character of GOD, or have any inclination to do it, unless they had been supernaturally taught by him, and formed to love such a GOD? Is it possible that liars and impostors should love a GOD of truth? A GOD to whom all liars are an abomination, and who has sentenced them to destruction? A GOD of purity and righteousness, who dooms all idolaters, all the deceitful, wanton, intemperate, unrighteous, and wicked of the earth to cursing, vexation, and rebuke? How cer[illegible]ay we determine that this is a

* Psalm civ. 1, 2 , 1 Kings viii. 27. ‡ Isaiah xl. 15. 16, 17, 23, 24. ‖ Daniel iv. 35. § Psalm cxlv. 9, 17.

character drawn by the finger of GOD! A character which no man could, or would have drawn, had he not been ſupernaturally inſtructed and influenced?

III. IT is a further evidence of the divinity of the ſcriptures, that the worſhip enjoined by Moſes and the prophets, is pure, rational, ſolemn, and conſiſtent with the character which they have given of GOD, its only proper object. Its whole tendency is to ennoble and purify the mind, to promote piety, righteouſneſs, peace, and joy. It is totally different from the worſhip of the Pagan world, and from any which philoſophers, legiſlators, and worldly wiſe men have ever deviſed. It is required that it be ſpiritual, profoundly reverent, and ardent: That the heart be kept and given to GOD: That as he is in heaven, and men upon earth, they *be not raſh with their mouth, nor haſty with their heart to utter any thing before him.** GOD declares, *I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.*† The firſt commandment prohibits all idolatry, as to the object, and the ſecond, as to the mode of worſhip. The ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament taught men, that they could have acceſs to GOD, and be accepted only by a Mediator, and the blood of atonement. While the worſhippers offered ſacrifice, and confeſſed their ſins over the heads of the beaſts which were to bleed and be ſacrificed in their ſtead, they acknowledged their worthineſs to die for their ſins; and were taught to draw near to GOD, and to hope in his mercy, only by the MESSIAH who was to come into the world. They were inſtructed with pure hearts and clean hands to draw near to GOD; to confeſs their nothingneſs and vileneſs before him; to adore and bleſs him for his infinite perfections; to acknowledge their dependance and obligations, and to be thankful unto him, and praiſe him for all his benefits. Thus the worſhip enjoined in the ſcriptures was calculated to impreſs the mind with the moſt ſublime and adoring apprehenſions of the true

* Eccl. v. 1, 2. † Lev. x. 3.

GOD; to beget in men love, fear, truſt, gratitude, hope, and joy. It was moſt happily adapted to abaſe men, and clothe them with humility, under a ſenſe of their littleneſs and ill deſert. In theſe views it tended not only to piety, but to righteouſneſs, and all holy living. Its whole tendency was to glorify GOD and benefit mankind. Thus there is a moſt beautiful harmony between the character and worſhip of GOD, as exhibited in the writings of Moſes and the prophets. In all reſpects which have been mentioned it is entirely different from the worſhip of the Heathens, or from any humanly deviſed. The Pagan worſhip is irrational, impure, and abominable. It is diſhonorable to GOD, debaſing and deſtructive to man.

IV. THE truth of the Moſaic and prophetic writings may be ſtrongly argued from the pure morals and religion which they teach; from their agreement with the nature and character of GOD; and from their entire unlikeneſs to the morals and religion of the Heathen.

THE religion and morals of the Old Teſtament are pure, perfectly conſiſtent with the character of God, who only is holy. They forbid all idolatry, and command that the heart be ſupremely and conſtantly given to GOD. *Thou ſhalt have no other* GODS *before me. Thou ſhalt love the* LORD *thy* GOD, *with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might.* This is perfectly becoming the character of GOD, beſide whom there is no other. It is conſiſtent with his infinite greatneſs and moral excellency; with the relation and indebtedneſs of all creatures to him.

THE commands in the ſecond table, Honor thy father and mother; Thou ſhalt not kill; Thou ſhalt not commit adultery; Thou ſhalt not ſteal; Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs; Thou ſhalt not covet, are all founded in love. They are all compriſed in this, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* They prohibit all ſin againſt our neighbour; whatever can hurt the name, intereſt, or perſon of any man; and whatever may in-

jure community at large. Theſe enjoin all the ſocial virtues; with every thing which can make a man honorable, give him peace in his own mind, and render him uſeful to others. They require every thing in temper and conduct, neceſſary to give honor, peace, and happineſs to families, and the commonwealth. As the religion of the bible is founded in love, and prohibits all ſelfiſhneſs, it perfectly agrees with the character of GOD who is good in himſelf, and does good unto all. It bears his image, diſplays and ſecures his glory. It is moſt ſafe, honorable, and bliſsful to man. It is not only infinitely ſuperior to all other morality and religion, but it is the only true religion and morality. This only can unite GOD, angels, and men in one great, holy, and happy ſociety. This is the only religion which begins heaven in the hearts of men in this world, and lays a foundation for the perfection of it, in a plenitude of joy, and pleaſures without end, in the future. *Charity is the bond of perfectneſs.**

THE deſign of the Jewiſh lawgiver was not only entirely different from that of all others, but far more noble. The great object of other legiſlators has been to ſupport and aggrandize themſelves, and their own nations; and they have adapted their laws to their local circumſtances and particular views. Thus Sparta enacted laws to form ſoldiers, Rome, conquerors, and Carthage, merchants and ſeamen. But the deſign of Moſes was to make his people good; and by forming them to a pure piety and morality, to qualify them for a happy exiſtence under the ſmiles and enjoyment of the ALMIGHTY. He appears to have had no deſign of making them great any further than he made them good. He ſeems to have been the only perſon, among all the eaſtern ſages and legiſlators, who conceived the idea of making a people great, by making them pious and righteous, ſober and merciful. It was a point of policy with all Pagan lawgivers not to

* Coloſſians iii. 14.

change the gods, nor alter the religion of their country. They left the people at full liberty to worſhip their own idols, and follow all their abominable luſts and ſuperſtitions; but Moſes, upon the moſt awful penalties, prohibited every thing of this nature. All other laws reſpect the outward conduct of men; but the law of Moſes commands the heart, every thought, deſign, and exerciſe. While the laws of Lycurgus, and other famous legiſlators, were in many reſpects impious, oppreſſive, and bloody, the law of Moſes breathes nothing but a ſpirit of pure devotion and philanthropy. Not only the commands in the decalogue, but particular precepts reſpecting the fatherleſs and widow, the ſtranger who ſojourned in the land of Iſrael; the laws reſpecting the redemption of a poor brother, reſpecting ſervants and captives, all breathe a ſpirit of humanity and love. Of the ſame benevolent nature were the years of releaſe, the jubilee, and other particular cuſtoms which there is not time now to enlarge upon, nor even to mention.

But all religions, except that exhibited in the bible, are nothing but ſelfiſhneſs, impiety, pride, barbarity, and filthineſs. None of them are founded in right principles, love to God and men, nor directed to right ends, the honor of the Deity, the good of his moral kingdom, and the happineſs of human kind.

Moſt certainly the God, the worſhip, piety, and morals of the Old Teſtament, are not only entirely different from the Gods, worſhip, and morals of the wiſeſt Pagans, but as ſuperior to them, as the full ſplendors of the ſun to the light of the glow-worm.

The ſanctions, by which the worſhip, piety, and morals, taught by Moſes and the prophets are enjoined, are wonderfully awful and glorious. They are indeed godlike, as much ſuperior to all others, which philoſophers, poets, and human legiſlators have deviſed, as the doctrines, morals, and worſhip of the bible are to theirs. In compariſon with them all others dwindle into mere impertinence. They are lighter than a feather when contraſted with a globe of gold. In theſe

views, is it poſſible that any other than GOD himſelf ſhould have been the author of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament? What nation hath ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous as all this law which he hath given us in his word? What nation can be ſo great and happy, and have GOD ſo near to them, as that which has ſuch a revelation, and which loves and practiſes ſuch a religion?

FROM the preceding diſcourſe we may learn,

I. How futile, falſe, and even contemptible, ſeveral of the principal objections are, which infidels urge againſt revelation, eſpecially the books of Moſes.

THEY object, that theſe repreſent "the eternal infinite being, as a local, tutelar deity, carried about in a trunk and confined to a temple."* How totally groundleſs and falſe is this, in view of that majeſtic and glorious character which it has been ſhewn, that Moſes and the prophets have given of GOD? Who has ever ſpoken of the Divine Majeſty in more ſublime and venerable language than Moſes? Was repreſenting him as the creator and poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, as bringing the flood upon the Antediluvians and overthrowing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven, repreſenting him as a local and tutelar deity? Was a deſcription of him as working all the wonders in Egypt, and at the red ſea, raining manna and fleſh about the camp of the Iſraelites, in the wilderneſs, and giving them water from the rock, a repreſentation of him under this diminutive character? Was it not a deſcription of him as every where preſent, operating in heaven and earth, as the abſolute ſovereign of the univerſe? How inconſiſtent with that glorious holineſs, and righteouſneſs which he aſcribes to JEHOVAH is the idea of a tutelary deity, beſtowing his partial favors, upon this or the other perſon, city, or nation?

THOUGH it be true, that there was a ſacred cheſt, in which were depoſited the two tables of the law, cal-

* Lord Bolingbroke.

led the ark of the covenant, and though GOD sometimes appeared in the cloud of glory, and gave special tokens of his presence in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, yet is he never represented as confined to them, or to any other place; but on the contrary, as filling heaven and earth with his glory. Though Moses represents him as the king of Israel, the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of all the righteous; yet he represents him as the sovereign of the world and the GOD of the spirits of all flesh. These characters are by no means inconsistent with each other. Surely his entering into covenant with Abraham and the Israelites, and showing them particular favors, for their good, and for the benefit of others, that in Abraham all the families of the earth might be blessed, and his own name forever glorified, could not be inconsistent with the divine character. Certainly it cannot reasonably be objected, *That the righteous* LORD *loveth righteousness, and that his countenance doth behold the upright*, and that he adopts the most wise and effectual means to glorify himself and advance the happiness of his moral kingdom. How totally groundless and uncandid therefore is the objection?

EQUALLY unfair and futile is the objection against the command given to Abraham relative to the sacrificing of his son. It is represented, that this was so bloody and inhuman that it never could have been given by the DEITY. But is there any truth in this objection? Can there be any thing cruel or bloody in GOD's taking away the life of any person, even of an only son? Has he not done this, in the course of his providence, in thousands of instances? And is not every parent obliged to resign his children to the arms of death, nay and to resign himself, whenever it shall appear to be the will of GOD, without a murmuring word or complaining thought? May he not take away our lives and the lives of our children by the sword, famine, pestilence, fire from heaven, or in any other way which shall be agreeable to his sovereign will? To deny either of these, is to deny the sovereignty of

GOD, and the wiſdom and equity of his diſpenſations. The command implied nothing cruel or unrighteous in the DEITY, nor required any wrong temper in Abraham. If GOD ſaw that it would be more honorable to himſelf, more inſtructive and honorable to Abraham, and of greater benefit to the univerſe to take away Iſaac by the hand of his father, and that he ſhould be offered as a ſacrifice to GOD, it was wiſe and good to command Abraham to offer him. And for Abraham to do it in obedience to the divine will, and in the exerciſe of all tender and parental affections towards his ſon, implied nothing wrong. On the contrary his exerciſes and conduct were in the higheſt degree virtuous. The deſigns of GOD, were moſt benevolent, and the whole affair was moſt inſtructive and uſeful. It was adapted, in a ſtrong point of light, to teach the abſolute ſovereignty of GOD over his creatures, their duty, in all circumſtances, to yield an unreſerved and entire ſubmiſſion to his will: To give to the world an illuſtrious type of CHRIST, and a moſt affecting repreſentation of GOD's love to the human race, in giving his only begotten ſon, from his boſom, that we might live through him. It was deſigned, in this way, to exhibit to the world, the excellency, wonderful effects, and triumphs of faith, to honor GOD and Abraham the friend of GOD, and to be of laſting ſervice to the church.

IN theſe views, the whole tranſaction was ſo far from every thing inhuman, or wrong, that it was in a high degree benevolent and gracious, as it reſpected the deity, and virtuous and praiſe worthy in Abraham.

THE deiſtical clamor againſt the Moſaic writings, on the account of the inſtructions given to the Iſraelites to borrow of the Egyptians gold and raiment, and not returning the loan, is as groundleſs as the preceding objections.

THE Hebrew word which our tranſlators have rendered borrow, in Exodus iii. 22, and lent, chapter xii. 36, properly ſignifies to aſk a gift, or to aſk earneſtly. This is the meaning of it Pſalm ii. 8. *Aſk of*

me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion. It is generally rendered aſk by our tranſlators.* It further appears from the whole ſtory, that the Egyptians did not conſider the Iſraelites as borrowing of them, or entertain any expectation of their returning the articles which they gave them. Why did Pharaoh and his army purſue after them if they expected their return? The Egyptians undoubtedly were glad to give them whatever they aſked, that they might immediately depart out of their land and that they might not all be ſwept away in one common ruin. It is written, The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might ſend them out of the land in haſte; for they ſaid we be all dead men.† Joſephus repreſents, that what the Iſraelites received of the Egyptians, at this time, was a free gift.‡ This is a ſufficient anſwer to the deiſtical cavil.

BUT ſhould it be granted, that they in fact borrowed gold and raiment of the Egyptians, there is no difficulty in the caſe. Before they had time to return the borrowed articles, Pharaoh and his people commenced war againſt them, with a view to their utter

* The Hebrew word is Shāāl, it is rendered aſk Gen. xxxii. 29, Deut. iv. 32, xxxii. 7, Joſhua iv. 6, Judges xviii. 5, and in ſeveral other places. The ſeventy in the Septuagint have tranſlated it in Exodus iii. 22 by the Greek word Aitēſan, which ſignifies to aſk or petition, anſwering perfectly to the Hebrew root Shāāl. The moſt common Hebrew roots for borrow are Lāvāh and Gnābāth: the former is the moſt uſual. Mr. Pool, both in his Synopſis and Engliſh Annotations, obſerves on the word Shāāl Exodus xii. 36 That it ſignifies to aſk. Shuckford has the ſame obſervation, in his connection of ſacred and prophane hiſtory, vol. II. p. 340. Mr. Kennikott, in his diſſertations on the Hebrew text of the Old Teſtament, repreſents it remarkable, that this word ſhould be rendered *borrow* and not *aſk*, "an alteration," ſays he, "which wants no other vindication than to obſerve, that to *aſk*, *beg* and *pray* for are the proper ſignifications of this verb." Diſſertation I. p. 390, 391.

† Exodus xii. 33.

‡ He ſays the Egyptians made the Hebrews conſiderable preſents, ſome on the account of the reſpect which they had to them, and others that they might induce them more haſtily to go from them. Ant. Jud. Book II. Chap. 14.

deſtruction. Heaven interpoſed and overthrew Pharaoh. The Hebrews had a juſt right to retain what they had received as the ſpoils of a public and unprovoked enemy.

BESIDES, the Egyptians juſtly owed the Iſraelites ten times more, than all they had received of them, for many years hard ſervice. The Egyptians by enſlaving the Iſraelites, and murdering their children, had forfeited their lives and their goods; and it would, doubtleſs, have been lawful for them, at any time, when it ſhould be in their power, to avenge themſelves for their murdered babes, and to plunder the Egyptians, at leaſt, until they had paid themſelves. JEHOVAH, whoſe is the earth and the fulneſs thereof, took the affair into his own hands, and by the moſt ſignal miracles authorized his redeemed people to hold the gold and raiment which they had received. This cannot be drawn into a precedent for any other people until they can produce the ſame divine warrant, and therefore cannot be pleaded for the injury of any perſon or nation. Of how little force are ſuch kind of objections?

BUT let us proceed to another which infidels have inſiſted upon, as totally ſubverſive of the Moſaic writings; the command to extirpate the nations of Canaan. They affirm, that the Iſraelites could have no juſt authority to go into Canaan, cut off its inhabitants, and take poſſeſſion of their country: That "GOD cannot command in particular what he forbids in general: That he who has made benevolence to all rational beings the fundamental law of our nature, can never command ſome to rob and to murder others; to uſurp on the rights of their fellow creatures, and to exterminate whole nations." It is boldly aſſerted, that "the men who juſtify ſuch cruelties upon any hypotheſis whatſoever, muſt have very ill hearts, as well as heads." And that "he who imputes them to the ſupreme BEING is worſe, than an atheiſt, though he paſs for a ſaint."* It is inſiſted,

* Lord Bolingbroke.

that the total extirpation of the Canaanites, without reſpect to ſex, the hoary head, or the tender babe, breathes ſuch a ſpirit of inhumanity and cruelty as is totally unworthy of GOD.

Is this reaſoning? Or is it dogmatical, blaſphemous impertinence? Is not GOD the ſovereign of life? Is not all which is in the heaven and in the earth the LORD's? And may he not do what he will with his own? Are not all men ſinners? Is it not of his mercies, that we are not conſumed; becauſe his compaſſions fail not? Is he a murderer becauſe he commands all men to the grave? Is he cruel becauſe he has made no difference of ſex or age? Is he a robber, when in his providence he takes away the property of his creatures, by lightnings, tornadoes, inundations, earthquakes, ſword, or peſtilence? Where is the hardy man, who dare charge the DEITY with any thing unrighteous or cruel in any of theſe? But if there be nothing inconſiſtent with the moral character of GOD in bringing about ſuch events, in his government of the world, then certainly he may commiſſion any of the elements, angels, particular men, or whole nations to do them. He might commiſſion Joſhua and the armies of Iſrael to execute his juſt judgments on the abominable inhabitants of Canaan. The ſupreme ruler of the univerſe, in fact, did cauſe the nations of Canaan to be exterminated, whether he were the GOD of Moſes or not. He has, in his providence, made a full end of many other nations, as well as of thoſe of Canaan. He has deſtroyed whole cities and villages by fire from heaven, by earthquakes, and the eruptions of burning mountains; and whole nations by the ſword, peſtilence, and famine. The male and female, old men, children, and ſmiling babes have periſhed in promiſcuous deſtruction. Nay, he has cauſed that the tender ſex ſhould eat the fruit of their own body for the want of all things in the day of their calamity. The GOD of deiſts, as well as the GOD of Moſes, of Chriſtians and of all men, has

done theſe things in all ages, and is ſtill doing them. But have even infidels ſo hardened a front, as to charge him with murder, robbery, cruelty, or unrighteouſneſs? Let them remove all difficulty with reſpect to the moral character of the eternal, infinite BEING in theſe reſpects, and there will be no difficulty in vindicating the commands and adminiſtrations of the GOD of Moſes.

INDEED there is no difficulty in the caſe. It perfectly comports with the common ſenſe and practice of mankind, in all ages and nations. The good prince and ruler prohibit all murder, robbery, and cruelty. This is general law. But at the ſame time they enact, that the murderer, traitor, and robber ſhall be put to death. When they are found guilty, they order the proper officer to execute them. The eſtate of the rebel is confiſcated to the crown, or commonwealth. Is there murder, robbery, or cruelty in this caſe? Certainly there is not. The judge acts a righteous and faithful part towards the community, and the officer does his duty in executing the ſentence of the judge. There is no contradiction between general law and that particular law, by which the delinquent is condemned, and the officer commanded to execute the judgment upon the guilty. No more is there between the general law of GOD and his ſentencing the Canaanites to be extirpated, and commanding Joſhua and the Iſraelites to execute the ſentence. The Canaanites were not only ſinners in common with all men, but moſt notorious ſinners. They were not only the moſt groſs and irreclaimable idolaters, but infamous for all the unnatural luſts by which mankind have ever made themſelves abominable. They had filled up the meaſure of their ſin, and ripened themſelves for deſtruction. They appear to have been great ſinners in the days of Abraham, and GOD uſed powerful means to reclaim them, in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, in which a part of them periſhed. With great long-ſuffering he had born with their provocations, nearly five hundred

years, from the time of Abraham until the Iſraelites began to inherit their land. There is nothing therefore, in the whole affair of their extermination, inconſiſtent with the moſt ſtrict and impartial juſtice, with the common ſenſe of mankind, and the general courſe of providence in the government of the world.

These obſervations anſwer the objections againſt the divine command, utterly to deſtroy the Amalekites, and all others of the like nature.

How ought men to bluſh to offer ſuch groundleſs objections in ſuch a magiſterial and dogmatical manner! How unfair and contemptible is it for infidels to object and clamor in ſuch a manner againſt the Moſaic and Chriſtian ſyſtems, when the ſame difficulty, if any there be, lies equally againſt their own?

II. To conclude this diſcourſe, let what has been offered ſerve to guard us againſt the ſophiſtry of deiſm, and confirm our faith in the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament. Let it excite in us the higheſt ſenſe of their peerleſs importance, excellence, and uſefulneſs. Let it beget in us a greater ſenſe of the ineſtimable worth of the hiſtorical parts of the Old Teſtament; and even of the genealogies, as they ſerve ſuch important purpoſes, not only relative to uſeful points of knowledge, but are, in ſome reſpects, ſo abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary to our faith and ſpiritual conſolation.

Let us bleſs our heavenly Father, that he has given us ſuch abundant evidence that the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament are of divine original, ſtamped with the image of his infinite purity, wiſdom, and goodneſs; and that we are able to give ſuch reaſons of the hope which is in us, with meekneſs and fear. Let us feel our obligations to him, that he has given unto us ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous as all this law, which he has ſet before us. May we prize it more than thouſands of gold and ſilver. May it be ſweeter to our taſte than honey and the honeycomb. May we meditate in it day and night. Let us conſider how great and happy that nation and people are, above

all others, who enjoy the divine oracles, and conform themſelves to their pure inſtructions and precepts; and how near this will make GOD to us in all things which we need, and for which we ſhall call upon him. Let us by all means make this happineſs our own. Then ſhall we know, by happy experience, how righteouſneſs exalteth a nation. Then ſhall wiſdom and knowledge be the ſtability of our times, and righteouſneſs and peace ſhall be in our day. The promiſes and hope of the goſpel will cheer us in the rugged paths of life, ſmoothe for us the bed of death, and give us light and fortitude in the gloomy valley. So ſhall we be forever planted in the land of uprightneſs, and ſhare in the endleſs dignities and beatitudes of the great ſalvation. AMEN.

DISCOURSE V.

ON the authenticity of the New Teſtament.

HEBREWS i. 2.

HATH in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his SON, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds.

AS the verſe preceding this is an ample atteſtation of the divine authority of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, ſo is this of the authenticity and ſuperior excellency of the New. It refers back to GOD, who, in the foregoing context, is declared, at ſundry times, and in divers manners, in paſt ages, to have ſpoken the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament unto the fathers by the prophets. This ſame GOD and father of all, the text affirms, hath in the cloſe of the Jewiſh ages, and under the goſpel, the laſt diſpenſation of his grace, ſpoken unto us, by a far more dignified and glorious perſon, his only begotten and well-beloved SON. *The only begotten SON, which is in the boſom of the FATHER, he hath revealed him.** This is a perſon

* John i. 18.

ſo truly divine, that *by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him.* The text inſtructs us that according to his original and eſſential right, as a divine perſon, and according to the immenſe complacency of the FATHER in him, he hath, by ſpecial conſtitution, ordained him, as God-man Mediator, to be the prophet, prieſt, and king of his own houſe, the abſolute heir and LORD of all worlds and creatures, even *head over all things to his church.*

THIS infinite dignity and authority of the perſon ſpeaking in the New Teſtament, and appointing the new, ſpiritual, and glorious diſpenſation of the goſpel, the apoſtle repreſents to impreſs the minds of the Hebrews with a ſenſe of its vaſt ſuperiority to that of the Moſaic: That he might ſhow them, that however glorious that was, which was now to be done away in CHRIST, yet that it *had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth:** That he might ſhow them the danger of turning away *from him who ſpeaketh from heaven* and of neglecting ſo great a ſalvation, as *began to be ſpoken unto them by the LORD, and was confirmed by thoſe who heard him.* Theſe indeed are weighty conſiderations to engage all, who hear the goſpel, immediately to give it their moſt entire credence, and to entertain it with the warmeſt gratitude, as a faithful ſaying and worthy of all acceptation.†

THE truth contained in our text, that the books of the New Teſtament are the words of GOD, ſpoken by his SON, the HEIR and LORD of all things, perfectly comports with the promiſe made by him to his diſciples, relative to the miſſion of the Holy GHOST, and the aſſiſtance, which he ſhould give them in the compilation of the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy GHOST, whom the FATHER will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, what-*

* 2 Cor. iii. 10, † 1 Tim. i. 15.

*ſoever I have ſaid unto you.** *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*†

WITH theſe ideas their claims and declarations entirely correſpond. They claim to be witneſſes of all things which JESUS began both to do and teach, and they declared that what they ſpoke, and wrote was no other than the word of GOD, witneſſed not barely by them, but by the Holy GHOST. This was their language, *And we are his witneſſes of theſe things and ſo is the Holy GHOST.*‡ *The word which GOD ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by JESUS CHRIST (he is LORD of all) That word, I ſay, ye know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached. And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and at Jeruſalem.*‖ Saith the evangeliſt John, *This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things; and we know that his teſtimony is true.*§ *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.*¶ St. Luke atteſts his goſpel to be a declaration of things which were moſt certainly believed among Chriſtians, in his day, and had been delivered by eye witneſſes of the truth. Thus ſolemnly and harmoniouſly do the evangeliſts and apoſtles atteſt the truth and divinity of the writings of the New Teſtament. That theſe ſcriptures are divinely true is the great point now to be further illuſtrated. For this purpoſe it may be obſerved,

I. THAT we have ample evidence, that the ſeveral books of the New Teſtament were written by the ſeveral perſons to whom they have been generally aſcribed, from the confeſſions and writings both of the friends and enemies of Chriſtianity; and that they were received with great eſteem and veneration, as the word of GOD.

* John xiv. 26. † Chap. xvi. 14.
‡ Acts i. 22, and chap. v. 32. ‖ Chap. x. 36, 37, 39.
§ John xxi. 24. ¶ 1 John i. 1, 3.

THE occaſion of writing them, and the different periods in which they were written, are generally known. The ſame books which we now have, were, at an early period, uſed in the Chriſtian church. There are numerous quotations from them, in the writings of the Chriſtian fathers, which ſhow them to be the ſame ſcriptures which we now enjoy. Within a few centuries after our SAVIOUR's paſſion there were catalogues of the books of the New Teſtament, which contain the ſame books which we now acknowledge as divine. The goſpels of Matthew and Mark are generally ſuppoſed to have been written within a few years of our SAVIOUR's paſſion. Chronologers and divines generally place them in the year 42 or 44, about eight or ten years after our LORD's aſcenſion. The goſpel of Luke was written about the year 55, a little more than twenty years after the aſcenſion. The Revelation, and the goſpel of St. John, which were written the laſt of the ſacred books,‖ were compoſed about the year 96, about 63 years after the aſcenſion of our bleſſed SAVIOUR. The epiſtles were all written between the years 52 and 67.§ They were all evidently

‖ Some place the writing of St. John's goſpel at an earlier period, in the year of our Lord 63. See Biſhop Watſon's collections.

§ The epiſtles ar not placed in our bibles, according to the time in which they were written, which appears to have been in the following order.

The firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, Anno Domini 52.
The ſecond epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, 53.
The firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians,
The epiſtle to the Galatians,
The ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians, and 57.
The epiſtle to the Romans,
The epiſtles to the Epheſians, Philippians, Coloſſians, and Philemon, 62.
The epiſtle to the Hebrews, 63.
The epiſtles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude, 66.
The ſecond epiſtle to Timothy, 67.
The epiſtle of James was written about the ſame time with the laſt to Timothy.
The Acts of the apoſtles are generally ſuppoſed to have been written about the year 63, ſoon after St. Luke, the writer, took leave of the apoſtle Paul at Rome.

written before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which was in the year 70. All the books therefore of the New Teſtament were written, and the whole canon of ſcripture completed, in the firſt century, within a little more than ſixty years after our LORD was glorified. They were all written while the apoſtles and multitudes of the firſt Chriſtians were living, and while the firſt churches at Jeruſalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Epheſus, Corinth and other places were in their full glory.

The primitive paſtors and churches moſt certainly knew what books were written by inſpired men, the evangeliſts and apoſtles; and they took the utmoſt care and pains to diſtinguiſh them from all forged and ſpurious writings; and to preſerve and tranſmit them uncorrupted to poſterity. Theſe books were conſtantly read, commented and preached upon in the churches; and the primitive fathers quoted them abundantly in their writings, as divines do at the preſent day. They declare, that there were four goſpels only, which they called by the ſame names which they now bear. It appears that Polycarp, who was contemporary with the apoſtles, has a paſſage in which he not only atteſts that there were, in his time, the four goſpels, as we have received them, but in which the beginnings of each of them are recited.† Juſtin Martyr, who lived and wrote his firſt apology for

This hiſtory was originally and univerſally received by the primitive churches among their true and genuine ſcriptures. It is found in the firſt, and in all the catalogues of the New Teſtament It is quoted by St. Clement, who was a companion of St. Paul; by Polycarp, a diſciple of St. John; by Papias and Irenæus, who flouriſhed in the ſecond century. It contains an irrefragable evidence of the truth of Chriſtianity, as it records the accompliſhment of the promiſes and predictions of CHRIST to his apoſtles: That ſoon after his aſcenſion they ſhould receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhould ſpeak with new tongues, and do greater works than himſelf. It records the power and ſucceſs of the goſpel, in turning ſinners from darkneſs to light, and cauſing Satan to fall like lightning from heaven.

† Dr. Whitby's preface to the four Evangeliſts.

Chriſtianity, about the middle of the ſecond century, and his ſecond twelve years after, viz. in the year 162, ſhows that theſe books were then well known by the name of the goſpels, and that they were read by Chriſtians in their aſſemblies every LORD's day. He cites paſſages out of them all, and declares them to be the words of CHRIST.‡ Indeed the citations of Juſtin Martyr, Origen, Clemens Romanus, St. Ignatius, Irenæus, and others, are almoſt innumerable. Irenæus only has cited St. Luke's goſpel more than an hundred times, and affirms, that the hiſtories of CHRIST which Luke alone had written were received by all Chriſtians. The quotations of Cyril, Cyprian, Ambroſe, Auſtin, and others, from this and all the other goſpels are too numerous to be particularly noticed. Theſe goſpels were received as of divine authority, and as deciſive in all points of doctrine and controverſy. The Chriſtian fathers and hiſtorians give us an account of the occaſions on which the goſpels were written, and that ſuch as were the diſciples of CHRIST carried them into the various countries where they preached, and left them with the churches.‖ Not only the goſpels, but the epiſtles are witneſſed both by the Chriſtian fathers, and the avowed enemies of the church. Julian openly confeſſed, that there were Peter's, Paul's, Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's writings, which were read among Chriſtians under thoſe particular names.§

IT is to be obſerved, as a further evidence of the truth of the New Teſtament ſcriptures, that we find catalogues of all the ſacred books which were received and uſed, as divine by Chriſtians, in the primitive churches, containing the ſame books of the New Teſtament which are now in our bibles. Theſe were made by different men, in different parts of the world;

‡ See Dr. Whitby's preface to the four Evangeliſts.

‖ Edwards' Miſcellanies p. 204, 205, 206. In which are quotations from Polycarp, Juſtin Martyr, Origen, Euſebius, and many others.

§ Grotius de verit. Lib. xiii. Chap. iii. Sect. 2.

at Alexandria, Jeruſalem, Conſtantinople, Africa, Venice, Carthage, and other places. One was made by Origen preſbyter of Alexandria, as early as the year 210 in which are all the books which we now have in the New Teſtament, except the epiſtles of James and Jude. Theſe he, however, owns in other parts of his writings. We have two catalogues of the New Teſtament, one made by Euſebius Pamphilus, and the other by Athanaſius, biſhop of Alexandria, in the year 315, which perfectly agree with ours in the New Teſtament. There are nine others, made in the fourth century, by which it appears that the Chriſtian churches had the ſame ſacred books which we have received, and that they acknowledged them to have been divine.*

Besides, the books of the New Teſtament were, at an early period, tranſlated into different languages, for the aſſiſtance of the churches in the various nations among whom the goſpel was promulgated. They are ſuppoſed to have been tranſlated into the Syriac language in, or very ſoon after the apoſtolic age. It has been the ancient and univerſal tradition, among the Syrian churches, that the New Teſtament was tranſlated into their language by St. Mark himſelf. And authors have ſhown, from the language itſelf, or particular names and phraſes in the tranſlation, that it muſt have been made early in the ſecond, if not before

* See Jones' Canon of the New Teſtament, part. I. chap. 8. See alſo Dr. Lardner, who has particularly noticed the early catalogues of the New Teſtament. He has Origen's in vol. II. p. 466. Dr. Kippis' edition, vol. IV. p. 326. He particularly relates the catalogue of Athanaſius, biſhop of Alexandria, which is the ſame with ours. After naming all the books, he quotes theſe words from the biſhop, "Theſe are the fountains of ſalvation, that he who thirſts may be ſatisfied with the oracles contained in them. In theſe alone the doctrine of religion is taught. Let no man add to them, or take any thing from them." See in the ſame volume p. 299 and 300 the catalogue of Cyril, biſhop of Jeruſalem, and in his ſeveaal volumes may be ſeen an account of many early catalogues of the New Teſtament, giving the ampleſt evidence that the ſame ſcriptures which we now have, were acknowledged by the church in the primitive ages.

the end of the firſt century.† Further, we have atteſtations, that the ſcriptures were read in the Syrian churches from the beginning. It is therefore moſt certain, that the ſcriptures were tranſlated into the Syriac language in, or very ſoon after the apoſtolic age.

This tranſlation is moſt accurate and admirably agrees with our verſion of the New Teſtament. The New Teſtament was alſo tranſlated into the Latin, Arabic, and many other languages, many centuries ago, and in theſe various and different languages, in countries far disjoined from each other, there are not only the ſame books, but there is an admirable agreement between them; and the churches have, with one conſent, for almoſt eighteen hundred years, received them as divine. In the fourth century, it was ordained, that theſe with the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, and no others, ſhould be read in the churches.

HENCE there are moſt certainly no other writings in the world ſo univerſally atteſted to be true and genuine, by the conſent, hiſtories, and writings of ſo many nations, and by enemies as well as friends, as thoſe of the New Teſtament.

II. IT ſhall be further obſerved, in confirmation of the truth of the writings of the New Teſtament, and of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, that from the time of our Saviour's aſcenſion, or very ſoon after, there have been ſuch worſhippers of GOD and the REDEEMER, as Chriſtians. They were found among all nations, in Paleſtine, Italy, Aſia, Africa, and Europe. They were a people of an entirely diſtinct religion, of doctrines, ſacraments, worſhip, and diſcipline, different from all others ever known or practiſed before upon earth. This is evident from the edicts of the Roman empire, from the hiſtory of the perſecutions and ſufferings which the Chriſtians endured in the various parts of the world; and from the early attempts which were made to extirpate them and deſtroy their writings.

† See Jones' Canon of the New Teſtament, and Dr. Whitby's preface to the epiſtles.

The hiſtories and atteſtations of theſe matters are too numerous here to be mentioned. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, Roman hiſtorians, aſſure us that in the days of Nero, who began his reign about twenty years after the paſſion of our SAVIOUR, there was a vaſt number of Chriſtians, not only in Judea, but in Rome, againſt whom Nero raiſed perſecution.* They atteſt, that many of both ſexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this ſuperſtition, and that it was ſpread not only over the cities, but villages and fields, and that the Heathen temples were almoſt deſerted.† The teſtimony of Chriſtian writers, to theſe facts, is abundant. Particularly Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, Tatian, and Athenagoras witneſs the numbers and ſufferings of the Chriſtians in the reign of this bloody tyrant. Some of theſe lived in the age of the apoſtles, wrote in the firſt, and all of them before the end of the ſecond century. Hiſtory and the apologies of the Chriſtian fathers are ſo full and expreſs on this head, that it can admit of no reaſonable doubt.

BUT this mightily ſerves to evince the truth of divine revelation eſpecially the truth of the New Teſtament. For had there not been ſuch a perſon as JESUS CHRIST, ſuch men as his apoſtles, and ſuch inſtructions as thoſe contained in the New Teſtament, there never could have been ſuch a ſect of people as Chriſtians, nor ſuch doctrines, ſacraments, diſcipline, and worſhip as are peculiar to the Chriſtian church. The exiſtence of ſuch a people in Judea, and in all parts of the Roman empire, in the reign of Nero, the perſecutions raiſed againſt them, and the amazing ſufferings which they endured for their adherence to CHRIST, and his holy religion, demonſtrate that the Chriſtian ſyſtem then exiſted, and that it was moſt certainly believed and known to be a religion from GOD. Had not this been the caſe, they would not have relinquiſhed their prejudices and

* Tacitus Ann. Lib. xv. c. 44.

† Sueton. Ner. cap. xvi. and Plin. epiſt. Lib. x. epiſt. 97.

renounced all other religions, Judaism and the worship of dumb idols; they would not have given up their lusts, prayed in the name of JESUS, forsaken father and mother, wives and children, and sacrificed ease, fortune, life, and every thing dear to men, in this world, for CHRIST and the gospel's sake, as they most certainly did. No rational account can be given of this, but on the supposition, that they had received and believed, beyond all doubt, the scriptures of the New Testament. They could not have believed them had they not known that the facts which the apostles related were true. Had they not had evidence, that JESUS arose from the dead; that his spirit was shed forth upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost; that the disciples cast out devils, healed the sick, spake all manner of tongues, and that the gifts which the apostles relate in their writings attended them, they never would have received the gospel. They would have been able themselves, to witness, that the apostolic writings were not to be depended on; and would have rejected the whole as a gross imposition.

THE supposition, that the instructions contained in the New Testament, and that the writing of those scriptures were not soon after our SAVIOUR's exaltation, during the apostolic age, would be to suppose that Christianity existed in its doctrines, sabbath, sacraments, worship, and discipline, even before the instructions and system of truths on which it is founded were given. This would not only be a grand absurdity; but contradict all history, both sacred and profane, relative to that matter. We have therefore strong evidence of what the scriptures relate, and that they were written while the apostles and first Christians were living.

III. THE truth of the scriptures of the New Testament appears from the character of the writers, the manner of their writing, and the circumstances in which they wrote. They could have been influenced to preach and write as they did from no possible views of a worldly nature, nor indeed from any prospects, in time or eternity, had they not most certainly known

that the facts which they teſtified, and the doctrines which they preached were true.

With reſpect to their character, they appear to have been capable of knowing whether the things which they teſtified and wrote were true, and of writing them intelligibly and faithfully. They exhibit every appearance of ſober, honeſt, and faithful men; free from all ſlightineſs and enthuſiaſm. They, in the ſtrongeſt terms, condemn all falſehood, deceit, and impoſture, denounce the curſe and vengeance of God againſt all corruptors of the goſpel, againſt all liars and every kind of wickedneſs. They appear to have been eminently pious, righteous, and charitable; wonderfully to have loved God and mankind. They appear to have labored and ſuffered above all other men for the glory of their Redeemer and the good of human kind. Now that ſuch men ſhould be guilty of ſuch great wickedneſs as to write a ſyſtem of lies, and impoſe it upon mankind, is not credible.

As to the manner of their writing, it is moſt ſimple, and exhibits every appearance of veracity. They relate the poverty, ſufferings, ſhame, death, and burial of their maſter; their own contentions, failings, and miſtakes. They go into no encomiums of their Saviour, nor of themſelves. They have uttered no invectives againſt their enemies, but the ſpirit of Jesus, of candor and love breathes through all their writings. They relate facts in the moſt plain and ſimple manner, without any parade or flouriſh, without applauſes or criminations.

In the circumſtances in which they wrote, they could have no poſſible worldly motive. They had witneſſed the hatred both of Jews and Gentiles againſt their Saviour, for the doctrines he preached and the claims he made. They had ſeen him crucified as an impoſtor, in the moſt ignominious and cruel manner. They knew how the religion of the croſs was every where ſpoken againſt: How unpopular it would be to preach up pardon and life eternal through a Saviour who had lately been crucified at Jeruſalem, as a deceiv-

and blaſphemer. JESUS himſelf had aſſured them, that if they had called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, they would much more thus call thoſe of his houſehold. He had premoniſhed them, that men would deliver them up to councils, and ſcourge them in the ſynagogues: That they ſhould be brought before governors and kings for his ſake, for a teſtimony to them and the Gentiles: And that they ſhould be hated of all men for his name's ſake.* He promiſed them nothing in this world for all their ſervices and ſufferings; but taught them to wait for honors beyond the grave. They were to be as ſheep in the midſt of wolves, and they knew that the world would be ſo mad againſt them, that whoſoever killed them would think that he did GOD ſervice.† They had nothing of a worldly nature to offer to mankind; nothing which they loved to engage them to become Chriſtians. In theſe circumſtances, they could have no worldly motives or proſpects to preach and write as they did. All worldly motives and proſpects were entirely againſt them.

IMPORTANT is it further to obſerve, that they could have been induced by no motives from another world, had they not moſt certainly known and believed the truths which they preached and wrote. If JESUS was an impoſtor, and if they were found falſe witneſſes before GOD they could have no proſpect of ſucceſs in preaching the goſpel, no peace in their own minds in this world, nor could they expect any thing in the world to come. They were, for nothing, making themſelves of all men the moſt miſerable. They could not therefore be impoſtors, but their writings muſt be true and genuine. No impoſtors were ever found acting in like circumſtances. They are always influenced by worldly motives, and have always promiſed worldly good, power, honor, riches, or pleaſures, to induce others to commence their followers.

FURTHER, the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians endured all things for the ſake of their teſtimony and

* Matth. x. 16 to the cloſe of 25th verſe. † John xvi. 2.

their SAVIOUR. Their went out into all the world, to preach the goſpel unto every creature. They were in labors and perils more abundantly, and ſacrificed every thing dear, of a temporal nature, to the divine honor and the good of their fellow men. They ſealed their teſtimony with their blood. No fears of death, by crucifixion, by burning at the ſtake, in the moſt terrible manner,* or by any other means which malice and art could deviſe; no promiſes of honor, wealth, worldly eaſe, pleaſure, or influence could diſſuade them from their teſtimony, nor induce them to renounce CHRIST and his glorious goſpel. Is it poſſible that they ſhould have acted in this magnanimous and ſuperexcellent manner, upon any other ſuppoſition than this, that they knew, as the apoſtle John affirms, that their teſtimony was true, and that they were animated and aſſiſted by GOD himſelf? When was it ever known, that men became liars and impoſtors without any worldly, or ſiniſter views? Or when have liars and impoſtors ſtood to their falſehoods under all ſufferings, and died martyrs to their own frauds?

IV. THE writings of the New Teſtament appear to be of divine original, as they are ſtamped with divinity, and exhibit the very image of GOD.

VARIOUS internal evidences of the divine original of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament have been already noticed, in a preceding diſcourſe. Moſt of theſe appear with more clear and convincing evidence in the New. Others it has, peculiar to itſelf, not leſs ſtriking and forcible. The doctrines and ſcheme of redemption appear high and glorious, far above all human and finite conception. Great is the myſtery of godlineſs: GOD was manifeſted in the fleſh.† Who could have conceived the doctrine of the adorable

* Some were diſguiſed in the ſkins of wild beaſts and worried to death by dogs. Some were crucified, and others were wrapped in ſhirts dipped in pitch, or beſmeared with it and then ſet on fire, to illuminate the night. Lardner's Jewiſh and Heathen teſtimony.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

TRINITY, which is fundamental to the whole plan of recovering mercy? That GOD ſo loved the world, that he would give his only begotten SON from his boſom to ſave the rebellious? That the eternal word would undertake the arduous work, ſaying, *Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my GOD?** Who could have known, that he would have laid down his life for the ſheep? What creature could have imagined the union of the divine and human natures, in the one perſon of JESUS CHRIST? That unto us a ſon ſhould be given, who is *the mighty GOD, the everlaſting FATHER!*† That this wonderful and glorious perſon *who knew no ſin, ſhould be made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of GOD in him; and that through his ſtripes we might be healed?*‡ Was it not equally beyond the ken of human knowledge, that the divine SPIRIT, who proceedeth from the FATHER and the SON, ſhould be ſent to convince the world of ſin, and righteouſneſs, and judgment? To ſhed abroad the divine love in the hearts of men, and to abide, as a ſanctifier, guide, and comforter, forever with the ſaints? Are not theſe thoughts above the thoughts of men, as the heavens are above the earth?

Do not other parts of this aſtoniſhing plan, the reſurrection of JESUS CHRIST, as the firſt fruits of them who ſlept, his exaltation to be head over all things to the church; the reſurrection of the dead; that CHRIST will loſe nothing in the grave, but raiſe up all his people at the laſt day, and give to every ſoul its own body; the committing of all judgment unto him, and his appearing in glory, with his mighty angels, and judging the world in righteouſneſs, equally ſurpaſs all human underſtanding? Was it a point of mere human knowledge, that GOD will bring good out of all evil? That the wrath of man ſhall praiſe him, and that the remainder of wrath he will reſtrain? That he created, and governs all things for his own glory, and at the ſame time for the greateſt perfection and happineſs of

* Pſalm xl. 7, 8. † Iſaiah ix. 6. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. Iſaiah liii. 5.

his moral kingdom? That these are united and perfectly harmonize in the divine plan? Did any of the princes of this world, did the philosophers, or any of its wise men discover or know these things? Were they not hidden from ages and generations? And would they not have been forever unknown, had not he who was in the bosom of the Father revealed them? Were they mere fictions would they not far exceed every thing which ever has been conceived by the human mind? Can it then, with the least color of reason, be imagined that JESUS, the carpenter, and twelve fishermen of Galilee, without supernatural assistance, could have first conceived and taught them. Do not the wisdom, love, power, justice, and faithfulness of GOD, in this admirable scheme of holiness and salvation, harmonize and shine forth in the most godlike and glorious lustre, passing all understanding? Do not the angels desire to look into these things? Do not even principalities and powers, in heavenly places, learn by them, in the church, the manifold wisdom of GOD? Is it not a system of infinite love, deeply impressed with the signature of all the divine perfections?

THE divinity of the New Testament further appears, in that the gospel exhibits the only conceivable plan of perfect union among rational creatures, and between them and their CREATOR, and of the greatest possible happiness of the intelligent system. In the gospel system love is the grand principle of union, piety, righteousness, and all holy exercises and conduct. In infinite love GOD is perfectly and eternally united to all holy beings, and enjoys all the happiness of the intelligent system. In supreme love men are united to GOD above all in heaven or in earth. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*† Perfect love to him, and the same love to men and angels, which the law enjoins on us towards our neighbour, forms a perfect union between GOD, and all the individuals of his great

† Psalm lxxiii. 25.

moral kingdom. And this is the only principle which can form a perfect and permanent union. All other unions are ſelfiſh, and are no further perfect than the different intereſts and feelings of the individuals and parties of whom they are compoſed unite. This is but very imperfectly; and the moment they become divided, and their feelings different, the union is diſſolved, and variance, ſtrife, and hatred take the place of union and love. The ſame ſelf-intereſt, or ſelfiſhneſs, which unites, ſeparates, and cauſes the parties even to thirſt for blood. But divine love forms one common intereſt among all its ſubjects, directs all to one common centre, and creates perfect and perpetual harmony and peace. This at once creates the greateſt poſſible happineſs; as perfect love appropriates all the happineſs of the beloved objects, whether of GOD, angels or men, ſo far as it can be poſſibly comprehended. In perfect love men and angels will be as bleſſed in the ſupreme eternal dominion, majeſty, purity, and bleſſedneſs of the DEITY, ſo far as they come within their view, as if they were their own. This alſo will enable them to enjoy all the happineſs of each other; and indeed all the happineſs in the univerſe of which they can form any poſſible conception. Hence all holy beings, every one who *overcometh, will inherit all things.** Selfiſhneſs contracts a man's enjoyments, and confines them to himſelf and his connexions; but love, or univerſal good will, extends them to every thing. Hence ſays the apoſtle, *Having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.*† Is it not peculiar to the goſpel that all piety and morality are founded in love, and placed in the heart? And that it requires that every thought and action ſhould be aimed at the glory of GOD and the good of his moral kingdom? Is this the religion of the world? Certainly it is not. Whence then is its origin? Can it be from any other ſource but GOD himſelf?

FURTHER, the doctrines, promiſes, deſign, and

* Rev. xxi. 7. † 2 Cor. vi. 10.

morals of the gospel present us with a most glorious character of GOD, and in this respect bear strong impressions of divinity. The divine character, as exhibited by Moses and the prophets, appears indeed glorious in holiness; but as revealed in the gospel, in the face of JESUS CHRIST, it excels incomparably more in glory. How doth his infinite love appear in the gift of his Son, to die for sinners? In recovering an innumerable multitude of all nations, not only from the ruins of their apostacy, but in raising them up, and making them sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS; and in causing them to reign in life with him forever? How do his greatness, wisdom, power, and goodness shine forth in governing all worlds, creatures, and events the least as well as the greatest, every thought, word, and action, life and death, for the glory of his name, the good of every Christian and the perfection and happiness of the intelligent creation? In securing this to all the heirs of promise, by covenant engagements? How great and beneficent does he appear in his promises, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the church; that nothing shall offend those who love him; and that he will give them all a crown of life and a kingdom which cannot be shaken? How glorious in holiness does he appear, in the design of the gospel, which is to glorify himself, in making his kingdom honorable, holy, and happy in the highest possible degree? and in his law as explained and fulfilled by JESUS CHRIST; as prohibiting every thing wrong in thought, word, and deed, as requiring nothing but love, and as all fulfilled in kind affection and conduct? In these views he appears to be uncreated, unchangeable, infinite love and goodness. GOD IS LOVE.‡ In this great affair of redeeming mercy, designed to destroy the works of the devil, in the threatenings of the law, in the judgments represented to be executed on the wicked, in all ages for sin, in the sufferings of CHRIST to make an atonement for it, in the tendency

‡ 1 John iv. 8.

of the doctrines, promiſes, threatenings, and examples of the goſpel, all the inſtitutions of it, and means of grace to make men holy, and in the final awards of the future judgment, the inflexible juſtice, unchangeable faithfulneſs, with all the natural and moral perfections of the DEITY, will beam forth in the moſt harmonious and glorious luſtre. By the goſpel glory is given to GOD in the higheſt, while peace and good will are brought to men. Abſtract from the works of GOD the aſtoniſhing, incomprehenſible work of redemption, the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, which paſſeth knowledge, and we ſhall in a manner annihilate the wiſdom, love, beneficence, truth, faithfulneſs, and glories of the divine character, in compariſon with what they now appear in the face of JESUS CHRIST. Is not the goſpel therefore ſtrongly impreſſed with the very ſignatures and image of GOD? Do any other writings exhibit ſuch a majeſtic, conſiſtent, and glorious character of him? Could JESUS and his apoſtles have thus delineated it had they not been ſent and taught of him?

THE immaculate, perfect, and peerleſs character of JESUS CHRIST, is a further internal mark of the divine origin of the New Teſtament. In general it is written of him, That he *knew no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*:* That the law of GOD was in his heart; and that *the zeal of his houſe had eaten him up*.† His doctrines and conduct, through his whole life, and in his death were wonderfully expreſſive of this character. His doctrines were moſt pure, condemning the idle word, impure look, and all deceit and ſin, in heart or life, and inculcating the moſt exalted piety, righteouſneſs, and goodneſs. *Thou ſhalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*.‡ He taught men to pray always and not to faint,§ and in all their devotions to worſhip the FATHER in ſpirit and in truth.‖ He commanded that his diſci-

* 2 Cor. v. 21, and 1 Pet. ii. 22. † John ii. 17.
‡ Matth. xxii. 37, 39. § Luke xviii. 1. ‖ John iv. 23, 24.

ples ſhould not only love one another, as he had loved them, but that they ſhould love, forgive, pray for, and do good to their enemies; and be perfect as their FATHER who is in heaven is perfect.¶ He taught them abſtraction from the world, perfect ſubmiſſion to the will of GOD, entire patience and contentment at all times and in all conditions. Theſe high and exalted duties he perfectly taught by his own example. His matchleſs piety appeared in his abundant prayers. We have an account of his praying all night; of his *offering up prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong crying and tears.*** He always went about doing good, feeding the hungry, opening the eyes of the blind, healing the ſick, comforting the mourners, and raiſing the dead. His love to men appeared in all his benevolent doctrines, in his glorious miracles, and in that he gave his life a ranſom for them. He could make this challenge even of his enemies, *Which of you convinceth me of ſin.*†† Though they invidiouſly watched his words and actions, and ſet up falſe witneſſes againſt him, yet they could prove no crime againſt him. His judge declared, *I find in him no fault at all.*‡‡ *I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon.*§§ What piety, ſubmiſſion, goodneſs, magnanimity, and patience did he exhibit in his agonies and death? His father's honor ſwallowed up every other conſideration. This was the language of his heart, *Not my will, but thine be done.** *Father, glorify thy name.*† When he was juſt recovered from his agonies, when Judas had betrayed him, and his enemies were ſeizing upon him, with what firmneſs and ſubmiſſion did he ſpeak? *The cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?*‡ At the ſame time what goodneſs does he ſhow to an enemy? He touched the ear of Malchus, and healed it. Before Pontius Pilate and the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, he witneſſed a good profeſſion, avouching his character, as the SON of GOD, and the SAVIOUR of men.

¶ Matth. v. 44—48. ** Heb. v. 7. †† John viii. 46.
‡‡ John xviii. 38. §§ Matth. xxvii. 24. * Luke xxii. 42.
† John xii. 28. ‡ John xviii. 11.

Under all the abuſe, reproach and agonies which he ſuffered, he betrayed not the leaſt impatience, ſpake not an improper word, nor diſcovered an unbecoming thought or feeling; but every thing the reverſe in the higheſt degree. His enemies buffetted and mocked him, ſcourged him, and crowned him with thorns, they pierced his hands and his feet; but he prayed, *Father forgive them.* He renewed and pardoned the thief, who juſt before had been reviling on him, and promiſed, *This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.*§ Amidſt all his ſhame and agonies, he forgat not an afflicted parent, but ſaid to the beloved diſciple, *Behold thy mother.* Then he cloſed the wonderful ſcene with, *FATHER, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit.*‖ What man ever lived and died in ſuch a divine and glorious manner as JESUS CHRIST? With the ſtricteſt truth it may be affirmed that no ſuch character and example beſide hath ever been exhibited upon earth. How deformed are the characters of the pious Eneas, Socrates, and Plato, after all the paintings and panegyrics which poets and philoſophers have beſtowed upon them, when contraſted with the character of JESUS given by the fiſhermen of Galilee? Is it therefore poſſible that this man ſhould have been an impoſtor? If his character was perfect his religion muſt be divine. If this was not his true character, and his diſciples were not inſpired, how were they enabled to draw one ſo far ſurpaſſing all others, which have ever appeared upon the earth.

FURTHER, the goſpel appears to bear the impreſſions of divinity, as it beſtows no praiſes upon thoſe things and enjoyments which are in the greateſt repute among men, but places them upon a very low ſcale, and treats them with indifference and neglect. It directs men to entirely different purſuits from thoſe, in which worldly men are moſt eagerly engaged. The riches, honors, and pleaſures of this world, ambition, military proweſs, and worldly wiſdom have no enco-

§ Luke xxiii. 43. ‖ Verſe 46.

miums in the goſpel. CHRIST repreſents them all as huſks which the ſwine eat, and that in the greateſt fulneſs of them, men may be loſt and die eternally. He repreſents them as dangerous to the ſoul, and all thoſe as fools, who eagerly purſue after them, and ſet their hearts upon them. He commands his followers, ſaying, *Take no thought for the morrow;*—what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, or wherewithal ye ſhall be clothed.* *Labor not for the meat which periſheth.*† CHRIST taught his diſciples not to ſeek the honor which cometh from men, and that true greatneſs conſiſted in humbling themſelves. *Whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf, the ſame ſhall be the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.*‡ His inſtructions and maxims were directly contrary to the wiſdom and practice of the world. He teaches us to ſeek that firſt and with the greateſt zeal and perſeverance which the world ſeeks laſt, or not at all. Seek firſt the kingdom of GOD. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* He teaches us to lay up our treaſures, and to have our affections in heaven. He taught this in example as well as precept. He humbled and made himſelf of no reputation, and became the pooreſt man upon earth. *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, but the ſon of man had not where to lay his head.*‖ When the people would have made him a king and judge, he rejected it with abhorrence. He was beyond all other men laborious, patient, and ſelf-denied. The philoſophers and the world in general placed virtue and vice in outward conduct, but the goſpel places them in the heart, and ſhows that all virtuous and vicious actions have their origin there. It diſcards ſelfiſhneſs, and requires that all things be done in charity or love. The maxims and conduct of the world are, Hate thine enemy; but the goſpel teaches us to love our enemies, forgive, pray for them, and do them good. Thus the inſtructions of CHRIST and his apoſtles are di-

* Matth. vi. 31, 34. † John vi. 27.
‡ Matth. xviii. 4. ‖ Chap. viii. 20.

rectly contrary to the maxims, inſtructions, purſuits, and feelings of philoſophers and all worldly wiſe men. At the ſame time they are incomparably ſuperior to them, all tending to holineſs, to make mankind uſeful and happy in life, and to make them eternally bleſſed. In theſe reſpects they reſemble GOD and lead to him.

THE goſpel teaches the ſublimeſt and moſt perfect piety: That GOD be loved with all the heart, and worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth: That men glorify him, in all things, whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do.§ It requires that men truſt in him and pray to him, at all times: That they be thankful, ſubmiſſive, patient, contented, and obedient.

ITS morals are pure and excellent beyond all parallel. Even infidels have allowed the excellency of the Chriſtian morals. Their ſurpaſſing excellency appears from many things which have been already obſerved; as they contain a ſyſtem of love; kind affection and conduct. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.* Its whole tendency is to righteouſneſs, peace, and ſafety. The goſpel requires the higheſt degrees of love and holineſs, and condemns all ſin, in thought, intention, and diſpoſition, as well as in word and conduct. The Heathen philoſophers allowed of many things which were abominable. Nay, they maintained their lawfulneſs. The ſame may be obſerved of infidels in general. Some of them, like the Heathen, recommend them to their children.¶ But the goſpel enjoins univerſal purity, righteouſneſs, and goodneſs. It enjoins, that all men be true, faithful, temperate, *peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.** It requires every thing reaſonable and kind, in all the relations and conditions of life. A perfect conform-

§ 1 Cor. x. 31.

¶ Many of the deiſts maintain the lawfulneſs of duelling and ſelf-murder, and are guilty of thoſe crimes. Lord Cheſterfield lived a life of debauchery, and recommended it to his ſon. Hume ſpeaks of the groſſeſt acts of uncleanneſs and covenant breaking as mere trifles. * James iii. 17.

ity to it would prevent every injury, and ſecure all the rights of men. It would eſtabliſh piety, righteouſneſs, and peace through the earth. It would produce the greateſt health, dignity, and happineſs, in individuals, families, and nations, in all the poſſible relations and conditions of the preſent ſtate.

THE goſpel brings life and immortality to light; and at once opens to the mind a ſource of the moſt noble, ſubſtantial, and divine comfort in time, and the moſt raviſhing and glorious proſpects in death and eternity. Its conſolations differ from all others, are ſpiritual and eternal, adapted to holy minds. They are the greatneſs, perfections, promiſes, univerſal and eternal dominion of GOD. Conformity to him, peace with him, and the enjoyment of him. A ſenſe of his glory, of his pardoning mercy, and faith in his promiſes; that the ſanctification and happineſs of his people will be promoted by all his diſpenſations, and that through CHRIST, he will beſtow on them a crown of life. In theſe things they have great peace, and rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. Theſe are conſolations and rewards which outweigh all others, in excellency and duration, as much as the globe outweighs a feather, or as the ocean exceeds the drops of a bucket.

THE threatenings and puniſhments exhibited in the goſpel are different from all others, ſuch as GOD only can inflict. And as they are infinitely more dreadful than any other of which imagination can form any idea, ſo they furniſh the moſt awful motives to reſtrain men from ſin, and to awaken them to holy living. There is a greatneſs, majeſty, and forcibleneſs in the reſtraints from ſin, and motives to holineſs, in the goſpel, which can be found in no human code, nor in any profane writers.

INDEED the goſpel preſents us with ſuch ſtriking and abundant evidence of a future, great, and general judgment, and of its awful and glorious awards and tranſactions, of the final iſſue of all human things, and of the eternal ſtate of all moral beings, as never

were made manifeſt by any other teachers, but CHRIST and his apoſtles. The repreſentations of it are calculated above all others to reſtrain the world from ſin, to promote holineſs, and to inſpire the human mind with the moſt venerable and exalted ideas of GOD and our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Do not theſe facts irrefragably prove that the New Teſtament muſt have been a divine, ſupernatural revelation? Can it, with the leaſt reaſon be ſuppoſed that CHRIST and his apoſtles, men ſo illiterate, could poſſibly, without ſupernatural aſſiſtance, have given ſuch characters, and formed ſuch a wonderful, holy ſyſtem of religion and morals, ſo far exceeding every thing which any other men have ever been able to effect? Would not this have been miraculous indeed? Nay, would it not have been one of the greateſt miracles yet recorded? Can it be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that impoſtors and haters of GOD and men ſhould form a ſyſtem of religion ſo pious, righteous, and benevolent, breathing nothing but the pureſt piety and philanthrophy, and calculated in its whole tendency to make mankind happy? Might we not juſt as well expect darkneſs from the ſun, and ſweet and ſalutary waters from the moſt bitter and deadly fountain?

V. THE harmony of the New Teſtament with itſelf, and with the Old is a further evidence of its divine original, and of the genuineneſs and authenticity of the whole canon of ſcripture. The writers of the New Teſtament conſiſted of a conſiderable number. They were men of different gifts, they wrote upon a great variety of ſubjects and occaſions, in different countries and circumſtances; and yet there is an admirable harmony in their teſtimony as to the hiſtory which they give of CHRIST, the ſtate and tranſactions of the primitive church, as to the character of GOD, the character and offices of the MEDIATOR, and the deſign of the Mediatorial undertaking. They admirably harmonize as to the doctrines and duties which they teach, and with reſpect to the motives with which they enforce Chriſtian obedience. This can be ac-

counted for upon no other principle but this, That they were guided by truth only.

THE New Teſtament alſo perfectly harmonizes with the Old, in the character which it gives of the DEITY and of mankind, in giving all glory to GOD, and in directing man in the paths of righteouſneſs and ſalvation; in the doctrines and duties it teaches and enjoins, and in the promiſes it makes to the righteous. There is an admirable agreement between the predictions of the Old Teſtament concerning CHRIST, the types and ceremonies reſpecting him, and the hiſtory of the New Teſtament concerning him. This points us to him, as lifted up upon the croſs, as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, and, with reference to the lamb in the paſſover, calls upon us to behold the lamb of GOD, who taketh away the ſin of the world. It records his birth in the city of David, his ſorrows, death, reſurrection, and glory; the conſequences of them in the gifts of the Holy GHOST; the ſpread of the goſpel, and calling of the Gentiles, in a perfect agreement with the numerous types, ceremonies, and predictions of the Old Teſtament concerning them. Does not this forcibly argue the divine original of the ſcriptures of both Teſtaments? Is it poſſible that a great number of impoſtors, living at a thouſand, or fifteen hundred years from each other, in different countries ſhould thus harmonize in ſentiments, and in facts, in ſuch a vaſt and almoſt infinite variety of circumſtances? Certainly they could not. Nor could the wiſeſt and beſt men, unleſs they had been ſupernaturally taught.

VI. THE wonderful effects of the goſpel, that it was believed and had ſuch an extenſive ſpread in the apoſtolic age, and in ſubſequent ages, is a demonſtration that it is from GOD.

EVEN in the apoſtolic age, the goſpel had a wonderful ſpread, and was received by great numbers of almoſt all nations of the then known world. This, conſidered with the ſtate of the world, at that time,

and the circumſtances in which the goſpel was then preached, muſt appear to be the LORD's work, and be marvellous in our eyes.

THE Jews, their ſanhedrim, rabbies and great men, were combined, with implacable oppoſition, againſt CHRIST and the doctrines of the croſs. The pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs of the Phariſees, the infidelity of the Sadducees, with all the habits, prejudices, luſts, and bigotry of the Jewiſh nation, were oppoſed to them. The idolatry, falſe principles, cuſtoms, ſuperſtition, and abandoned wickedneſs of the Pagan world, ſtood in direct oppoſition to the goſpel. It had to combat the art, power, pride, and eloquence of kings, philoſophers, poets, and worldly wiſe men. The world indeed with all its art and powers was engaged againſt it.

THE SAVIOUR, whom the apoſtles were commanded to preach, had not only been lately crucified, as a malefactor and impoſtor; but they themſelvees were obſcure, though honeſt men. They had no wealth, literature, or worldly greatneſs to recommend them; no earthly friends, alliances, or power to ſupport them. Beſides, if any man believed their report and profeſſed Chriſtianity, he, at once, not only expoſed himſelf to the loſs of eaſe, honor, and all worldly poſſeſſions, but to hatred, ſtripes, impriſonment, tortures, and death itſelf.

NEVERTHELESS, even in theſe circumſtances, thouſands believed. Such was the evidence and power with which the apoſtles preached, that even in that city, where but a few weeks before the LORD had been crucified, three thouſands were won to the belief of the truth by one ſermon. Some years after, the brethren at Jeruſalem could addreſs the apoſtle Paul in ſuch language as this, *Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands there are of the Jews which believe.** The epiſtles, written in the apoſtolic age, prove that there were congregations of Chriſtians not only at Jeruſa-

* Acts xxi. 20.

lem, Samaria, and Antioch, but at Rome, Corinth, Epheſus, Coloſſe, Philippi, Theſſalonica, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; at Crete, Pontus, Galatia, and many other places. So rapid was the propagation of the goſpel, that St. Paul compares it to the diffuſion of the light of the ſun and luminaries of heaven. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.* With this declaration of the apoſtle, the teſtimony of the Chriſtian fathers happily correſponds. Juſtin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, which is ſuppoſed to have been written about a hundred years after the paſſion of our SAVIOUR, declares, "That there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or Barbarians, not excepting thoſe ſavages, who wandered in clans from one region to another, and had no fixed habitation, who had not learned to offer prayers and thankſgivings to the FATHER and maker of all, in the name of JESUS who was crucified." Tertullian repreſents that all places in the Roman empire were ſo filled with Chriſtians, that were they only to withdraw, "cities and provinces would be depopulated."

THE Gentiles, in great numbers, turned from the ſervice of dumb idols to ſerve the living GOD, and to wait for his ſon from heaven. The Heathen temples were deſerted and ſhut up, their oracles were ſilenced, and the works of the devil deſtroyed.†

THE goſpel has made great progreſs and ſpread far in the world, ſince the primitive ages of Chriſtianity. Though the powers of the world have combined to extirpate Chriſtians and to deſtroy the ſcriptures, yet bibles and churches have greatly increaſed and are ſtill increaſing.

† Not only the fathers and eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians of the beſt credit, but Heathen writers, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny the younger, and others witneſs theſe facts. Thoſe who have not their writings may ſee quotations to this purpoſe, in Dr. Lardner, in Dr. Doddridge's ten ſermons to young people, and in Paley's evidences.

Now will any perſon of common underſtanding and acquaintance with mankind affirm it to be poſſible, that this ſhould have been the caſe, unleſs the goſpel had been true, and GOD himſelf had owned and rendered it effectual, by the ſupernatural influences of his ſpirit and grace? Do men eaſily forſake their ſuperſtitions, their falſe gods, their long contracted habits, the love and purſuit of the world, their moſt gainful and beloved luſts, and become eminently pious, righteous, charitable, patient, and ſelf-denied, like the primitive Chriſtians? Have philoſophers, or any other writers or preachers, except the apoſtles and preachers of the goſpel, ever thus reformed and changed the world? Is it poſſible that any thing but divine truth, attended with the ſupernatural influences of the Holy Spirit, ſhould produce ſuch glorious effects? Could not the apoſtles have as eaſily cauſed the mountains to ſink and the vallies to riſe, have transformed lions and wolves into lambs and doves, as to have effected them, had not their report been true, and the LORD been with them?

WHAT clear and abundant evidence have we therefore, from this and the preceding arguments, that the writings of the New Teſtament are a revelation from GOD, and that the apoſtles *did not follow cunningly deviſed fables, when they made known unto us, the power and coming of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *but were eye witneſſes of his majeſty.**

THE preceding diſcourſe may naturally lead us to ſeveral inferences ſome of which I ſhall mention.

I. WE infer how uncandid and contrary to truth all thoſe repreſentations and inſinuations are, which infidels ſo often make, that the New Teſtament was not written in the apoſtolic age, but ſome hundred of years after; that its authenticity depends on votes of councils, and that ſome parts of it were voted in only by a ſingle caſting voice. Such things they are pleaſed to inſinuate and even affirm, againſt the cleareſt evidence to the contrary. At the ſame time they bring no au-

* 2 Pet. i. 16.

thority in proof of what they affirm, nor can they ſuggeſt any circumſtance by which it can appear in the leaſt degree probable. Nay had not the goſpels and epiſtles been written, and the great things happened at the time when they are related and ſuppoſed to have happened, and been written, they would in many inſtances have refuted themſelves, or been capable of the eaſieſt refutation. They relate the time when John the baptiſt and CHRIST were born, the princes who reigned in Judea and at Rome, the high prieſts and Roman judge before whom JESUS was arraigned and condemned, and the rulers and judges before whom they alſo ſtood, and by whom they ſuffered. They repreſent the ſtate of the Jews and Romans in ſuch a manner at the time of their writing, as that they muſt utterly have deſtroyed their authority, and made it a work of the greateſt facility to have refuted their teſtimony and writings, had they not been true. But nothing of this nature was ever attempted, by any of the ancient enemies of Chriſtianity. They appear ever to have acknowledged the facts which the apoſtles recorded.† Had not the New Teſtament been written during the apoſtolic age, it would have been impoſſible for the fathers, who lived in the firſt and ſecond centuries, to have quoted thoſe ſcriptures as they have done. But as the copies were ſcattered in various and diſtant countries it was a work of ſome time, in the then ſtate of the world, to collect them, and form them into one book as they now appear.

II. THE pretences of infidels, that the evangeliſts do not harmonize, but contradict themſelves and lie, is uncandid and groundleſs. It has been ſhown that there is an admirable harmony in the writers of the New Teſtament, ſuch as never has been found in any other writers; and that their apparent character, the

† Scraps of Heathen teſtimony witneſs the time of CHRIST's paſſion. Auctor nominis ejus Chriſtus, qui Tiberio imperante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum ſupplicio affectus erat. Tacit, annal. Lib. XV. c. 44. He aſſerts that Chriſtians were named from CHRIST, and that he ſuffered, under Pontius Pilate the procurator, in the reign of Tiberius.

manner in which they have written, and the circumſtances in which they wrote, give us every reaſon to credit their teſtimony. Candor and modeſty would therefore prevent all men from cenſuring them, as inconſiſtent and falſe, unleſs real inconſiſtencies and palpable contradictions were to be found in what they have written. But no ſuch inconſiſtencies and contradictions are to be found. With reſpect to the reſurrection of the SAVIOUR, on which the deiſts lay the greateſt ſtreſs, there is the moſt perfect harmony, with reſpect to the great fact, the time when he aroſe and many of the circumſtances; though in the relation of ſome other circumſtances there is a difference. Theſe differences however imply no contradiction, nor inconſiſtency. The women appear not to have all arrived at the ſepulchre at the ſame time, and the appearances to them were different. To ſome, at one time, but one angel appeared, to others, who arrived at a different time, there was the appearance of two; at one time an angel appeared at one place, upon the ſtone which had been laid at the mouth of the ſepulchre; at another time two were ſeen in the ſepulchre. One evangeliſt has related one circumſtance, and another other circumſtances; they were all true, and the omiſſion of ſome of them in one ſacred writer, and the relation of them in another makes no contradiction or inconſiſtency. One of the evangeliſts relates, that both the thieves reviled CHRIST; another ſpeaks only of one as reviling him. The account is not contradictory; both reviled him at firſt, though afterwards one repented and did him the higheſt honor. The omiſſion of a circumſtance forms no contradiction. Few men, or hiſtorians, who are ever ſo faithful, relate every circumſtance, or all the ſame circumſtances. Some hiſtorians write but a ſmall part of what others do; but do not contradict the hiſtorian who writes more copiouſly, nor does he deſtroy his credit, who writes a general hiſtory only.

III. SINCE there is ſuch clear and abundant evidence of the truth of divine revelation, how exceedingly

cautious ſhould all be, and young men in particular, that they do not remain ignorant of it, and ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon and laughed out of their religion, by a few witty cants, ſly inſinuations, and groundleſs miſrepreſentations of unbelievers. A queſtion of ſuch immenſe magnitude as this, whether the ſcriptures be a revelation from GOD, ſhould not be determined raſhly. It challenges the moſt impartial and thorough inveſtigation. If any renounce Chriſtianity againſt clear and ſufficient evidence of its divinity, or for want of due examination, they will be wholly inexcuſable, and the conſequences will be infinitely dreadful. If any have renounced the faith inconſiderately, it highly concerns them immediately, in the moſt ſerious and impartial manner, to re-examine the ſubject. Such a re-examination might deliver them from the moſt fatal deluſion, and iſſue in their eternal ſalvation.

IV. IN a word, hath GOD ſpoken to us by his ſon, whom he has appointed heir of all things, and by whom alſo he made the worlds, how ſhould all take heed how they hear him who ſpeaketh from heaven? A perſon of ſuch peerleſs dignity, and who ſpake as never man ſpake, demands all our attention. If he that deſpiſed Moſes' law died without mercy, of how much ſorer puniſhment muſt he be thought worthy, who rejects the ſon of GOD? How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?

DISCOURSE VI.

The Divinity of the Scriptures proved from the accompliſhment of Prophecy.

JEREMIAH xxviii. 9.

WHEN the word of the prophet ſhall come to paſs, then ſhall the prophet be known, that the LORD *hath truly ſent him.*

THE accompliſhment of the ſcripture prophecies, in their appointed ſeaſon, is one of the ſtrongeſt evidences of the truth of the divine oracles. This is an evidence which ever has been, and ever will be increaſing, even until the end ſhall come. The fulfilment of every prophecy is an atteſtation to the truth of the ſcripture, and gives a new, and further evidence of its divine original. The prophecies which are at this time fulfilling, in view of all nations, afford additional evidence to all that accumulation of it, which has preceded their accompliſhment, and irrefragably demonſtrate to us, that GOD ſpake unto the fathers by the prophets, and that the ſcriptures are a divine revelation. Indeed the accompliſhment of the prophecies is the great, and a kind of ocular demon-

ſtration to us, in theſe laſt ages, of the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

THE paſſage of ſcripture which has now been read, in connection with the preceding verſes, imports, that GOD, in former ages, had been ſending true prophets unto his church, and had given full evidence to it and to the world, that he had indeed ſent them, by the accompliſhment of the events which they had reſpectively predicted. The words alſo import, that all true prophets are to be known in the ſame way; ſo that whenever the prophecies of any prophet ſhall be accompliſhed it may be certainly known that GOD has indeed ſent, and ſpoken by him. Hence the accompliſhment of the words of the prophets is an evidence that GOD ſpake by them, and that the ſcriptures contain a divine revelation. It will therefore be natural in further diſcourſing on the words,

I. To notice a variety of ſcripture prophecies, or words of the prophets, which have been literally accompliſhed.

II. To ſhow that this affords us demonſtrative evidence, that GOD ſpake by them, and that the ſcriptures are his word.

I. I SHALL notice a variety of ſcripture prophecies which have had a moſt literal accompliſhment.

BY prophecies, in this diſcourſe, we are to underſtand clear and expreſs predictions of future events, which had no ſuch connection with the courſe of nature, or ſecond cauſes, nor any ſuch dependance on them, as that they could have been, in any meaſure, diſcerned, or foretold on that account.

IN treating of theſe, I ſhall not attend to all the predictions in the ſacred books. This would be to tranſcribe a conſiderable part of both teſtaments, and to write a volume inſtead of a ſermon. Nor ſhall I, in this place, bring into view the numerous prophecies concerning our bleſſed SAVIOUR, which have had a moſt literal and wonderful accompliſhment in him. Theſe will be exhibited in a ſubſequent diſcourſe.

NOR ſhall I inſiſt much on the predictions of events which were immediately, or ſoon, to come to paſs. Such as the predictions of Moſes to Pharaoh of the plagues that he would inflict upon him for his obſtinacy in not letting Iſrael go; that GOD would bring out the Iſraelites from that land; that the rebellious Iſraelites ſhould die in the wilderneſs; that the earth ſhould ſwallow up the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and that GOD would deliver up the inhabitants of Canaan before the Iſraelites, and plant the latter in a land flowing with milk and honey. Such alſo were the predictions of Joſhua, that the waters of Jordan ſhould be cut off, and the walls of Jericho fall down before the children of Iſrael.* Such were the predictions of Elijah concerning the handful of meal in the barrel of the widow of Zarephath and the oil in her cruiſe;† concerning the drought in the days of Ahab, and the abundance of rain, after he had brought back the people to the LORD, at mount Carmel.‡ Of the ſame kind was the prophecy of Micaiah reſpecting the fall of Ahab at Ramoth Gilead;§ of Eliſha relative to what was ſpoken by the king of Aſſyria in his bed chamber, and the places where he would fix his camps, in the land of Iſrael; concerning the incredible plenty in the gate of Samaria, and the death of the unbelieving lord.‖ The prophecy of Iſaiah reſpecting the recovery of Hezekiah from his ſickneſs, and of the deſtruction of Sennacherib and his army;¶ and of Jeremiah, in the context, againſt Hananiah the falſe prophet, are not leſs remarkable, with many others which might be mentioned. The people knew, by the accompliſhment of theſe and ſimilar predictions, with reſpect to the other prophets, as they did with reſpect to Samuel, when *the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground,*

* Joſhua iii. 10, 13, and chapter vi. 26. † 1 Kings xvii. 14.
‡ 1 Kings xviii. 1, and chap. xviii. 44. § 1 Kings xxii. 17, 28.
‖ 2 Kings vi. 10, 11, 12, and chapter vii. 1, 2, 18—20.
¶ 2 Kings xix. 21, 32, 33, 36, and chapter xx. 6, 7: compared with Iſaiah xxxvii. 22, 29, 36—38.

that they were eſtabliſhed to be prophets of the LORD, and that he ſpake by them.

BUT paſſing theſe, let us pay our attention to a number of prophecies reſpecting Abraham and his ſeed. Eſpecially thoſe recorded in Geneſis xv. 5, 13, 14, 16; and xvii. 15, 16, 19. *And he brought him forth abroad, and ſaid, Look now toward heaven, and tell the ſtars, if thou be able to number them: And he ſaid unto him, So ſhall thy ſeed be. And he ſaid unto Abram, Know of a ſurety, that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land that is not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them and they ſhall afflict them four hundred years. And alſo that nation whom they ſhall ſerve will I judge. And afterward ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance. In the fourth generation they ſhall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And GOD ſaid unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou ſhalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah ſhall her name be. And I will bleſs her, and give the a ſon of her: Yea, I will bleſs her, and ſhe ſhall be a mother of nations; kings of people ſhall be of her. And GOD ſaid, Sarah thy wife ſhall bear thee a ſon indeed; and thou ſhalt call his name Iſaac: And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with him for an everlaſting covenant and with his ſeed after him.*

HERE are remarkable predictions and promiſes of things to come, to human appearance wholly improbable. Nay, according to the common courſe of nature, abſolutely impoſſible. Who but GOD could have known, or foretold, that the ſeed of a man an hundred years old, and of a woman at the age of ninety years, whoſe bodies were now even dead, ſhould become as the ſtars of heaven in number, deſtroy the nations of Canaan, and poſſeſs that glorious land? Who but the omniſcient JEHOVAH could have predicted the period of Iſrael's ſervitude in Egypt, the time and manner of his deliverance, and the generation which ſhould be planted in the land of promiſe? But theſe events were as exactly and as expreſsly foretold, as they could have been related after they had

taken place. At the time appointed, Iſaac was born and his ſeed was admirably multiplied. Nations, the nation of Iſrael and of the Edomites, ſprang from him; and kings of nations deſcended from their mother Sarah, after ſhe had been, as one dead, as to her ever having an offspring. The ſeed of Iſrael were afflicted in Egypt, Pharaoh and his hoſt were deſtroyed, and the ſons of Jacob delivered and ſettled in Canaan, at the very time which had been predicted. This is particularly noticed by the ſacred hiſtorian, Exodus xii. 40, 41. *Now the ſojourning of the children of Iſrael, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to paſs at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the ſelf-ſame day, it came to paſs, that all the hoſt of the* LORD *went out from the land of Egypt.* That is, from the time of GOD's making the promiſe to Abraham upon his firſt coming into the land of Canaan.*

FURTHER, GOD predicted and promiſed to Abraham, that he would give his ſeed all the country from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Gen. xv. 18. This was literally accompliſhed in the reigns of David and Solomon. It is recorded 2 Samuel viii. 3, and 1 Kings iv. 21. *And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philiſtines, and unto the borders of Egypt.*

ANOTHER very remarkable prophecy concerning the ſeed of Abraham is that which reſpected Iſhmael. Gen. xvi. 10, 11, 12. *And the angel of the* LORD *ſaid unto her, I will multiply thy ſeed exceedingly that it ſhall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the* LORD *ſaid unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and ſhalt bear a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Iſhmael; becauſe the* LORD

* Dr. Kennicott obſerves an omiſſion of ſeveral words in the preſent Hebrew text of the 40 verſe, which ſtands thus in the Samaritan Pentateuch. Now the ſojourning of the children of Iſrael and their fathers in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years. Diſſertation I. p. 398, 399. The ancient Greek verſion, the preſent Septuagint and Joſephus give us the ſame idea.

hath heard thine affliction. And he ſhall be a wild man; his hand will be againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him: and he ſhall dwell in the preſence of all his brethren. Compared with this Gen. xvii. 20. *And as for Iſhmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have bleſſed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes ſhall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.*

THIS is a very extraordinary prediction, and from that to the preſent time has been moſt remarkably accompliſhing, and is ſtill ſo in the view of all nations. The original word, tranſlated *a wild man*, as Mr. Pool obſerves, is literally a wild aſs' man, wild, fierce, untamed, and unſettled as that fierce and wandering animal.* The prophecy therefore is, that he ſhould be a wild and barbarous man, roving from place to place, living in mountains and deſarts; that he ſhould be warlike and violent, continually hunting wild beaſts, warring againſt, and oppreſſing mankind; that by his ill neighbourhood, his perpetual violence, and robberies, he would provoke all other people to become his enemies. The words nevertheleſs import, that he would dwell in the midſt of his brethren, and that neither they nor any foreign nation ſhould ever be able to conquer him, or diſpoſſeſs his poſterity of their country. This prophecy reſpected not only Iſhmael but his poſterity. In every part of it, it has been moſt literally accompliſhed.

WITH reſpect to Iſhmael himſelf, Moſes aſſures us, that he begat twelve princes, and that he lived and died in the midſt of his brethren,† as they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, which is before Egypt. They were compaſſed about by the ſons of Abraham by Keturah, by the Moabites, and Ammonites, the poſterity of his kinſman Lot, and by the Iſraelites and Edomites, the deſcendants of Iſaac and Jacob. Iſhmael and his poſterity dwelt in the wilderneſs, ranged the vales

* Pool's Engliſh annotations and Synopſis in loco.

† Gen. xxv. 16, 17.

and the mountains like the wild aſs. They have been fierce, warlike, and cruel. The Arabians are robbers by land and pirates by ſea; are at war with all nations, and live by violence and plunder. When they have received and treated people with great hoſpitality in the evening and morning, they often rob them before it is night. In this manner they provoke individuals and all nations of mankind to become their enemies and deſtroy them. Many attempts have been made to conquer and extirpate them; but none have ſucceeded. Notwithſtanding all the provocations they have given, and all the mighty monarchies and generals which have ariſen in the world and attempted their deſtruction, they have to this day maintained their country and independence. They alſo ſtill retain the ſavage manners, the wild and oppreſſive ſpirit of their father.* They have ever been and are ſtill a numerous people. While all other nations are changing their manners, dreſs, and cuſtoms, they continue the ſame as they were three thouſand and five hundred years ago. Theſe are events to human view moſt ſingular, improbable, and marvellous. Who but GOD, to whom all his works are known from the beginning, could have foreſeen and foretold them? It is now more than three thouſand and ſix hundred years ſince the prophecy was ſpoken, yet we ſee it literally accompliſhed and accompliſhing in the open view of all nations.

THE predictions of Iſaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel againſt the nations circumjacent to Canaan; thoſe againſt the Moabites, children of Ammon, Philiſtines, Aſſyrians, Egyptians, and Babylonians, and the capitals of thoſe kingdoms, here merit our ſpecial notice. Theſe prophets propheſied particularly of their deſtruc-

* Iſhmael was a robber and highwayman. See univerſal hiſtory vol. xviii. p. 369. His poſterity were given to war, bloodſhed, rapine, and cruelty; lived upon plunder, harraſſing their neighbours by continual robberies and incurſions. They are infamous to this day for the robberies they commit on travellers and merchants of all nations. The ſame volume p. 409, 410, 416.

tion; and, in ſeveral inſtances, foretold the perſons by name, by whom their deſtruction ſhould be accompliſhed. Iſaiah, in the xiii. xv. xvi. xvii. xviii. xix. xxi. and xxiii. chapters of his prophecy, predicts the fall of all thoſe nations and the deſtruction of their capital cities; the captivity of the ten tribes, and the deſtruction of their capital. He very particularly deſcribes the fall of Babylon and of Tyre. He particularizes many of the circumſtances reſpecting their deſtruction. He predicts the conqueſt of Babylon by the Medes and Perſians, and repreſents Cyrus by name, as appointed of GOD for that ſervice. *That ſaith of Cyrus, He is my ſhepherd, whoſe right hand I have holden to ſubdue nations before him; and I will looſe the loins of kings to open before him the two leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be ſhut. I will go before thee and make the crooked places ſtraight: I will break in pieces the gates of braſs, and cut in ſunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treaſures of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places.** He alſo foretold that the overthrow of Babylon ſhould be total and everlaſting. *And Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' exceilency, ſhall be as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It ſhall never be inhabited, neither ſhall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.*† Theſe predictions of Iſaiah were at leaſt one hundred and ſixty years before the capture of Babylon, when it was the head of the kingdom and in its full glory. There were no human proſpects of ſuch an event; but all appearances were to the contrary: Yet he not only foretels the event, but the very people and general by whom it ſhould be accompliſhed, and the immenſe treaſures which ſhould be taken from the magazines, treaſuries, and ſecret repoſitories of Babylon.

THE prophet Iſaiah not only propheſied againſt Tyre, but gave many particulars reſpecting her deſtruction: That her firſt overthrow, by Nebuchadnezzar, ſhould be ſeventy years; and that then ſhe ſhould

* Iſaiah xliv. 28, and xlv. 1, 2, 3. † Chap. xiii. 19, 20.

be reviſited, in mercy, and flouriſh again. He alſo prophecied the converſion of the Tyrians in the goſpel day.‡

JEREMIAH predicted the conqueſt of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the judgments of the Almighty upon the Philiſtines, upon Moab, Edom, Damaſcus, and other nations and places.‖ With reſpect to Babylon, he is more particular than Iſaiah. He fixes the preciſe time of its deſtruction, at ſeventy years from the capture of Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans, with ſeveral other particulars. Chapter xxv. 12. *And it ſhall come to paſs when ſeventy years are accompliſhed, that I will puniſh the king of Babylon, and that nation, ſaith the* LORD, *for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual deſolations.* Then in the l. chapter 37 and 38 verſes, he declares, that *a ſword is upon all the mingled people that are in the midſt of her, and they ſhall become as women: a ſword is upon her treaſures, and they ſhall be robbed. A drought is upon her waters, and they ſhall be dried up.* In the li. chapter 31, 32, and 39 verſes, he predicts a number of remarkable circumſtances. *One poſt ſhall run to meet another, and one meſſenger to meet another, to ſhew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the paſſages are ſtopped, and the reeds they have burnt with fire. In their heat will I make their feaſts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and ſleep a perpetual ſleep and not wake, ſaith the* LORD.

How admirably were all theſe prophecies accompliſhed? Where are the mighty nations and cities againſt whom the prophets ſpake? Have they not long ſince periſhed from the earth? With reſpect to Babylon, were not her waters dried up and her treaſures robbed? Is it not notorious, that Cyrus turned the river Euphrates, and by that means took the city? That it was taken at one end, and at the time of a great annual feſtival, when the inhabitants were buried in ſleep and drunkenneſs, juſt as the prophet had predicted? Dean Prideaux and biſhop Newton have ſhown how all theſe

‡ Iſaiah xxiii. 15, 17, 18. ‖ Jeremiah xliii. xliv. xlvi. xlvii. xlviii. xlix.

particulars, as to time and circumſtances, were accompliſhed. The facts are eſtabliſhed by hiſtorians of the beſt authority.

THE prophets declared that Babylon, like Sodom and Gomorrah, ſhould be totally overthrown and riſe no more forever. And is it not true, that it is ſo blotted out from under heaven that no man knoweth the place of its ſituation?

THE prophet Ezekiel foretold that Tyrus ſhould be ſo utterly demoliſhed, that it ſhould become a bare rock, and *a place for the ſpreading of nets in the midſt of the ſea.** Agreeably to which prediction, and that of Iſaiah's, already noticed, it was deſtroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, after a ſiege of thirteen years, in which, as the prophet had expreſsly predicted, every head had been made bald, and every ſhoulder made bare. But after all he was miſerably diſappointed as to the treaſures and riches of which he expected to have made himſelf the poſſeſſor: for the Tyrians ſent away their treaſures in their ſhips. He therefore made an expedition againſt Egypt, and conquering Pharaoh and Egypt, enriched himſelf and paid his army with its treaſures and ſpoils. This was a moſt literal accompliſhment of Ezekiel xxix. 18, 19. *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon cauſed his army to ſerve a great ſervice againſt Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every ſhoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the ſervice that he had ſerved againſt it: Therefore thus ſaid the* LORD GOD, *Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he ſhall take her multitude, and take her ſpoil, and take her prey, and it ſhall be the wages of his army.*

THESE prophecies were moſt literally fulfilled. Tyrus was firſt demoliſhed by Nebuchadnezzar; after ſeventy years ſhook off his yoke, and was rebuilt upon an Iſland in the ſea, at a ſmall diſtance from the place where the ancient Tyrus had ſtood. This latter was

* Ezekiel xxvi. 3, 4, 5.

taken by Alexander the great, and utterly deſtroyed; ſo that nothing is left remaining but its ruins and the bare top of the rock on which it was built, and upon which now the fiſhermen ſpread their nets. Travellers who have viſited it, and ſeen the fiſhermen ſpreading and drying their nets upon it, have been filled with ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment, at the minute and perfect fulfilment of the prophecies concerning it.

IN the apoſtolic age, the Tyrians were converted to the faith of the goſpel, and churches were gathered among them. Thus accurately have the prophecies concerning Tyre been accompliſhed.

THE remarkable predictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel relative to the deſtruction of Egypt, and its remaining a baſe kingdom, which ſhould never more exalt itſelf,* have had a ſingular completion.

NO leſs notorious has been the fulfilment of the prophecies of Moſes, Jeremiah, and the prophets concerning the judgments which GOD would execute upon the Iſraelites, for their diſobedience; concerning their recovery from the North country, and their preſervation among the nations, though hated, deſpiſed, plundered, and perſecuted by them univerſally. Moſes predicts the nation which ſhould come againſt them, deſcribes its character, the manner in which it would beſiege them, until they ſhould eat the fruit of their own bodies, the fleſh of their ſons and of their daughters in the ſiege, and in the ſtraitneſs wherewith their enemies ſhould diſtreſs them; that the tender and delicate woman among them ſhould eat her children ſecretly in the ſiege. Nay that the LORD ſhould bring them again into Egypt by ſhips, and that there they ſhould be ſold unto their enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and that no man ſhould buy them.† Jeremiah foretold the captivity of Zedekiah and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, with the ſeventy years captivity, and the return of the Jews again to their own

* Jeremiah xliv. xlvi. and Ezekiel xxix. 13, 14, and chapters xxx. xxxi. xxxii.

† Deut. xxviii. 49 to the 60th verſe, and alſo verſe 68.

land at the expiration of that term.‡ Whoever has read the hiſtory of the Jews, in the books of the Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and the Lamentations, in Joſephus and other profane writers, cannot but at once be convinced that the events have anſwered the predictions even as face anſwereth to face in water, or in the moſt perfect mirror.

AMONG all the prophecies, none are more remarkable than thoſe of our bleſſed SAVIOUR recorded Luke xix. 43, 44, and chapter xxi. 6, 23, 24. *For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide. And ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another, which ſhall not be thrown down. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days; for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land and wrath upon this people. And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations. and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* He further ſaid, *Then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world unto this time, no nor ever ſhall be.*‖ Have not theſe, and other predictions of our SAVIOUR been accompliſhed to a tittle? Have not Jeruſalem and the holy temple been deſtroyed? Has not the kingdom of heaven, the goſpel with all its privileges, been taken from the Jews? And has not Jeruſalem, for almoſt eighteen hundred years, been trodden down of the Gentiles? Were not the ſufferings of the Jews, when conquered by the Romans, without a parallel? Joſephus, in his wars of the Jews, ſays, "Never was any nation more wicked, nor ever did any city ſuffer as they did." Nay, he ſays, "All the miſeries which all mankind had ſuffered, from the beginning of the world, were not to be compared with thoſe which the Jewiſh nation did then ſuffer." Was not every ſtone in the temple thrown

‡ Jere. xxv. 9, 10, 11, and xxxii. 28, 29, and 36, 37.
‖ Matth. xxiv. 21.

down, and its very foundations plowed up, according to the prediction of the prophet, *Zion shall be plowed as a field?*§ Did not Titus, after the conquest of Jerusalem, send multitudes of the Jews in his ships to Egypt to be sold for bond-men and bond-women; and was not the market so glutted, that after numbers of them had been bought, no man, as Moses had predicted, would buy the rest?

THE present state of the Jews is a wonderful fulfilment of prophecy. In Jeremiah xxx. 11, it is written, *Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.* This is notorious among the nations. Though the Jews are scattered among all people, though they have been persecuted, plundered, and massacred, in an unparalleled manner; banished and driven by violence from city to city, and from one kingdom to another,¶ yet they still exist as a distinct nation, and perhaps never were more numerous than at present; while the ancient nations among whom they had been scattered in the days of this prophecy, have been long since swept away. Where are the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, or any of the nations who oppressed them before that time? Their infidelity, that, with the very book in their hands, which contains all the predictions against them, which have been so

§ Micah iii. 12. The Jewish writers acquaint us, that Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up the very foundations of the temple, and that Turnus Rufus plowed up the ground upon which it stood.

¶ Say the Jews, "Romans, Persians, Saracens, Christians, Mahometans, every nation and sect have successively raised its arm against us, and from the Nile to the Vistula, from the Tagus to the Euphrates, every country has seen our blood flowing." Letters to Voltaire. "What a marvellous thing is it, that after so many wars, battles, and sieges; after so many fires, famines, and pestilences; after so many rebellions, massacres, and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery, and misery, they are not destroyed utterly, and though scattered among all people, yet subsist as a distinct people, by themselves. Where is there any thing comparable to this to be found in all the histories and in all the nations under the sun?" David Levi from Basnage.

remarkably fulfilled, and all the characters of the MESSIAH, they ſhould continue in unbelief, is wonderful. Who can contemplate the exact accompliſhment of thoſe numerous prophecies, the blindneſs which in part has happened unto Iſrael, what they have ſuffered, and their preſent ſtate and not be a Chriſtian?

THE dream of Nebuchadnezzar,* and Daniel's viſion of the four beaſts,† which came up from the ſea, repreſenting the riſe, character, progreſs, and decline of the four great kingdoms, the Babylonian, Perſian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies, which in their ſucceſſive periods were to lay waſte the earth, are too ſingular and important to be paſſed over without ſpecial notice. In the interpretation and explanation of theſe, Daniel exhibits a wonderful ſcene of prophecy, compriſing a regular ſeries of the principal events, which in the courſe of providence, were to ſucceed each other, during the term of ſeveral thouſand years. From that time to this, events have, with an aſtoniſhing punctuality, anſwered the predictions. We have ſeen the Perſian ſucceeding the Babylonian monarchy, but inferior to it, as the breaſt and arms of ſilver were to the head of gold. To this ſucceeded the Grecian, or third kingdom, a ſtill coarſer monarchy, and remarkable for its brazen arms. This was followed by the Roman, ſtrong as iron, breaking in pieces all other kingdoms. Theſe monarchies have exactly anſwered the characters given them in the different beaſts by which they were reſpectively repreſented. The Babylonian empire was ſtrong, magnificent, and cruel as a lion; the marches and conqueſts of Nebuchadnezzar were rapid as the flight of the eagle,‡ perfectly correſponding with the repreſentation of the eagles' wings upon the lion.

THE kingdom of the Medes and Perſians, for its cruelty and greedineſs after human blood, was like a

* Daniel ii. † Chap. vii. ‡ Jer. xlviii. 40.

bear, that cruel and voracious animal. Hiſtorians have repreſented it as one of the moſt cruel kingdoms which ever exiſted. It held other kingdoms between its teeth, exceedingly ground and oppreſſed them.

THE Grecian, or third monarchy, was like the leopard, ſwift and courageous. Alexander is repreſented, by hiſtorians, as running and even flying to victory. In ten or twelve years he is ſpoken of as having conquered the world. Though he was a ſmall king, and his troops generally were not numerous, yet he had courage to attack and vanquiſh the greateſt potentates and armies. The incredible rapidity of his marches and victories, while they aſtoniſhed the world, admirably correſponded with the repreſentation of a leopard with four great wings to aſſiſt his flight, and of the he-goat which went upon the face of the whole earth and touched not the ground.* What could more aptly repreſent the four kingdoms into which the empire was divided upon the death of Alexander, than the four horns of the leopard? Daniel who ſaw, when the goat was ſtrong, the great horn broken, certifies us that this was the king of Grecia, and the firſt king; and whereas four ſtood up for it, four kingdoms ſhould ſtand up out of the nation but not in his ſtrength.† How literally have theſe predictions had their accompliſhment?

HAS not the Roman, or fourth kingdom appeared with all the ſtrength and terribleneſs of the fourth beaſt? Has it not, according to prediction, been diverſe from all the other kingdoms, devoured the whole earth, trodden it down, and broken it in pieces? Has not this mighty empire been broken into ten parts, or kingdoms? Have we not witneſſed the little horn, that marvellous antichriſtian power, the man of ſin, ariſing from among the ten kingdoms, with a look more ſtout than his fellows, with a mouth ſpeaking great words againſt the Moſt High, making war with, and wearying out the ſaints? Have we not ſeen

* Dan. viii. 5. † Verſes 8, 21, 22.

him, in perfect correſpondence with the apoſtolic predictions, exalting himſelf above all that is called GOD, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he as GOD, ſitteth in the temple of GOD, *ſhewing himſelf that he is* GOD,* *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats?*† Do we not, at this time, behold the Euphrates of this myſtical Babylon drying up, her power and riches almoſt annihilated? Do we not ſee millions, who gave her her power and were once her moſt firm and zealous adherents and ſupporters, now wonderfully hating her, and beginning to burn her with fire? Who can ſeriouſly and impartially contemplate theſe ſcenes of prophecy, and the vaſt events, in a long ſucceſſion of ages, in which they have had an exact completion, and not be conſtrained to acknowledge, *That prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but that holy men of* GOD *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy* GHOST?‡

TIME fails me to ſpeak of the accompliſhment of numerous predictions in the preſervation of the church, which has always been like the buſh which Moſes ſaw, in the midſt of a flame of fire, and yet has never been conſumed; and of the many prophecies concerning the calling of the Gentiles into the church of GOD, and of her enlargement and beauty, by reaſon of their acceſſion, of the accompliſhment of which we, and all the churches of the Gentiles are witneſſes. They who were not the people of GOD are now his people, and ſhe who was not beloved, is now beloved.

II. THE accompliſhment of theſe predictions affords demonſtrative evidence that the prophets were ſent of GOD, and that the ſcriptures are his word.

No man can foretel what ſhall be on the morrow, or what even a day may bring forth. Much leſs can he predict what ſhall be many ages or thouſands of years to come. He cannot foreſee what his own purpoſes and conduct will be, or what ſhall take place with reſpect to himſelf and family, or within the nar-

* 1 Theſſ. ii. 4, 8, 9. † 1 Tim. iv. 3. ‡ 2 Peter i. 21.

row limits of his own particular connections, for one day or hour. How much leſs can he foreſee what events may happen in a nation, or in numerous kingdoms for a long ſucceſſion of ages. There are no *data*, or firſt principles upon which they can poſſibly be known. *The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favor to men of ſkill.** Hence GOD challenges it as his peculiar prerogative and glory, to tell what ſhall be hereafter. Iſaiah xli. 21, 22, 23, *Bring forth your ſtrong reaſons ſaith the king of Jacob, let them bring them forth, and ſhow us what ſhall happen: let them ſhow the former things what they be, that we may conſider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare things for to come. Show the things which are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.* It is here repreſented as a clear demonſtration of divinity to foretel what ſhall be; ſo that if any would acquaint mankind with the deſigns and great events of providence in future times, we might know them to be more than men or angels, even the true and living GOD. The xlvi. chapter, 9, and 10, verſes is to the ſame purpoſe. *Remember the former things of old, for I am GOD, and there is none elſe, I am GOD and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, ſaying my counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.* Both Heathen wiſe men, and the prophets of GOD, have declared, that none but GOD can tell dreams and reveal the things which ſhall be in times to come. The Chaldeans anſwered before the king, and ſaid, *There is not a man upon the earth that can ſhow the king's matter: and there is none other that can ſhow it before the king, except the GODS whoſe dwelling is not with fleſh.*† Joſeph, before and after his interpretation of the dream of Phoraoh, declared, that it was GOD who ſhowed to him the events which were coming upon his kingdom. *And Joſeph anſwer-*

* Eccl. ix. 11. † Dan. ii. 10, 11.

*ed, It is not in me: GOD ſhall give Pharaoh an anſwer of peace. And Joſeph ſaid unto Pharaoh, the dream of Pharaoh is one, GOD hath ſhewed unto Pharaoh what he is about to do.** In like manner, Daniel, when he was about to interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and open to him a wonderful ſucceſſion of events, declared to him, *That there is a GOD in heaven who revealeth ſecrets, and he that revealeth ſecrets maketh known unto thee what ſhall come to paſs.*†

INDEED future events are ſo connected with the volitions, tempers, and paſſions of an innumerable multitude of free actors, on the births, exiſtence, circumſtances, and deaths of countleſs millions of mankind; ſo entirely dependent upon and wrapped up in the divine counſels, that it is abſolutely impoſſible for any to know or reveal them but GOD himſelf. Hence that remarkable viſion of St. John of the book ſealed with ſeven ſeals. This was the book of the divine counſels and future events, reſpecting the church and the world, until the end ſhould come; *And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.*‡ The lamb only, who is GOD as well as man, was able to open the book and to looſe the ſeals thereof. This great prophet of the church, the ſun of righteouſneſs and light of the world, and he only has ſhown us what ſhall come to paſs. It was his ſpirit in the prophets which did ſignify all which they foreſaw and predicted.‖ Hence, as the word of the prophets have in all inſtances univerſally come to paſs, it proves demonſtrably, that the LORD ſent and ſpake by them, and that the ſcriptures are his word.

THE prophets, in numerous inſtances, have been moſt expreſs and determinate. They have fixed the very times when events ſhould happen, the manner in which they ſhould be brought about, and declared the very names of the perſons, who were to be the princi-

* Gen. xli. 16, 25. † Dan. ii. 48, 29.
‡ Rev. v. 3. ‖ 1 Pet. i. 11.

pal actors, and the very nations by whom judgments were to be executed, or deliverances obtained, and this and the other great event accomplished. They have foretold very particular and minute circumstances, the manner in which cities should be taken, the distress of the inhabitants, that women in their sieges, which were at the distance of more than a thousand years, from the time of the prophecy, should eat the fruit of their own body; that the inhabitants should be scattered and sold among all nations; the nation to whom, in a certain instance, they should be sold, how they should be carried to the Egyptians, in ships, and that with respect to some of them, no man would buy them. Instances of all these have been already mentioned. The particular intrigues and deceit of princes, a particular marriage for state purposes, and the consequences of such intrigues and marriage have been clearly and expressly predicted. Daniel xi. 17, 27. *And he shall give him the daughter of women corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.* According to this prediction, Antiochus the great gave his daughter Cleopatra, with a great dowry, to the young king of Egypt, that by these means he might get an advantage against him, and get possession of his kingdom; but Cleopatra deserted the interest of her father, and clave to her husband, and so the crafty designs of Antiochus were carried headlong. He declared how the hearts of Antiochus and Ptolemy should be to do mischief, and how they should speak lies at the same table; but that it should not prosper. It is notorious how this was accomplished at Memphis, some hundreds of years after, to which place Ptolemy, king of Egypt, invited Antiochus Epiphanes to a feast. Both kings practised all the intrigue of which they were masters; but after all their falsehood and cunning neither of them was able to carry his point. Ptolemy neither gained Syria, nor Antiochus Egypt.

It was predicted, 1 Kings xiii. 2. *Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that*

burn incenſe upon thee, and men's bones ſhall be burnt upon thee. How literally every part of this prophecy was fulfilled, three hundred and fifty years afterwards we are certified 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16.

THE prophets foretold innumerable events, not only for one age, but for a ſucceſſion of many ages. The ſpirit of prophecy continued in the church for more than fifteen hundred years, during the whole time in which the ſcriptures were compiling. Inſpired men not only predicted the great events of that period, but of ages ſucceeding, even to the preſent time, and to the conſummation of all things.

NOTHING can be more evident than this, that none but the omniſcient GOD, to whom all his works were known from the foundation of the world, could thus minutely and particularly have made known to mankind the vaſt diſpenſation of his providence, in the ſucceſſive ages of the world.

IT cannot, with the leaſt color of truth, be pretended that the ſacred books were written ſince the events which they predicted are come to paſs: for their great antiquity hath been clearly evinced in my preceding diſcourſes. The books of the Old Teſtament have for conſiderably more than two thouſand years been tranſlated into different languages, and been known among various other nations beſides the Jews. The New Teſtament hath not only been written about ſeventeen hundred years; but, for conſiderably more than a thouſand, has been tranſlated into a great variety of languages, and been in the hands of an almoſt innumerable multitude of people, in various parts of the earth; and yet we find many predictions of both Teſtaments now fulfilled and fulfilling before our eyes.

Do we not ſee the Jews a diſtinct nation, though in all places, hated, deſpiſed, and perſecuted? Have we not the moſt certain evidence, that they have been broken off by unbelief? That in Jeruſalem one ſtone has not been left upon another; and that for more than ſeventeen hundred years it has been trodden down of the Gentiles?

Do not the Arabians, the deſcendants of Iſhamael, retain the ſpirit of their father unto this day? Are they not wild men, robbing and fighting the inhabitants of all other nations, and yet retaining their country and independence?

Is not Egypt the baſeſt of kingdoms, oppreſſed and waſted by ſtrangers? Are not its inhabitants ſervile, vicious, and mean ſpirited?

Is not the condition of Noah's poſterity the very ſame which their father predicted, more than four thouſand years ago? Do we not behold Japhet enlarged and dwelling in the tents of Shem? And is not Canaan a ſervant of ſervants unto his brethren?

In a word, have we not witneſſed the riſe, progreſs, duration, and decline of the man of ſin? Has he not perfectly anſwered the characters given him in ſacred prophecy? Are not theſe ſo many public enſigns, or monuments, erected in the view of all nations, witneſſing for God, that his word is true; What are the reſpective conditions of the Jews and Arabs, but ſtanding and moſt public miracles? Shall we, can we, in view of theſe wonderful events, be faithleſs? Shall we not rather be ſtrong in the faith, giving glory to God.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. The bible, no leſs than the things which are made, abſtractly from all the declarations which it contains to that purpoſe, teacheth us demonſtrably, that there is an infinite, omniſcient, almighty God, who doth whatever pleaſeth him, in heaven, in earth, and in all deep places. Were there not a God, future events never could have been foretold. Had not God been an infinite being, to whom all hearts, thoughts and purpoſes, all ſecret as well as open things are perfectly known, in all places of the earth, and in every moment and period of time, and the power of all creatures, it is impoſſible to conceive how he could foreſee infallibly the things which ſhall be in all future

times. His prediction of future events implies his immutability, omnipotence, and infinite wisdom. Were he not unchangeable he could not know what would be his own purposes hereafter, or that he should be able to accomplish them. Was he not almighty and infinitely wise; so as, in all times and places, to be able to govern his creatures, and do whatever pleaseth him, there would be, in the nature of things, an entire uncertainty with respect to future events. The divine prescience is doubtless founded in GOD's perfect knowledge of himself, and that all things will be operated according to the counsel of his own will.

II. OUR subject teaches us, in the strongest point of light, the veracity and faithfulness of GOD. We learn the veracity of persons by their speaking the truth in all their declarations, and their faithfulness, from their punctuality in performing their promises, compacts, and words, at all times and in all circumstances, be the matter ever so difficult. Since therefore GOD has always spoken the truth, in every thing which he has predicted, promised, or threatened, and performed his word from generation to generation, it gives us the strongest evidence of his truth and faithfulness, independent of the works of creation, or any declarations in the sacred books concerning these attributes. It furnishes a sure foundation for our believing the testimony of GOD unreservedly and universally.

EVERY thing which GOD has spoken from the fullest trial, from long and universal experience, has appeared to be strictly true. Whatever impediments, improbabilities, or even impossibilities there have been, in human view, in the way of the accomplishment of the predictions, promises, or threatnings of the word, they have all been accomplished in their time. Though the bodies of Abraham and Sarah were dead, yet the promised Isaac was born. Though the sea must be dried up and Jordan driven back, though the heavens must rain down bread, and waters flow from the flinty rock, yet Israel entered into Canaan! Though nearly

five hundred years elapſed, from the time in which GOD promiſed the land of Canaan to the ſeed of Abraham, before they were put in poſſeſſion of it, yet, *not one thing failed of all the good things which the* LORD *their* GOD *had ſpoken**

How long ſoever the period between the denunciation of any evil, or curſe and its execution, yet the threatning denounced has always overtaken the guilty. Though GOD waited an hundred and twenty years upon the Antediluvians, yet the flood came and ſwept them all away. Thus did the curſe come upon the builder of Jericho, more than five hundred and twenty years after it had been denounced. When in the corrupt reign of Ahab there aroſe a man unbelieving and hardy enough to build the accurſed city, the curſe came upon him. *He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firſt born, and ſet up the gates thereof in his youngeſt ſon Segub, according to the word of the* LORD *which he ſpake by Joſhua the ſon of Nun.*† It was about eight hundred and ſixty years from the days of Moſes to the Babylonian captivity, and fifteen hundred and thirty from that time to the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Roman armies, and yet the curſes denounced againſt the ſeed of Jacob have been fully executed and ſtill reſt upon them.

WHAT ſtriking and admirable evidence have we, in theſe views, of the infinite, unchangeable truth and faithfulneſs of GOD? If we conſider, that this GOD has revealed himſelf, in his word as a GOD of truth, commanded us to worſhip him as ſuch a GOD, in ſpirit and in truth; and that he has commanded us to ſpeak the truth every one with his neighbour, does it not afford ſtill additional evidence that he is true and exceedingly loves the truth? Have we not then a ſure foundation from the word of GOD to believe all its declarations relative to the goodneſs of GOD, his great love to mankind in the gift of his SON and redemption through his blood; concerning the origin and reign of ſin,

* Joſh. xxiii. 14. † 1 Kings xvi. 34.

and the good which GOD will bring out of evil, independently of the light of nature? Has not GOD, in every view, *magnified his word above all his name?*

III. IN the accompliſhment of ſo many predictions and promiſes, GOD has given us a certain pledge, and ground of aſſurance, that all others ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. Though they tarry long, yet we may wait for them, with the greateſt aſſurance. Notwithſtanding all the ſubtle and formidable combinations of earth and hell againſt CHRIST and his church, and how much ſoever they may ſeem to proſper and to be carrying their points, for a ſeaſon, the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt them. *He that ſitteth in the heavens ſhall laugh: the LORD ſhall have them in deriſion. He will comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waſte places, and he will make her wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſert like the garden of the LORD: joy and gladneſs ſhall be found in her, thankſgiving and the voice of melody.** Her ſun ſhall no more go down, nor her moon withdraw itſelf: for the LORD ſhall be her everlaſting light, and the days of her mourning ſhall be ended. All her people ſhall alſo be righteous. *A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong nation.*† The ſaints ſhall all awake from the duſt and ſing. If we will believe the prophets and live godly in CHRIST JESUS, we ſhall awake alſo and come forth with them, to the reſurrection of life. We ſhall ſtand before the ſon of man, and he will bleſs us, and appoint unto us a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Let us therefore truſt in the LORD and not be afraid. Let us rejoice in him evermore. Let us comfort, and animate one another with theſe words; and in theſe bright and glorious proſpects let us ever be thankful and bleſs the LORD. AMEN.

* Iſaiah li. 3. † Chap. lx. 20, 22.

DISCOURSE VII.

JESUS is the CHRIST, or the prophecies fulfilled in him prove a Divine Revelation.

ACTS xviii. 5.

PAUL was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews, that JESUS was CHRIST.

WHETHER JESUS of Nazareth be the CHRIST, is a queſtion of the higheſt importance. If he be not, the Chriſtian ſyſtem is a mere deluſion. Our preaching, our faith, and our hopes are in vain. But if he be the CHRIST, the ſon of the living GOD, then we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins according to the riches of divine grace. Our hopes of pardon, of a glorious reſurrection and bleſſed immortality are ſurely founded. A queſtion of ſuch magnitude, in which all have ſo particular an intereſt, ſuch a vaſt and eternal concern, challenges the moſt ſerious attention and thorough inveſtigation. It is a point greatly to be inſiſted on, and clearly to be illuſtrated, by the Chriſtian miniſter, and in which all Chriſtians, at as early a period of life as poſſible, ought to be well inſtructed.

THE apoſtle Paul, therefore, with great zeal and labor, inſiſted on this fundamental article of our holy religion. At Theſſalonica, he reaſoned out of the ſcriptures from ſabbath to ſabbath, *opening and alledging, that CHRIST muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead*: and that the very JESUS whom he preached unto them was CHRIST.* At Rome, his heart was ſo impreſſed and enlarged with this ſubject, that *he expounded and teſtified the kingdom of GOD, perſuading* the Jews *concerning JESUS, both out of the law of Moſes, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.*† When he preached at Corinth he purſued the ſame method, reaſoning *in the ſynagogue every ſabbath, perſuading the Jews and the Greeks.*‡ When his mind was moſt impreſſed and warmed with the goſpel, when the love of CHRIST, and compaſſion for ſouls had the moſt conſtraining influence upon him, as in the inſtance in our text, he with the greateſt freedom and energy, teſtified, that JESUS was CHRIST. This teſtimony he confirmed, by the holy ſcriptures, Moſes and the prophets.

IN the ſame manner our bleſſed LORD referred the Jews to their own ſcriptures, for the knowledge of this great truth. *Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me.*§ *Had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: For he wrote of me.*** Before his paſſion he aſſured his diſciples, That *all things that are writ by the prophets concerning the ſon of man, ſhall be accompliſhed.*‖ After his reſurrection, *Beginning at Moſes, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf. And he ſaid unto them, theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and in the prophets, and in the pſalms concerning me.*¶

* Acts xvii. 2, 3. † Chap. xxviii. 23. ‡ Context verſe 4.
§ John v. 29. ** Verſe 46. ‖ Luke xviii. 31.
¶ Luke xxiv. 27, 44.

THESE ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture unite their teſtimony, with the apoſtles, *that JESUS was CHRIST.* They import that the MESSIAH has been ſo clearly and amply predicted and characterized in the Old Teſtament, that, upon his coming, he might moſt certainly be known to be the CHRIST; and that all the predictions and types reſpecting him have had ſuch a perfect accompliſhment in JESUS of Nazareth, as to afford convincing evidence that he is indeed the very CHRIST.

THIS is the great point which it ſhall be the buſineſs of this diſcourſe to illuſtrate.

FOR this purpoſe I ſhall be led to conſider the prophecies which had reſpect unto JESUS CHRIST, and which have had their accompliſhment in him. Here I ſhall contemplate thoſe which reſpect the time of his incarnation; thoſe which are deſcriptive of his perſonal character, and relate to various circumſtances of his life and death: and thoſe which reſpect his reſurrection and the conſequences of his ſufferings. With theſe, I ſhall conſider his own works and predictions; and ſhow that they afford demonſtrative evidence, that JESUS is the CHRIST; and that the ſcriptures are conſequently a divine revelation.

I. LET us contemplate the predictions which relate to the time of his incarnation.

THERE are ſeveral remarkable prophecies concerning the time of the MESSIAH's coming into the world. The firſt of theſe which offers itſelf to our attention is that notable one of the patriarch Jacob; *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until SHILOH come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.** SHILOH ſignifies *his ſon*, or *the ſent*; that is the ſon of Judah or the ſent of GOD, the MESSIAH. Rabbi Jonathan, in the Chaldee paraphraſe, reads this paſſage until the king MESSIAH, his little ſon ſhall come. The ancient Rabbies and Talmudiſts, read SHILOH, the king MESSIAH.† Mr. Pool

* Gen. xlix. 10.

† See Buxtorf on the word SHILOH. In the moſt ancient book, Bereſchit Rabba, it is written, the king MESSIAH.

much prefers another ſignification of the word SHILOH, importing *the ſent*, or *him who was ſent*. He ſuppoſes it to be a name in a peculiar manner appropriated to him, who was ſent of the FATHER into the world, with the higheſt commiſſion and authority, to ſave mankind, and moſt happily correſponding with the character ſo often given him in the New Teſtament.* Our SAVIOUR repeatedly applies to himſelf the term ſent. John iii. 17, 34, and chapter x. 36. *For he whom GOD hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of GOD. Say ye of him whom the father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, thou blaſphemeſt?*

BE the ſignification of the word SHILOH what it may, it is univerſally agreed, that by it we are to underſtand the MESSIAH or CHRIST.

HE was then to come, when the ſceptre ſhould depart from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet; that is when Judah ſhould have no lawgiver or juriſdiction within itſelf. The word *Shebet* tranſlated *ſceptre*, ſignifies a *rod*, or *tribe*, as well as ſceptre. That is the rod of government, or that juriſdiction peculiar to the tribes of Iſrael.

THAT Judah retained the ſceptre or rod of government during the captivity in Babylon is evident from the teſtimony of the Jews, and from the ſcriptures. When Cyrus gave liberty for their return, at the end of ſeventy years, he commanded the veſſels of the temple to be delivered to the prince of Judah.†

AFTER the Jews returned to their own land, they lived as a diſtinct people, had their own governors and laws until the time of our SAVIOUR's birth. But about this time, or ſoon after, their authority in civil matters, at leaſt, was greatly diminiſhed. After their ſubmiſſion to Herod, and taking the oath of fealty to him, their authority in civil affairs was very inconſiderable. At the time of our SAVIOUR's crucifixion, they

* Poli. Syn. in loco. The word SHILOH may be derived either from the root Shalach, which ſignifies *ſent*, or from Salah: If from the latter it ſignifies, *his fœtus*, or *little ſon*.

† Ezra i. 8.

acknowledged, that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, and that they had no king but Cæsar.§ Whatever remains either of civil or religious power there were among them at this time, they very ſoon entirely ceaſed. The compilers of the univerſal hiſtory read the prophecy of Jacob in this manner, "The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come, and unto him the nations be gathered."

HENCE they fix this important period for the departing of the ſceptre from Judah at the converſion of Cornelius, and the gathering of the Gentiles unto JESUS CHRIST. From this time, they ſtrongly argue that the Jews loſt all juriſdiction.

INDEED ſoon after this the Jews were ſubdued and the holy city and temple were deſtroyed. They became an hiſſing, an aſtoniſhment, and a perpetual deſolation. The Jews bear rule in no place, but in every country and nation are in ſubjection. This not only admirably coincides with the prediction of the patriarch, but with the time our bleſſed LORD prefixed for that event. Says he, The goſpel ſhall be preached in all the world, and then ſhall the end come.‖ Not the end of the world, but of the Jewiſh church and ſtate. This is the light in which divines and others of the greateſt learning and character have underſtood this prophecy.*

IN this view how fully and accurately has it had its accompliſhment in JESUS CHRIST, both as to the time and conſequences of his coming? He came in the fleſh when the ſceptre was in a great meaſure departed, and rapidly departing. When he came in his kingdom among Jews and Gentiles, it wholly departed, and the people were more and more gathered unto SHILOH. No other perſon appeared at this time with any of the peculiar characters of the MESSIAH, nor was any received as ſuch, but JESUS of Nazareth. To

§ John xviii. 31, and chapter xix. 15. ‖ Matth. xxiv. 14.
* Meſſrs. Mede, Poole, Sherlock, Newton, Guyſe, the compilers of the univerſal hiſtory, and others.

whom has the gathering of the people been, but unto him? Is not he then that CHRIST who ſhould come into the world?

THIS prepares the way for bringing into view the prophecy of Iſaiah concerning the time of our SAVIOUR's incarnation, recorded in the xi. chapter of his book, 1ſt and 10th verſes. *And there ſhall come forth a ROD out of the STEM of JESSE, and a BRANCH ſhall grow out of his ROOTS. And in that day there ſhall be a ROOT of JESSE, which ſhall ſtand for an ENSIGN of the people: to IT ſhall the Gentiles ſeek and HIS REST SHALL BE GLORIOUS.*

THAT theſe paſſages reſpect the Meſſiah is evident not only from the characters given him in the text, but from the whole context. It is alſo allowed by the univerſal conſent of Chriſtians. It is remarkale that the time here prefixed, by the prophet, for the advent of the Meſſiah was when the houſe of David ſhould be reduced to the moſt forlorn and contemptible circumſtances; when it ſhould be reduced to the loweſt condition in which it could be, and yet be viſibly his houſe. The MESSIAH was to be a ROD or BRANCH out of the ROOT not of DAVID a public, but of JESSE, a private perſon. The text imports, that the MESSIAH ſhould ſpring from the family of David when it ſhould be reduced to its primitive ſtate before it was ennobled with royalty, and when it ſhould be like a ſtump or root but juſt viſible.

Now at this very period, it is manifeſt, that our SAVIOUR came in the fleſh, and in his kingdom. The houſe of David was never lower than at this time, while it had any viſibility. Soon after, the Jewiſh nation was deſtroyed and the houſe of David loſt in its ruins.

IN what a remarkable manner did the patriarch Jacob, and this evangelical prophet, though they lived in ages almoſt a thouſand years diſtant from each other, ſee eye to eye in this great point? They ſaw the MESSIAH coming juſt at the decline and termination of

the Jewiſh ſtate, that he would be a public perſon, an enſign lift up to the nations, to whom the people would gather as to an illuſtrious head or prince.

THE prophet further foreſaw, that his reſt would be glorious, or glory, as it is in the original. That is the reſt itſelf, which he ſhould give to the ſouls of his people, ſhould be glorious; be glory begun on earth, and eternal glory in heaven: or the place of his reſt, his houſe or church ſhall be glorious; replete with glorious ordinances, gifts, graces, and communications of the HOLY GHOST. The prophet ſaw the nations of the earth flocking to this prince or enſign for theſe bleſſings.

BUT to whom are the characters applicable, except to JESUS CHRIST? Who has ever appeared as a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, and as a branch out of his roots, and ſtood as an enſign to the nations but this JESUS? To whom have the nations ſought but unto him? Whoſe reſt but his has been glorious to them?

LET us proceed to a third prediction of the time of CHRIST's manifeſtation in the fleſh. In Daniel ix. 24, 25, 26, 27, it is written, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy, and to anoint the moſt holy. Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, unto the* MESSIAH *the prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks; and threeſcore and two weeks the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, in troublous times. And after threeſcore and two weeks ſhall* MESSIAH *be cut off but not for himſelf: and the people of the prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the city, and the ſanctuary and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined: (and he ſhall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe.)*

THIS is one of the moſt illuſtrious and determinate prophecies of the time of CHRIST's coming and of a

number of important events conſequent upon it of any in the divine oracles. The whole term of time to the coming of CHRIST the prince, is declared to be ſeventy weeks; or four hundred and ninety years, reckoning ſeven years to every week. By the general conſent of expoſitors, the weeks are to be underſtood as weeks of years, every day to be reckoned as a year, according to the ſtyle of prophecy. This period is divided into three different ones, ſeven weeks, ſixty and two weeks, and one week. The time from which theſe weeks are to be reckoned is moſt particularly noticed, from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem. This was evidently in the ſeventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when Ezra received that ample commiſſion to build the houſe of GOD and reſtore his worſhip at Jeruſalem, recorded in the vii. chapter of his book. From this time, ſeven weeks, or forty nine years were to be reckoned for the building and reſtoring of the city. In ſixty two weeks, or four hundred and thirty four years, from the termination of the ſeven weeks, the MESSIAH was to come in his public miniſtry, in the preaching of John the baptiſt and the introduction of the goſpel kingdom: that is in four hundred and eighty three years from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem. At this very time, which was in the twenty ſixth year of the Chriſtian era, John came preaching and baptizing in the wilderneſs, and not long after our bleſſed SAVIOUR was baptized and began his public miniſtry. Having in the miniſtry of John the baptiſt and in his own public inſtructions, confirmed the covenant with many for one week, he was cut off, but not for himſelf. This was in the thirty-third year of the Chriſtian era, juſt four hundred and ninety years from the commandment given to Ezra. In the month Niſan, in the paſſover week, in which he began to go up to Jeruſalem, was our SAVIOUR crucified.

BY his own miniſtry, that of the ſeventy and of his twelve apoſtles he had made many diſciples among the

Jews, and by his death he ſealed and confirmed the new covenant not only with them, but with the many millions of mankind who ſhould, in all ſucceeding ages, believe on his name.

FURTHER, it is worthy of ſpecial notice, that he was not cut off for himſelf. Not for any fault of his own. No, for the tranſgreſſions of the people was he ſmitten; *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions and bruiſed for our iniquities.**

ANOTHER peculiar circumſtance of this prediction is, that he ſhould cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe. By his ſacrifice, of which all others were but typical, they were aboliſhed and became of no ſignificancy. The SAVIOUR exclaimed with his expiring breath, *It is finiſhed.*† *The vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,*‡ purporting, that all temple ſervices were now finiſhed that all its myſteries were now diſcloſed and perfectly accompliſhed in CHRIST, and a new and living way opened into the holy of holies through the vail of his fleſh. Thus every part of this prophecy, ſo far as it reſpected the coming, character, work, and paſſion of the MESSIAH, had a moſt accurate and perfect accompliſhment in JESUS OF NAZARETH? When did face, even in the moſt perfect mirror, ever anſwer with greater exactneſs to face, than this prediction and its accompliſhment anſwer each other in our JESUS? Is it then poſſible that he ſhould not be the MESSIAH? Who but he confirmed the covenant with many for one week? Who but he was cut off at the end of ſeventy weeks from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore Jeruſalem? Who but JESUS CHRIST was cut off not for himſelf, but for the tranſgreſſions of his people? Who, JESUS of NAZARETH excepted, hath by the one offering of himſelf perfected forever them that are ſanctified, and put an end to all oblation and ſacrifice?

IN Haggai we have another remarkable prediction of the time of the MESSIAH's coming. *For thus ſaith*

* Iſaiah liii. 5. † John xix. 30. ‡ Matth. xxvii. 51.

the LORD *of Hoſts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land: And will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come: and I will fill this houſe with my glory ſaith the* LORD *of Hoſts. The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the* LORD *of Hoſts: and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the* LORD *of Hoſts.* Haggai ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

IN leſs than two hundred years from the uttering of this prophecy, GOD began the ſhakings here predicted by the victories of Alexander, the rough goat. About one hundred eighty-five or eighty-ſix years after the prediction was delivered, he defeated the Grecian army at Granicus,‖ and the ſame year Darius himſelf, at Iſus; and in about five years the Perſian empire was broken to pieces, and the Grecian monarchy commenced. The ſons of Alexander were, ſoon after his death, all murdered, one after another, and the Grecian empire was divided between his four great captains. From this time there was a continual ſhaking and daſhing in pieces the nations, until the Grecian empire was broken, and ſucceeded by the Roman, or fourth monarchy. This was conſtantly ſhaking and laying waſte the nations until the reign of Auguſtus, when mankind ſeemed admirably to forget their former animoſities, and peace with her olive branch, huſhed all the nations of the earth in harmony and quietneſs.

AND now, at this auſpicious era, CHRIST, THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS, came to his temple, and it was filled with the unrivalled glories of this greater than Solomon. Here he gave the nobleſt peace to the ſouls of men, and gathered thouſands to his name in one day, and even by one ſermon. Thus the glory of this latter houſe was greater than that of the former. In this view the prediction of Haggai had a

‖ This defeat was May 20, in the year of the world 3671, and in November following he defeated Darius himſelf. Oct. 1ſt. A. M. 3674, he again defeated Darius, at Arbella and took Babylon.

perfect completion, as to the time of CHRIST's manifestation in the flesh.

IT shall only be further observed under this head, that Daniel, in his interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, fixes the coming of the MESSIAH in the time of the fourth monarchy. Then he predicted, that a stone should be cut out of the mountain without hands which should break in pieces all other kingdoms, and GOD should set up a kingdom which should continue forever.¶

AT this very period CHRIST came, when the Roman empire was in its full glory, and set up his kingdom upon earth. Thus in all these prophecies respecting the time of CHRIST's coming, it is very observable, that there is a most perfect harmony, though they were spoken by different men, upon very different occasions, in ages far disjoined from each other, and in such circumstances as that the speakers of them could have no communication one with another.

ANOTHER circumstance deserves particular notice in this place, that about this time in which these notable prophecies fixed the advent of the SAVIOUR, the Jews every where expected the coming of their prince. They every where seemed to lift up their heads with gladness, as though, in the fourth monarchy, they saw the dawnings of their redemption.

BOTH divines and historians give us full evidence that there was at that time, not only among the Jews but among other nations, a general expectation of the appearance of some extraordinary prince among mankind.*

HEROD's massacre of the children of Bethlehem, and the appearances of one and another with pretences that they were the MESSIAH, afford clear evidence that this was the case. Had there been no such expectation, Herod would not have been alarmed with the fears of losing his kingdom by an obscure babe,

¶ Dan. ii. 31, 46.

* See the bishop of Litchfield's and Coventry's defence of Christianity. Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius evince this fact.

born at Bethlehem. False Christs would not have made their appearance, at this time, had there not been an expectation of the coming of the son of GOD. This general expectation could arise from these predictions only. This therefore affords additional evidence of their antiquity and that JESUS is indeed the CHRIST. We proceed

II. To a view of the predictions which are descriptive of his personal character, and relate to various circumstances of his life and death.

THE first text which I shall notice, as characterizing the SAVIOUR, is that peculiarly descriptive prophecy of Moses, *The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.*† That this prophecy respected the CHRIST, is evident from the repeated applications of it to him in the New Testament.‡ It imports, that JESUS CHRIST should be an Israelite from the midst of his brethren, and that in his offices and character he would, in an eminent manner, be like Moses. This was most remarkably the case with our CHRIST.

WAS Moses king in Jesurun? So was JESUS CHRIST upon his holy hill of Zion. This was the declaration of the angel to the virgin mother, *He shall be great, and be called the son of the highest; and the LORD GOD shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*‖ Was Moses an eminent prophet? So was JESUS CHRIST. He was the sun of righteousness, and light of the world.§ No man in heaven or earth prevailed to open the sealed book of the Father's counsels, and reveal them to men, but the LAMB who was slain.* Was Moses a prophet who had intimate communion with GOD? Whom the LORD knew face to face? In this respect who was ever so like him as JESUS of Nazareth? He

† Deut. xviii. 15. ‡ Acts iii. 22, 23, and chapter vii. 37.
‖ Luke ii. 31, 33. § Malachi iv. 2. John i. 4, 9.
* Rev. v. 3, 4, 5.

was as one brought up, from everlaſting with the FATHER, rejoicing always before him.† He had the moſt perfect knowledge of his whole will. Hence it is written, *No man hath ſeen GOD at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the FATHER, he hath declared* him.‡ Was Moſes a prieſt and interceſſor, a Mediator and interceſſor between GOD and his people? Is not *JESUS CHRIST the one Mediator between GOD and men?*‖ Does he not live forever *making interceſſion for us?*§ Was Moſes a lawgiver, and author of a glorious diſpenſation? Is not JESUS CHRIST the author of one which far exceeds it in glory? Did Moſes confirm his miſſion by an aſtoniſhing ſeries of miracles, which he wrought in Egypt, at the red ſea, and in the wilderneſs? Was not *Jeſus Chriſt a man approved by GOD, by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which GOD did by him in the midſt of the people?*¶ Did not he the works which no other man ever did? Did Moſes deliver his people from bondage? Does not CHRIST make his free indeed?* Moſes fed the Iſraelites miraculouſly in the wilderneſs, and JESUS CHRIST, in a miraculous manner, repeatedly fed thouſands in the deſarts of Judea. Did Moſes lead Iſrael through the ſea, and through the wilderneſs to the borders of Canaan? And did not CHRIST ſay to the ſtormy wind and rolling ſeas, *Peace be ſtill*, and cauſe a great calm? Does he not conduct his people through the wilderneſs of this world, and put them in everlaſting poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan? Was Moſes faithful as a ſervant in the houſe of GOD? Was not JESUS faithful as a ſon over his own houſe.†† Did Moſes confirm the covenant between GOD and his people by the ſhedding and ſprinkling of blood? And has not CHRIST ſealed the new covenant with his own blood, and by it cleanſed them from all ſin?‡‡

THUS was JESUS CHRIST like Moſes, in all theſe important parts of his character! In him, and in him

† Prov. viii. 23, 30. ‡ John i. 18. ‖ 1 Tim. ii. 5.
§ Heb. vii. 25. ¶ Acts ii. 22. * John viii. 36.
†† Heb. iii. 2, 6. ‡‡ 1 John i. 7.

only, has this notable prediction had a moſt accurate completion. From the foundation of the world unto the preſent time, who has appeared among men with all theſe likeneſſes of Moſes? Is not this therefore that prophet who was to come into the world?

BUT to proceed, the ſcriptures deſcribe the MESSIAH as David's ſon and LORD.* As a child born, and yet, the mighty GOD, the everlaſting FATHER, the PRINCE of PEACE.† He is characterized as the ſon of a virgin,‡ born in Bethlehem,‖ as coming to Zion *lowly, and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt the foal of an aſs.*§ How exactly do all theſe characters apply to that wonderful perſon, JESUS CHRIST? He is the eternal WORD, who was *made fleſh*,¶ *GOD manifeſt in the fleſh.*** He was *the ſeed of the woman*, the ſeed of Abraham, the SON and LORD of David, and in every other reſpect juſt what theſe ſcriptures declared the MESSIAH ſhould be? Of this the New Teſtament affords us the moſt ample teſtimony.

THE MESSIAH is further characterized as one againſt whom *the Heathen ſhould rage, the kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel together*,†† as *a man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief*, as *deſpiſed and rejected of men*, as bearing *the ſins of many and making interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors*; as making *his grave with the rich in his death*, and as *numbered with the tranſgreſſors*,‡‡ as *pierced, and mocked with gall and vinegar*;‖‖ and as one whoſe *garments his enemies ſhould divide*, and upon whoſe *veſture they ſhould caſt lots*.§§ It was alſo predicted, that GOD would *not leave his ſoul in hell, neither ſuffer his holy one to ſee corruption*.¶¶

THE character given of the MESSIAH in theſe various predictions, is indeed very ſingular and wonderful. It agrees with the character of no other perſon,

* Pſalm cx. 1. † Iſaiah ix. 6. ‡ Chap. viii. 14.
‖ Micah v. 2. § Zech. ix. 9. ¶ John i. 1, 14.
** 1 Tim. iii. 16. †† Pſalm ii. 1, 2. ‡‡ Iſaiah liii.
‖‖ Pſalm xxii. 16, and Pſalm lxix. 21.
§§ Pſalm xxii. 18. ¶¶ Pſalm xvi. 10.

who ever appeared in our world but with that of JESUS CHRIST. Yet that all theſe predictions were accurately and minutely accompliſhed in HIM, the New Teſtament affords us the moſt ample aſſurance. Who but JESUS CHRIST ever died, or even pretended to die, to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs? Who ever merited ſo well of his countrymen, and yet was ſo hated and rejected of men, as was JESUS CHRIST? Who but CHRIST was ever laid among the dead, and yet ſaw no corruption? Who can be ſo blind as not to ſee in him the characters of the SAVIOUR of the world?

I SHALL, in this place, juſt notice another kind of predictions of the character and work of the MESSIAH, equally accompliſhed in JESUS CHRIST; that is, all the types of him; the manna which fell, and the ſerpent which Moſes lifted up upon the pole, in the wilderneſs; the paſſover and the lamb, a bone of which was not to be broken; the day of atonement, the ſcape goat, the lamb for a peace offering with all the ſacrifices, which, for ſo many ages, bled and ſmoked upon the Jewiſh altars: Nay, the ſacrifices of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and other good men, from the fall of man until the incarnation and paſſion of the SON of GOD. To theſe we may add the high prieſt, the altar, the tabernacle, and temple, the entrance of the Jewiſh high prieſt annually into the holy place, and almoſt all the inſtitutions of the ceremonial law. Theſe all harmoniouſly preached CHRIST as a ſuffering and atoning SAVIOUR. Is not he our paſſover ſacrificed for us? The LAMB of GOD who taketh away the ſin of the world? A lamb of whom a bone was not broken? Was not he lifted up that *whoſoever believeth on him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life?* Were not both the moral and ceremonial laws, even to a tittle, accompliſhed in him? Indeed in him was accompliſhed every thing ſignified by typical perſons and typical things.

BUT the evidence that JESUS is the CHRIST will ſtill grow upon us while we contemplate,

III. His own predictions and their accompliſhment. He foretold the manner of his death; that one of his diſciples ſhould betray him unto the chief prieſts and ſcribes; that they ſhould condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to ſcourge and to crucify;* that Jeruſalem ſhould be compaſſed with armies, deſtroyed and trodden down of the Gentiles; that the Jewiſh temple ſhould be ſo entirely demoliſhed, that one ſtone ſhould not be left upon another; and that then there ſhould be great tribulation, ſuch as had not been from the beginning of the world unto that time. He alſo predicted, that before this deſtruction of the Jewiſh church and polity, there ſhould be famines, and peſtilence, and earthquakes in divers places; and that there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, and ſhould ſhew great ſigns and wonders.† He alſo premoniſhed his diſciples, that they ſhould hear of wars and commotions, and that there ſhould be fearful ſights and great ſigns from heaven.‡ The New Teſtament, Joſephus, and other hiſtorians give us full evidence of the moſt punctual accompliſhment of theſe predictions.‖

* Matth. xx. 18, 19. † Matth. xxiv. 2, 7, 21, 24.
‡ Luke xxi. 8, 9, 10, 11.
‖ Joſephus gives a very large account of the wars and rumours of wars predicted by our SAVIOUR, and of the ariſing of falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and he ſays, There were many prophets who taught the Jews, even to the laſt, to expect deliverance. Wars of the Jews, Book VII. Chap. 30. Hiſtorians alſo relate that there were ſeveral famines about this time, particularly two in the reign of Claudius Cæſar. Joſephus relates that in one of theſe many in Paleſtine died with hunger. See his antiquities, Book XX. Chap. 2. Grotius relates, that in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, there were earthquakes at Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Coloſſe. Joſephus ſaith, that in Judea, there were vehement winds dreadful thunderings and lightnings and vaſt roarings of the quaking earth. Wars of the Jews, Book IV. Chap. 17. Among the prodigies which preceded the deſtruction of Jeruſalem he relates, that a ſword ſeemed to hang over the city, or a comet pointing down upon it: That before the ſun went down there were ſeen, in the clouds, armies in battle array, and chariots encompaſſing the country and inveſting their cities: That the great gate of the

IV. OUR SAVIOUR's predictions of his reſurrection, the particular time of it, and its conſequences, with their accompliſhment afford plenary evidence that he was indeed the CHRIST, and that the ſcriptures contain a divine revelation.

His predictions concerning theſe are very remarkable and merit a particular conſideration. No impoſtor would have riſked the truth of his character and doctrine upon an event like this, and have particularly appointed the time for this great event. This was giving every advantage to his enemies againſt him, had he not been the MESSIAH; and had he not ariſen at the appointed time. Yet he repeatedly foretold his reſurrection, and that it ſhould be on the third day. He had alſo aſſured his diſciples, that in conſequence of his reſurrection and aſcenſion to his Father, they ſhould receive the Holy Ghoſt, and ſpeak with new tongues: and that, as they would be hated, perſecuted, and be brought before kings and rulers for his name's ſake, he would give them a mouth and wiſdom which all their adverſaries ſhould not be able to gainſay, nor reſiſt.§ He premoniſhed them, that perſecution would be carried to ſuch lengths, that ſome of them ſhould be put to death, yet that his goſpel ſhould have a ſpeedy and wonderful ſpread; ſo that even before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, it ſhould be preached to the whole world, or to the various parts of the Roman empire.* Theſe predictions were all punctually ac-

temple, which twenty men could ſcarcely ſhut, and which was made faſt with bolts and bars, was ſeen to open of its own accord; and that, at the ninth hour of the night, at the feaſt of unleavened bread, as great a light ſhone upon the temple and the altar as if it had been noon day. He alſo reports, that, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, the prieſts in the temple, at midnight, firſt heard a kind of noiſe as of a moving from that place, and then heard a voice ſaying, *Let us go hence.* Tacitus relates the ſame things for ſubſtance. Joſephus further narrates, that one Jeſus, four years before the war commenced, at the feaſt of tabernacles, began to cry, a voice againſt Jeruſalem, the temple and all the people, Wo, wo to them; and that he continued this cry about ſeven years. Wars of the Jews, Book VII.

§ Luke xxi. 12, 14. * Matth. xxiv. 9, 14. Mark xiii. 10.

compliſhed. On the third day he roſe again. This was a glorious atteſtation of his Meſſiahſhip. Had he been an impoſtor, GOD would neither have raiſed him, nor could he have raiſed himſelf. The apoſtle therefore, inſiſts on this, as an infallible evidence, that he was the ſon of GOD. Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the Son of GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.* His reſurrection is witneſſed by all the evangeliſts, by the united teſtimony of his twelve apoſtles, and by the declarations of the apoſtle Paul. The miſſion of the holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt, with ſuch miraculous and ſaving power; the apoſtles inſtantly ſpeaking thirteen different languages which they had never learned; the ſucceſs of the goſpel in the converſion of three thouſand by one ſermon, and its general promulgation through the Roman empire, within leſs than forty years, from our SAVIOUR's paſſion; the apoſtles ſpeaking with a mouth and wiſdom which could not be reſiſted, were further evidences of his reſurrection, as well as an accompliſhment of his predictions. Had JESUS been an impoſtor, his cauſe would have died with him. His promiſes never could have been accompliſhed, and his predictions all fulfilled. His diſciples could never have poſſeſſed ſuch extraordinary powers, and performed ſuch aſtoniſhing works. Jews and Gentiles would not have been converted and gathered unto him, the true SHILOH, as they have been. With what aſſurance, therefore, may we receive JESUS, as the CHRIST, and the Chriſtian ſyſtem as divine?

LET us now apply the diſcourſe.

I. THE accompliſhment of ſuch a ſeries of prophecy, of the ceremonial law, and all the types in JESUS of Nazareth, and the accompliſhment of his own predictions and promiſes afford an inconteſtible evidence, of the truth of the holy ſcriptures, and eſpecially of the divinity of the Chriſtian ſyſtem.

IT has been already ſhown that it is the ſole prerogative of GOD to foretel future events, and that the ful-

filling of the prophecies is an irrefragable evidence of the divine original of the ſcriptures. It ought however to be here further remarked, that it is abſolutely impoſſible, that any other being but GOD, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, and government univerſal, ſhould be the author of ſuch an admirable ſeries of prophecy delivered a thouſand, or many hundred years before the appearance of the perſon whom they reſpected, and before the events which they predicted: and of ſuch a ſyſtem of types, ceremonies, and ſacrifices, all to be accompliſhed in one perſon, at the diſtance of fifteen hundred years from their inſtitution. The accompliſhment of theſe prophecies depended on innumerable great events which none but GOD could poſſibly effect, on the riſe and fall of numerous nations and empires, on thouſands of family connections and circumſtances, on millions of births and deaths, on the countleſs free volitions and actions of individual agents in heaven, earth, and hell, which nothing but an infinite mind could either comprehend or govern.

THE firſt prediction concerning CHRIST, that he ſhould be the SEED OF THE WOMAN and bruiſe the ſerpent's head was four thouſand years before his incarnation, and the firſt ſacrifices were nearly of the ſame date. The prediction, or promiſe, that in him all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed was more than eighteen centuries and an half, and that reſpecting the coming of SHILOH when the ſceptre ſhould depart from Judah and a lawgiver from between his feet, at leaſt, ſeventeen hundred years before the events took place. The inſtitution of ſacrifices, and the Jewiſh ritual by Moſes was more than fifteen hundred years before the paſſion of our SAVIOUR. The predictions concerning him in the Pſalms were, at leaſt, a thouſand, and thoſe in Iſaiah about ſeven hundred, and thoſe in the other prophets, even the lateſt four and five hundred years before his incarnation.

Now that any but GOD could be the author of ſuch a regular ſeries of prophecy, carried on through ſo

many ages, ſpoken by ſo many different perſons, and the accompliſhment of which depended on an almoſt infinite variety of human volitions, and moſt hidden diſpoſitions and actions of individuals, and on the accompliſhment of events ſo improbable to all human foreſight, in many inſtances ſo minute, and in others ſo great and aſtoniſhing, is moſt incredible, is abſolutely impoſſible. That ſuch a ſyſtem of types, ſacrifices, and ceremonies ſhould be inſtituted, at ſuch a diſtance of time from the appearance of the perſon whom they reſpected, and that they ſhould all have an accurate fulfilment in JESUS CHRIST, muſt be a divine work. I am perſuaded, that it is as impoſſible that a creature ſhould have effected it, as that he ſhould have created the world. The ſcriptures therefore have the ſtrongeſt ſignatures of a divine original. The New Teſtament eſpecially, and the Chriſtian ſyſtem muſt be true. It was ſpoken by him in whom all the law and the prophets have been fulfilled, by him who is the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs, and by men taught all things by his Spirit. It perfectly harmonizes with the Old, has been confirmed by the accompliſhment of the predictions of our SAVIOUR, ſealed with his teſtimony and blood, and with the teſtimony, miracles, and blood of his apoſtles.

II. OUR ſubject affords matter of great encouragement and joy to ſinners. Since JESUS is the CHRIST, ſinners may be pardoned and ſaved from the wrath to come. Nay, they may reign in life by JESUS CHRIST for ever and ever. How ſhould theſe glad tidings fill every heart with joy, and awaken all human tongues to praiſe? With what earneſtneſs and thankſgiving ſhould ſinners haſten to embrace their LORD, and make ſure of the great ſalvation? O let all the ends of the earth look unto him and be ſaved.

III. How full of awful import is this ſubject to infidels, and all unbelievers. If JESUS be the CHRIST *he that believeth not ſhall be damned. He is condemned already. He ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of* GOD *abideth on him.* Since JESUS is the CHRIST all judgment

is committed to him, he will come to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, and of all their hard ſpeeches and blaſphemies, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken, or written againſt him. Yes, he *ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not* GOD, *and that obey not the goſpel of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST: *who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the* LORD, *and from the glory of his power.*

IV. Is JESUS THE CHRIST, how bleſſed are thoſe who believe in him? And how ſhould they rejoice in their REDEEMER, and render all obedience and glory to him? As he is the CHRIST, they have redemption through his blood, he will raiſe them up at the laſt day, and give them eternal life. All the great and precious promiſes made to them and the church ſhall be accompliſhed. Zion ſhall triumph and become a praiſe in all the earth. With what ſafety may the ſaints truſt and not be afraid? How ſhould they rejoice in the LORD evermore? How ſhould his love conſtrain them? With what care and zeal ſhould they obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded them? Did the hearts of the diſciples burn within them while he opened to them the ſcriptures, ſhould not the ardors of divine love rekindle in our hearts, while he is exhibited to us, as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, *witneſſed by the law and the prophets?* Should not we labor to poſſeſs the feelings, and adopt the language of angels and fellow ſaints, and ſing, *Glory to* GOD *in the higheſt? Alleluia: for the* LORD GOD *omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him. Unto him that loved us and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto* GOD *and his* FATHER: *to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.* AMEN.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The proof of Scripture from Miracles.

ACTS ii. 22, and HEBREWS ii. 4.

Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; JESUS of Nazareth, a man approved of GOD among you, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns, which GOD did by him, in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know. GOD alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns, and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his will.

IN the preceding diſcourſes I have been exhibiting a variety of evidence, that the ſcriptures are a divine revelation. I ſhall now enter upon the conſideration of a different kind of evidence, which has not yet been particularly diſcuſſed, the evidence ariſing from miracles. Theſe have ever been conſidered, by Chriſtians, as ſo many infallible atteſtations to the divinity of the ſcriptures. They have not only been pleaded by Chriſtians, in all ages of the church, but Moſes, JESUS CHRIST, and his apoſtles appealed to them, as divine, infallible teſtimonials of the truth of the written word. Theſe were the divine credentials

which Moſes produced in the preſence of his brethren, and of Pharaoh, by GOD's expreſs direction, to evince that his miſſion was divine, and that they might certainly know and believe, that the GOD of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob had appeared to and ſent him.*

OUR bleſſed LORD taught, that miracles afforded ſuch demonſtrable evidence of his divine miſſion, as would render all men inexcuſable who ſhould not believe on him. *But I have greater witneſs than that of John: For the works which the FATHER hath ſent me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the FATHER hath ſent me.*† *The works that I do in my FATHER's name, they bear witneſs of me.*‡ Again, ſaith he, *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin; but now they have both ſeen and hated both ME and my FATHER.*§ The words imply, that the evidence from miracles, that JESUS was indeed the CHRIST and his religion divine, was ſo clear, that nothing but mere hatred of GOD and the REDEEMER prevented the Jews from believing on him. CHRIST therefore affirms, *But now they have no cloak for their ſin.*‖ In the text, CHRIST is declared to be a man approved of GOD, that is demonſtrably witneſſed to be his SON the MESSIAH, and highly approved of him, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns which he did by him. For the truth of theſe miracles, the apoſtle appeals to the people as things which they moſt certainly knew. *As ye yourſelves alſo know.* In the other part of the text, it is affirmed, that GOD bore the apoſtles witneſs, *with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.* By theſe he gave the ſtrongeſt atteſtations to the truth of the doctrines which they preached, and to the divinity of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. The apoſtle therefore aggravates the guilt, and infers the certain deſtruction of unbelievers in the text and context, taken in their connected view. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which began to*

* Exodus iv. 1, to the 10. † John v. 36. ‡ Chap. x. 25.
§ Chap. xv. 24. ‖ Verſe 22 of the afore quoted chapter.

be ſpoken unto us by the LORD, *and was confirmed unto us, by them that heard him? GOD alſo bearing them witneſs with ſigns, &c.*

In this view of the text, and the parallel paſſages which have been quoted, this general remark, in a clear and ſtrong point of light, preſents itſelf to our conſideration, viz.

THAT the miracles wrought by the prophets, our bleſſed LORD, and his apoſtles were divine, infallible atteſtations of the truth of the ſcriptures, and of the Chriſtian religion. For the illuſtration of this obſervation it is propoſed,

I. To explain my idea of a miracle, as it will be uſed in this diſcourſe.

II. To prove that the prophets, our bleſſed LORD, and his apoſtles did really work a great variety of miracles, taking the word in the moſt ſtrict and important ſenſe.

III. THAT theſe miracles were divine, infallible atteſtations of the truth of the ſcriptures, and of the Chriſtian religion.

I. I AM to explain my idea of a miracle, as it will be uſed in this diſcourſe.

MIRACLES are extraordinary events, produced by ſupernatural, omnipotent energy, entirely againſt, or above the laws of nature; or they are extraordinary events which it is the province of GOD only to effect. They are extraordinary events, becauſe they are contrary to, or above every thing which comes to paſs in the ordinary courſe of nature. This only makes them miraculous. The divine power is no leſs conſpicuous in the common courſe of events, in the riſing and ſitting of the ſun, and in the waxing and waning of the moon, than in theſe; but as they are fixed and common, there is nothing miraculous in them. They are produced by a ſupernatural, omnipotent energy, as they are contrary to all the laws of nature, or entirely above them. They are beyond the reach of all finite power. It is the province of GOD only to effect them, as they are above all the powers of magnetiſm, elec-

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tricity, balloons, all philoſophical, magic, or human arts. Whatſoever is not above all theſe is no miracle, and will not be conſidered as any atteſtation from Heaven of the truth of divine revelation. But ſuch extraordinary, ſupernatural events as GOD only can effect, and as were effected to prove the miſſion of the prophets, of JESUS CHRIST, and his apoſtles, will be pleaded as direct, infallible atteſtations of their divine miſſion, and of the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

HAVING made theſe obſervations, I proceed

II. To prove that the prophets, our bleſſed LORD, and his apoſtles did really work a great variety of miracles, taking the word in the moſt ſtrict and important ſenſe.

DID not Moſes exhibit ſupernatural works in Egypt, at the red ſea, and in the wilderneſs? Did not GOD bear him witneſs by works which it was his ſole province to effect, not for a day or a year only, but during the term of forty years, in the wilderneſs? Did not the other prophets miraculouſly preſerve life, and raiſe the dead,* heal the leproſy,† ſmite thouſands with blindneſs,‡ cauſe fire to come down from heaven, and inſtantly deſtroy their enemies,‖ conſume the ſacrifice, the altar, the ſtones, the very duſt and water, at mount Carmel?§ Did not GOD bear witneſs for them, by ſhutting the mouths of hungry lions,¶ by cauſing them to walk unharmed in the midſt of a furnace, burning with ſeven fold heat,** and by various other ſupernatural works?

WITH reſpect to JESUS CHRIST, it is affirmed, *That he was a man approved of GOD*, among the Jews, *by miracles, and wonders and ſigns which GOD did by him in the midſt of them, as they themſelves alſo knew.* He walked, like the GOD of nature, upon the ſea, and made all the elements obey him. At his word the ſtormy wind ceaſed from its tumultuous roar, and the rolling ſeas were ſtill. This was the peculiar work of

* 1 Kings xvii. 11, 24, and 2 Kings iv. 32, 37. † Chap. v. ‡ Chap. vi. 18. ‖ Chap. i. 10, 11, 12. § 1 Kings xviii. 38. ¶ Dan. vi. 21, 22. ** Chap. iii. 24—28.

GOD. Job ix. 8. *Which alone ſpreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the ſea.* Pſalm cvii. 29, and cxlviii. 8. *He maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof are ſtill. Stormy wind fulfilling his word.* He healed all manner of diſeaſes. The moſt obſtinate and incurable, and ſuch as had been of long continuance, inſtantly departed at his bidding. The eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf unſtopped, and the tongues of the dumb looſed at his command. Thoſe who, for a long courſe of years, had been bowed together, and could not lift up themſelves, with ſuch as had their limbs withered, were immediately healed. Theſe were all divine works, which GOD challenges as his peculiar work. *Who healeth all thy diſeaſes.** *The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiſeth them that are bowed down.*†

How often, and in what various circumſtances, did he raiſe the dead? To the aſtoniſhment and joy of the parents and ſpectators, he awakened the dead daughter of Jairus.‡ When he ſaw the afflicted condition of the widow of Nain, following her only ſon to the grave, he ſtopped the mournful train, and reſtored him, in perfect health, to his mother.‖ By the ſame divine power he called Lazarus from the grave. And that which was the greateſt of all miracles, was his raiſing himſelf on the third day.

To the apoſtles GOD bore witneſs with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy GHOST. They healed the ſick and caſt out devils, as their LORD had done. Hence it is written, *And by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people.—Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at leaſt the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them.—There came alſo a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing ſick folks, and them which were*

* Pſalm ciii. 3.
† Pſalm cxlvi. 8.
‡ Mark v. 41, 42.
‖ Luke vii. 13, 14, 15.

*vexed with unclean ſpirits : and they were healed every one.** Theſe miracles they wrought not only in great numbers at Jeruſalem, but in all other places where they preached the goſpel. The evangeliſt Mark teſtifies, *They went forth and preached every where, the* LORD *working with them and confirming the word with ſigns following.*† The apoſtle Paul not only healed the ſick and lame, and caſt out devils, but raiſed the dead. *And* GOD *wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul : ſo that from his body were brought unto the ſick handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.*‡ When Eutychus was taken up dead, Paul embraced him and reſtored him to life.‖ Peter, in like manner, raiſed Dorcas to life after ſhe had been ſome time dead.§

FURTHER, GOD granted unto the apoſtles a great variety of ſupernatural gifts, enabling them inſtantly to ſpeak all manner of tongues, to interpret ſtrange languages, to foretel future events, and underſtand the moſt profound myſteries. CHRIST, juſt before his aſcenſion, promiſed to enrich them with theſe miraculous powers. *And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe ; In my name ſhall they caſt out devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues, they ſhall take up ſerpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them, they ſhall lay hands on the ſick and they ſhall recover.*¶ Having made theſe promiſes unto them, he, the next LORD's day after his aſcenſion, ſhed down all theſe gifts upon them ** Nay, he gave them a power of giving the Holy GHOST, and communicating the ſame miraculous gifts unto others. Thus did the apoſtle Paul to believers at Epheſus. *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy* GHOST *came on them ; and they ſpake with tongues and propheſied.*†† Peter and John communicated the ſame gifts to the believing Samaritans, and they were given to the proſelytes of the gate, or the devout Gentiles, like Cornelius and

* Acts v. 12, 15, 16. † Mark xvi 20.
‡ Acts xix. 11, 12. ‖ Chap. xx. 9, 10. § Chap. ix. 37, 40.
¶ Mark xvi. 17, 18. ** Acts ii. 1, 12. †† Chap. xix. 6.

his houſe; and even the idolatrous nations upon their repentance and reception of the goſpel.* Theſe gifts were ſhed down immediately from GOD upon the churches in general, as they were upon the church at Jeruſalem, or were conferred upon them by the impoſition of the apoſtles' hands. Some of the churches had them in great abundance. Thus had the church at Corinth, though it conſiſted principally of Gentiles, who had been turned from dumb idols, and the moſt abominable luſts, to the ſervice of the living GOD.

THESE gifts were entirely ſupernatural, and can be aſcribed to nothing but divine, Almighty power. From the foundation of the world to this time, there has never been any thing in philoſophy or magic arts enabling men inſtantaneouſly to ſpeak all manner of languages with propriety and freedom; nor have any, by any philoſophical, aſtronomical, magical, or any other arts, ever been able to communicate ſuch gifts to men. Indeed they are effects no leſs wonderful than the creation of the world, and can be aſcribed to no other than to him, who gave exiſtence and knowledge to man, made his mouth, and beſtowed on him the gift of language.

THAT Moſes and the prophets, CHRIST and his apoſtles, in fact, wrought the miracles aſcribed to them, is beyond all reaſonable controverſy, from a great variety of conſiderations.

PARTICULARLY, with reſpect to the miracles of Moſes, it appears next to impoſſible, in the nature of things, that he ſhould have brought Iſrael out of Egypt, and ſupported them in the wilderneſs, without miracles. Unleſs we admit theſe the whole ſtory of their redemption muſt be given up. Moſes was a perfect ſtranger to Pharaoh and his court. He had no friends, or influence there, and was known to few even among his own nation. Forty years he had been a ſtranger in the land of Midian. When he went into Egypt to ſpeak to Pharaoh and the Iſraelites, he ap-

* Acts xiii. 52.

peared in the character of a ſingle perſon, a ſhepherd of the country of Midian, without human credentials or human aid. What could influence the king of Egypt to give up millions of ſlaves, their cattle and all their ſubſtance without ſomething very extraordinary? Or what could induce the Iſraelites to follow a ſtranger into the wilderneſs, where a ſmall caravan could not have ſubſiſted a ſingle week, but ſome ſtrong aſſurances that he was indeed ſent of God? By what poſſible human means could the Iſraelites have ſubſiſted a ſingle year or month, in a barren wilderneſs? What notice would be paid to a private ſtranger, who ſhould demand of the king of Great Britain immediately to free Ireland, and allow the inhabitants to be a nation entirely independent of the Britiſh government? Or ſhould ſuch a perſon demand of Congreſs, an immediate liberation of all the negroes in the ſouthern ſtates, would the leaſt regard be paid to him? Should they be liberated at his demand, how could he, without proviſions and without arms, conduct them through a vaſt wilderneſs, and plant them in a country of innumerable warriors? How then could Moſes, without the ſpecial interpoſition of heaven, have delivered Iſrael from the bondage of Egypt, ſupported them in the wilderneſs, conquered potent nations, and led them to the borders of Canaan?

Besides, the miracles which he wrought are atteſted by the records and teſtimony of a whole nation, by ſongs and monuments prepared, at the time of them, to celebrate and to perpetuate them in all future ages. They are witneſſed by public inſtitutions, and by almoſt all the prophets and ſacred writers in the church of Iſrael? They were not matters of mere opinion, or ſpeculation, in which thoſe who reported them might have been deceived, but matters of fact, which lay open to their eyes and ears, their touch and taſte, and were as eaſily, and as certainly known, as any things which are objects of ſenſe. Children as well as adults certainly knew whether they were led through the ſea, ſubſiſted on manna forty years, were

led by the pillar of cloud and fire; whether they heard the law from Mount Sinai, saw the mountain all on fire and burning into the midst of heaven. It cannot be reasonably supposed that a whole nation should unite in testifying lies; that their public records, and the sacred odes they sang to the honor of JEHOVAH should be designed to perpetuate the most egregious falsehoods. There is therefore the most certain and abundant evidence of their truth.

WITH respect to the miracles wrought by CHRIST and his apostles, they were objects of most certain knowledge. What can be more easily or certainly known, than these facts, whether the eyes of the blind are opened? Whether the sick, the lame, the deaf and dumb, lunatics and leprous men were instantaneously and perfectly recovered from those disorders? What can be more certainly known than whether dead men were made alive? Or whether illiterate men were enabled instantly to speak all manner of languages, with propriety, ease, and fluency? In these facts, neither the apostles, nor others could possibly have been deceived. The miracles which they reported were wrought openly in all parts of the world, upon a vast variety of occasions, before friends and enemies.

THE apostles who witnessed these miracles, as has been shown in a preceding discourse, had all the marks of honest men, of the most unshaken integrity and veracity. The doctrines and morals which they taught were holy and sublime, tending to universal good. Their lives appear to have been without blemish, their love to GOD, their labors and sufferings for CHRIST's and the gospel's sake without a parallel. They appear to have imbibed the utmost abhorrence of all deceit and falsehood, and have most pointedly, beyond all other men, denounced the curses of GOD against all liars and impostors.

THEY could be influenced by no worldly motives. The religion which they embraced taught them, that the world would hate them, that they must suffer the

loſs of all temporal enjoyments, and wait for their reward in an unſeen, future world. Indeed even in that, they could expect nothing, unleſs they knew that JESUS was the CHRIST, and that his religion was true. They knew how their maſter had been treated, that his followers were a ſect every where hated and ſpoken againſt; that all the luſts of the human heart, all the religions, prejudices, literature, policy, and powers of the world were againſt them. They were poor, illiterate men, without any thing of a worldly nature to recommend the wonderful and glorious things which they had witneſſed. They could expect no ſucceſs in this world, only on the ground that their teſtimony was true, and the LORD would be with them, as he had promiſed. It is therefore impoſſible to find a motive in heaven or earth, in time or eternity, for their making the reports which they did, had they not known the certainty of the facts to which they gave teſtimony. On any other ſuppoſition, all poſſible motives were againſt them. Yet under all perſecutions and trials, they perſevered in their teſtimony, and ſealed it with their blood. There is every circumſtance to corroborate the truth of their teſtimony, which can be in any caſe whatſoever. Perhaps there never were, in any other, ſo many circumſtances of ſuch weight to confirm the teſtimony of any witneſſes.

FURTHER, the impoſſibility of the apoſtles' deceiving the world, and obtaining credit to the reports they made, had not the facts been true, at the time when they bore witneſs to them, demonſtrates, beyond all reaſonable controverſy, the veracity of their teſtimony. The apoſtles declared the occaſions on which the miracles were wrought, the times when, and the places where they were done, the names of the perſons on whom they were wrought, and who were particularly concerned in them, what people were preſent, and whence they came. They related the effects which they had on the people, and many circumſtances reſpecting them, giving every advantage to their enemies to diſprove them, had it been poſſible.

The prophets, CHRIST, and his apoſtles performed their miracles in the moſt open manner, ſometimes before thouſands of people, both enemies and friends. The apoſtles indeed could make their appeal to both, as in our text, that they were indiſputably true.

IT was an enlightened age when theſe wonderful works were performed. Learning flouriſhed, and men were capable of detecting any deceit, either in the miracles themſelves, or in thoſe who reported them. They were examined in councils and courts of the moſt artful men, by judges and kings, keenly edged againſt Chriſtianity; yet after all which the combined art, malice, and hatred of the world could effect, they were not able to diſcover the leaſt deceit in either of them. They were fully believed at Jeruſalem, and in all places where they had been wrought. The goſpel was believed and ſpread far and wide among the nations. This muſt have been utterly impoſſible had not the facts reported been true.

ACCORDING to the account of theſe miracles, they were ſome of them wrought when thouſands of people were collected from the various cities, towns, and villages in Judea, and even from Tyre and Sidon. It is recorded, that with a few loaves and fiſhes, CHRIST, at one time and another, fed them, and that the fragments, after they had eaten, far exceeded the quantity of proviſion at firſt ſet before them. It is alſo recorded, that, on the day of pentecoſt, when the holy GHOST came down upon the apoſtles, in the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, and abode upon them, and they ſpake with other tongues, as the ſpirit gave them utterance, *there were dwelling at Jeruſalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*, and that Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Jews and proſelytes, Cretes and Arabians, with the inhabitants of thirteen different countries, all heard the Galileans ſpeaking in their own native language. Now had not theſe reports been true, it is impoſſible, in the nature of the thing, that they ſhould have ever obtained the leaſt credit. In the very places where it is affirmed, that theſe mi-

raculous works were done, and in all the cities of Judea, and in all parts of the Roman empire, there would have been ſubſtantial witneſſes, that there was no truth in the reports. Thus would it have been with reſpect to other miracles, as they were performed in the moſt public manner. For CHRIST to have appealed to the people, as he did, that his works bore witneſs of him, and for the apoſtles to have appealed to their hearers, as they did, that they knew them moſt certainly, would have been the moſt barefaced impudence and effrontery, and the height of madneſs. It muſt, at once, have ruined their cauſe, and brought both it and them into univerſal contempt. But ſo far was it from this, that they were highly eſteemed, their report was believed, and Chriſtianity was wonderfully ſpread through all parts of the then known world.

FURTHER, enemies as well as friends, Jews and Gentiles, acknowledged the miracles, though they aſcribed them to the prince of devils.* Celſus, a moſt bitter enemy of Chriſtianity, owns the miracles wrought by CHRIST and his apoſtles. Pilate gave ſuch an account of the life, miracles, death, and reſurrection of JESUS, in a letter to the emperor Tiberius, that he propoſed it to the ſenate, to number him among the gods of Rome.†

ACCORDING to the accounts of the fathers and of credible hiſtorians, miracles, the gift of tongues, of the interpretation of tongues, and of healing the ſick continued during the whole apoſtolic age, and ſome of the early apologiſts for Chriſtianity appeal to their

* Then gathered the chief prieſts and the Pharisees a council, and ſaid, What do we? For this man doth many miracles. John xi. 47. For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifeſt to all them that dwell at Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it. Acts iv. 16. See alſo Matthew xii. 24. It does not appear either from ſcripture or prophane hiſtory that the miracles of CHRIST and his apoſtles were ever denied, in the primitive ages either by Jews or Heathens, but the evidence is that they were acknowledged by both.

† Baxter's Reſt, part II. chapter iv. where may be found other teſtimonies of the enemies of Chriſtianity, with numerous other teſtimonies of the ancient Chriſtian fathers.

enemies, that in their own houſes there were perſons whom they knew to have been miraculouſly healed. Hence there is the ſtrongeſt evidence of the truth of the miracles recorded in the ſcriptures.

It need only further to be obſerved, that as it is morally impoſſible, that the reports concerning the miracles recorded in the bible ſhould have obtained credit at the times and places when and where they are declared to have been wrought, unleſs they had been true, ſo they could not have obtained credit at any time afterwards. If there had been no ſuch works wrought, nor the reports of them been propagated from the beginning, all Chriſtians would have rejected them. The reports of them in one place, or church would have been contradicted in other churches, unleſs there had been a general combination of all the churches and teachers on earth to propagate falſehood. This would have been next to impoſſible, as the churches were ſoon ſpread abroad in many countries, far diſtant from each other. Beſides, there have always been, from the beginning, apoſtates from the church. Theſe were perfectly acquainted with its hiſtory, doctrines, cuſtoms, and claims to a divine original, and had any thing been introduced new and ſtrange, after the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, they would have diſcovered the deceit and charged it upon the Chriſtians. But nothing of this appears. Therefore, in every view, the miracles recorded in the bible appear to have been indiſputable facts.

III. THESE miracles were divine, infallible atteſtations of the truth of the ſcriptures, and of the Chriſtian religion.

THEY were wrought to prove that GOD had ſent the prophets, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and his apoſtles to teach men his will and their duty. As they were ſupernatural works, which it is the ſole prerogative of GOD to effect, they atteſt his approbation of them and their inſtructions. They afford the ſame kind of evidence of the truths of the goſpel, that GOD ſent CHRIST and his apoſtles to ſpeak and do the

things which they did, as the works of creation do that there is a GOD.

THE miracles wrought by Moſes and the prophets, recorded in the Old Teſtament, are ſuch as GOD challenges as his own peculiar works. Jer. xxxii. 20, 21. *Which haſt ſet ſigns and wonders in the land of Egypt; and haſt brought forth thy people Iſrael out of the land of Egypt with ſigns and with wonders.* Pſalm cv. 26, 27, to the end. The miracles wrought by Elijah and Eliſha in cauſing that the handful of meal in the barrel and the little oil in the cruiſe ſhould feed Elijah and the widow's houſehold, many days, without the leaſt diminution, and in raiſing the dead ſon of the widow of Zarephath to life;* in cauſing fire to come down and conſume the ſacrifice, and the wood, and the ſtones, and the duſt, and the water in the trenches, upon mount Carmel;† in multiplying the widow's oil, and raiſing the dead ſon of the Shunamite, were works of divine power.‡ So was the preſervation of the three children in the furnace of the King of Babylon, and of Daniel in the lion's den. They were therefore the moſt ſtriking demonſtrations of GOD's approbation of them and of the truth of what they declared, in his name, to mankind. Theſe works bear as evident ſignatures of divinity as the works of creation and providence, or any works of GOD whatſoever; and as it cannot be ſuppoſed, that GOD would proſtitute his power in operations to contenance and ſupport impoſtors, to eſtabliſh forgeries, and deceive his rational creatures, in concerns of infinite moment, they cannot but be viewed as infallible atteſtations of the divine miſſion of the prophets of CHRIST, and his apoſtles, and of the divinity of the Chriſtian ſyſtem.

IN this view, every miracle is to be conſidered as a divine teſtimony to the truth of Chriſtianity, as much as a voice from heaven, from the EXCELLENT MAJESTY HIMSELF, atteſting its divine original. As all the works of creation and preſervation are GOD's

* 1 Kings xvii. 11, to the end. † Chap. xviii. 38.
‡ 2 Kings iv. ſee the whole chapter.

voice to us, which have a language univerſally to be heard and underſtood, ſo the ſupernatural works of CHRIST and his inſpired ſervants, are his voice to mankind, declaring his approbation of their claims, and witneſſing the truths which they delivered in his name. As every creating work, and as all the works of conſervation are, in themſelves, evidences of the DIVINE EXISTENCE, ſo every miracle wrought for the confirmation of the miſſion, inſtructions, and doctrines of inſpired men, is in itſelf, a divine atteſtation of the truth of divine revelation. The more abundant theſe miraculous works have been, the ſtronger and more abundant is the evidence ariſing from them. Juſt as the evidence of the being of GOD is increaſed by the vaſt variety, greatneſs, and glory of the works of creation and providence; or as the multiplicity of credible witneſſes and teſtimonies increaſes and confirms the certainty of any fact.

THESE are adapted to the capacity of common people, no leſs than to that of the learned and wiſe. They at once afford, in the minds of men of all characters, conviction of a divine power and interpoſition.

SHOULD any perſon, at this day, claim to be a prophet ſent of GOD, and in confirmation of his miſſion and doctrines raiſe the dead, open the eyes of one born blind, inſtantly cure the moſt mortal and incurable diſeaſes, heal a man who had been lame from his birth, until he was forty years of age, as Peter and John did the man at the beautiful gate of the temple,* and as Paul did the cripple at Lyſtra,† would it not at once convince the ſpectators, he was indeed a meſſenger from GOD? Have not miracles always had this effect, and been received by men of all nations, as divine teſtimonials in behalf of thoſe on whoſe account, or by whom, they have been wrought? Did not even the magicians confeſs the finger of GOD in the miracles wrought by Moſes? Did not Pharaoh and the E-

* Acts iii. 2, 7, 8. † Chap. xiv. 8, 9, 10.

Egyptians, as well as the Iſraelites, acknowledge him as a prophet of the LORD? When the king of Iſrael and his people ſaw the miracle at Mount Carmel, they inſtantly fell on their faces, and ſaid, *The LORD he is the GOD;* and they obeyed the voice of Elijah, in arreſting the prophets of Baal, that they might be put to death. When Nebuchadnezzar ſaw the miracle of the three children walking unharmed in the burning furnace, he at once acknowledged them to be the ſervants of the moſt high GOD.‡ The ſame effect had the miracle wrought for the preſervation of Daniel, in the den of lions, upon king Darius ‖ In like manner, when Paul healed the cripple at Liſtra, the people of all characters acknowledged it as a divine work. The miracles of the New Teſtament were ſo entirely different from every thing of which aſtrologers, magicians, conjurers, and wiſe men among the Heathen were capable, that they acknowledged them to be divine works, and evidences of the truth of the goſpel. Thus did Simon Magus, Sergius Paulus, and the chief men in the iſle of Paphos and multitudes, who uſed curious arts, and had the fulleſt acquaintance with the magic and lying wonders of the Heathen world.§ They confeſſed their deeds, and embraced the goſpel. Thus men of all characters, and of all preceding ages and nations, among whom miracles have been wrought, have acknowledged their evidence. Indeed it lies open to the common ſenſe of mankind. It at once arreſts the attention, and convinces the underſtanding and judgment of all men of candor and common diſcernment. Nothing could be more pertinent and concluſive than the addreſs of the blind man, whoſe eyes JESUS had opened, to the unbelieving Jews. *Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Since the world began hath it not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not of GOD, he could do nothing.*¶

‡ Daniel iii. 26. ‖ Chap. vi. 20, 26, 27. § Acts viii. 9, to 20, and chap. xiii. 6, 13, and chap. xix. 19. ¶ John ix. 30, 33.

WITH reſpect to the ſcripture miracles, it is a very corroborating circumſtance, that they were wrought by inſpired men during the whole time the ſacred canon was compiling, from the days of Moſes to the cloſe of the apoſtolic age, for the term of about fifteen hundred and ninety years, and then entirely ceaſed. This affords the ſtrongeſt evidence, that the deſign of them was to be ſo many divine atteſtations and ſeals to the truth of the divine oracles.

IT is a further circumſtance, confirming the evidence from the ſcripture miracles, that no other religion claims to be eſtabliſhed by miracles, or can juſtly make the leaſt pretence to any thing of this nature. We may ſafely challenge all the patrons of infidelity to ſhow a ſingle inſtance in which the dead have been raiſed, the eyes of ſuch as had been born blind opened, or in which illiterate men have been enabled inſtantly to ſpeak with new tongues, and, by the laying on of their hands, to communicate miraculous gifts to others, to eſtabliſh any other than the Chriſtian religion.

IN a word, that the ſcripture miracles were generally works of the moſt ſurpriſing mercy and goodneſs, and performed for the moſt glorious purpoſes, exceedingly ſtrengthens the evidence ariſing from them. They were wrought to pour contempt upon the gods of the Heathen, deſtroy idolatry, and demonſtrate that JEHOVAH was the one only living and true GOD; to prove a religion which gives the moſt conſiſtent, exalted, and glorious ideas of him: A religion which exhibits a ſyſtem of the moſt benevolent and ſublime doctrines, and of the moſt pure and perfect morals, which ever appeared in our world. The miracles themſelves were worthy of GOD, perfectly congruous to his conſummate wiſdom and goodneſs. The religion which they evince is of infinite moment. While it brings glory to GOD in the higheſt, it has the moſt benevolent aſpect upon men. In its doctrines, duties, and morals it as much excels all other religions,

as the ſun o' ines the paleſt ſtar or the expiring taper.

MIRACLES therefore, in themſelves, and in all their attendant circumſtances, convey to us irrefragable evidence of the truth of the ſcriptures, and of the holy religion which they teach.

FROM the view we have taken of the ſubject we have been contemplating, it is natural to remark

I. THE diſingenuity, impertinence, and fallacy of all deiſtical objections to the evidence of ſcripture ariſing from the miracles which it records.

How perfectly trifling and inconſiſtent with the conduct of all reaſonable men is the objection that miracles cannot be credited, becauſe they are contrary to univerſal experience; which can mean no more than this, that they are contrary to the experience of thoſe ages and people who never ſaw them. But men every where believe, with an undoubting perſuaſion, facts they never have experienced. Mountains perpetually on fire, from the entrails of which are ſuch eruptions of burning materials, as inundate the neighbouring fields and overthrow whole villages and cities is entirely contrary to all the experience of the North Americans, and to people of many other parts of the earth. Nevertheleſs they have no doubt of the exiſtence of Etna and Veſuvius, or of the tremendous effects of their eruptions. That water ſhould freeze, and the rivers and ſeas become hard as ſtone, ſo that men can walk and drive teams upon them, in various parts of Europe and North America, is contrary to the univerſal experience of all the inhabitants of the torrid zone; yet do not the Weſt Indians and thouſands of other people of all nations in the hot countries believe theſe facts without heſitation or doubt? Would not even deiſts themſelves laugh at their ignorance and credulity if they did not? Has it not been agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind, upon credible evidence, to credit many facts contrary to what they had ever experienced? Upon evidence far leſs, than that by which the miracles of ſcripture

are ſupported? Did not even the ſophiſtical Mr. Hume believe, and do not infidels believe facts contrary to their own experience?

The pretence that miracles are impoſſible and incredible, that there is a far greater probability, that whole nations, through a courſe of ages, ſhould combine to atteſt known falſehoods, than that they ſhould be true, is no leſs abſurd and impertinent, than the preceding objection. He who created the univerſe and fixed the laws of nature, for his own glory and the good of creatures, can moſt certainly ſuſpend, counteract, or operate above them whenever he pleaſes. It is as eaſy with him to give ſight, hearing, and ſpeech to ſuch as have been born blind, deaf, and dumb, as to beſtow them at firſt, in the common courſe of nature. It is juſt as eaſy with him to reanimate the dead as to give life to man at firſt; to reſtore the withered limb, as to cauſe it to wither. If therefore his own glory and the good of countleſs millions of creatures, in time and eternity, might be advanced by it, there is every reaſon to believe he would effect thoſe beneficent and glorious works.

In a word, how unlike were all the ſubtle, uncertain, uſeleſs, and pretended miracles and lying wonders of the Heathen world, and of the man of ſin, to to the miracles wrought by Moſes and the prophets, by Jesus and his apoſtles? How diſingenuous and abſurd is the adducing and urging of them, in the leaſt degree, to invalidate the miracles recorded in the ſcriptures? Were they not all exceedingly ſuſpicious, and far from being well authenticated? Were there any but what could be accounted for upon natural principles? Was there ever any thing like raiſing dead men from their graves? Were any ever ſeen alive converſing with people, as Lazarus was with thouſands of his countrymen? Were thoſe miracles wrought before thouſands of people, on the moſt public occaſions, before enemies and friends? Were they examined by councils, kings, and judges, whoſe religion, honor, intereſt, and implacable malice all combined, and ur-

ged them to detect their fraud? Nay, was it not great men and their dependants, who were interested in spreading them, who first reported them? How came the pretence of lying wonders, and counterfeit miracles if there were no true ones? How paltry were the designs for which the pretended miracles were wrought? To serve the low purposes of fraud, ambition, and covetousness. Not to establish truths on which the salvation of countless millions of fallen creatures were dependant. Not to diffuse the knowledge, and advance the glory of the DEITY, and make the whole system of holy creatures more happy. In every view how dissimilar are they to the scripture miracles! Hence they can in no respect be compared with them, or in the least degree invalidate them.

II. WHAT a variety and abundance of evidence of the truth of the scriptures now pours itself upon us?

WE have, in the course of the preceding discourses, brought into view some of the principal external and internal evidences of the divinity of the scriptures; and we see from what a variety of sources we have the most clear and satisfying evidence, that they contain a revelation from heaven. How will the most concise recapitulation, or summary, even of the heads of evidence strike the sober and candid mind with conviction! We have seen by what a variety of evidence the pentateuch and Old Testament scriptures are supported. By the united testimony of a whole nation, through a long succession of ages: By their records, their public monuments, their civil and religious constitution, their passover, feasts and sabbaths, their songs of praise, and various customs. In addition to these, how strong is the evidence of the truth of the whole canon of scripture, arising from the apparent character of the writers, the circumstances in which they wrote, their sufferings for the truth, the manner in which they have related facts, and the peculiar adaptation of their instructions, prophecies, reproofs, and warnings to the state of the various ages and nations in which they lived: From the agreement of their writings with the

chronology, hiſtory, and manners of the various kings who reigned, of the origin, progreſs, and decline of the nations and monarchies concerning which they have ſpoken: From the harmony of the doctrines, morals, motives, and tendency of the religion which they taught, though they lived in ſo many different ages and places, ſpake upon a vaſt variety of occaſions and ſubjects, and generally had no knowledge of or connection with each other; and from the impoſſibility of their having acted from worldly motives? No leſs clear and ſtriking is the evidence from the ſublimity, purity, and tranſcendant excellency of the religion taught in the ſcriptures; its entire difference from all other religions, as it commands the heart, requires that every action ſhould be under the influence of faith and love, and aimed at the divine glory and general good; and alſo from its matchleſs ſuperiority to them: From its ſuitableneſs to the neceſſities, and its ſufficiency to relieve all the wants of fallen men; its tendency to glorify the Deity and make his creatures conſummately and forever bleſſed: From the repreſentations which the ſcriptures make of the unity, ſpotleſs purity, infinite perfection, and glory of GOD; and the ſinleſs, perfect character of our LORD JESUS CHRIST:—From the rational and pure worſhip which they enjoin:—From their numerous prophecies, and their exact accompliſhment; eſpecially, from the accompliſhment of ſuch a number, and wonderful variety of them in JESUS, the MESSIAH: From the preſent moſt evident fulfilment of ſome of them before the whole world, in the preſent ſtate of the Jews, of Jeruſalem, and the holy land; in the ſeed of Iſhmael, and in the riſe, progreſs, and decline of the man of ſin; and from that aſtoniſhing ſeries of miracles wrought for the confirmation of the divine word, during the whole time of its compilation. With reſpect to the New Teſtament and the Chriſtian ſyſtem, how ſtrong is the evidence of its divinity not only from the preceding conſiderations, but from the moſt authentic hiſtory? From the

certain exiſtence of Chriſtianity, in its diſtinguiſhing doctrines and ordinances from the days of CHRIST and his apoſtles? From the numerous quotations made from it by the fathers who ſucceeded the apoſtles? From catalogues of the Evangeliſts, the Acts, and the Epiſtles, made at an early period, by different men in different parts of the world, who do not appear to have had any connection with or knowledge of each other?—From the ſpread of the goſpel by a few illiterate men, without riches, without worldly fame, friends, power, or influence, againſt all the prejudices, religions, cuſtoms, cunning, malice, and powers of the earth; and from the impoſſibility of its having gained the leaſt credit, and ſpreading in that aſtoniſhing manner in which it did, had it not been true, and accompanied with ſupernatural influence from above? To ſay nothing of numerous other topics and circumſtances of argument, what a flood of light and conviction, do theſe, viewed in their combined, harmonious evidence, pour upon our minds? What a cloud of the moſt ſubſtantial witneſſes atteſt the divinity of the word? What facts? What religions beſide were ever ſupported by ſuch ſtrength and variety of evidence? By ſuch united atteſtations from earth and heaven? Shall we then forſake this blaze of day, the full ſplendors of the SON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, for the gloom of night without the glimmerings of the paleſt ſtar? Shall we forſake a ſyſtem of divine truth, of life and ſalvation, for infidelity? For that which has no ſyſtem, no inſtitutions, no motives, no hopes, no foundation? For that which verges on total ſcepticiſm? And, in moſt inſtances, has terminated in the diſbelief even of the exiſtence of GOD himſelf? For that which has led on a whole nation to abandon all principles of morality, to blaſphemy, filthineſs, and tenets ſubverſive of all government and ſocial happineſs, and to aſtoniſh the world with new and unprecedented crimes? Shall we return back from that exalted ſtate of ſocial happineſs, of civil and religious ſociety to which the goſpel has raiſed us, and abandon

the bleſſed hopes which it inſpires, for the ſtate of Heatheniſm? For the life of beaſts, and the eternal ſleep of death? No, let us be men, aſpire to immortality, flee the dreadful precipice, be ſtrong in the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS, and bleſs GOD forever for his unſpeakable gift and glorious goſpel. AMEN.

DISCOURSE IX.

On the Inſpiration of the Scriptures.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

ALL ſcripture is given by inſpiration of GOD.

IN the preceding diſcourſes, an attempt has been made to evince the abſolute neceſſity of a divine revelation, for the inſtruction, comfort, and ſalvation of man; and, as far as could be, within the compaſs of a few ſermons, to exhibit the evidence of the divinity of the ſcriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament. The evidences which have been adduced apply equally not to one book or part, but to all the books and to all the parts of thoſe ſcriptures. They are divine atteſtations to every doctrine, duty, and motive which they teach, to the promiſes which they make, to the threatnings they contain, and the facts which they relate. They prove the whole of ſcripture to be a divine word, or they prove nothing to the purpoſe.

HOWEVER, there are many ſemi-deiſts, who while they maintain that part of the ſcriptures were divinely inſpired, or at leaſt are to be received as true,

deny that other parts are, and even venture to treat them with blaſphemous ridicule and contempt. Some talk in this profane and merry manner, "For our parts we do not believe more than half the ſcriptures to be true," and ſome ſticklers for Chriſtianity, who have written profeſſedly in defence of revelation, have treated it with no leſs diſhonor. In this way, they, in effect, ſet aſide, and render all ſcripture doubtful and uſeleſs. It is therefore highly neceſſary for the honor of the ſcriptures, and the ſupport of Chriſtianity, to attend particularly to this point, and to prove, that all ſcripture is given by inſpiration.

IT is the deſign of this diſcourſe, as clearly as may be, to illuſtrate this truth. The apoſtle Paul, in the text, moſt expreſsly and ſtrongly affirms it. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of* GOD. He not only affirms, that all ſcripture was given by inſpiration, but in the words following the text, he declares the great utility of the ſcriptures to all the purpoſes of man's inſtruction and ſalvation. *And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: that the man of* GOD *may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.* What a noble teſtimony is this to the inſpiration, high importance, and uſefulneſs of the whole ſcripture?

IN further diſcuſſing this ſubject, it is propoſed, firſt to ſtate the true idea of inſpiration, as it will be maintained in the preſent diſcourſe; and then to prove that all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of GOD.

I. I AM to ſtate the true idea of inſpiration.

INSPIRATION, in the primary and moſt natural meaning of the word, ſignifies the act of breathing into a perſon or thing, or the infuſion, or ſuggeſtion of ideas to the mind by GOD. This is the firſt and higheſt idea of inſpiration, the ſuggeſtion of ideas to the mind by the inſpiration, or breath of GOD, or which comes to the ſame thing, by the ſpirit of GOD. This is the true idea ſuggeſted by the Greek word in the text.*

* Theopneuſtos, breathed by GOD.

This inſpiration the Jews aſcribed to the chetubim, or ſacred writers, who penned their books of the Old Teſtament. To the prophets, properly ſo called, they aſcribed an immediate ſuggeſtion of ideas to the mind of the things which they delivered in the name of the LORD. Hence they went unto the people with, *A thus ſaith the* LORD,† and *thus ſaith* GOD.‡ They declared in the moſt ſolemn manner, that what GOD ſaid they would ſpeak.‖

THE ſpirit of GOD impreſſed, by dreams and viſions, on their minds, and kept alive in their memories, the things which they were to ſpeak or write, or they were otherwiſe immediately ſuggeſted to them. By a divine impulſe they were moved to compoſe and write the prophecies, inſtructions, promiſes, and threatnings which we find in the ſcriptures. At the ſame time, they were ſuffered to uſe their own reaſon, and to write in their own words and ſtyle, ſo that the different tempers, zeal, and manner of addreſs is ſeen in their ſeveral prophecies and writings, both in the Old and New Teſtament. This affords one ſtrong evidence of the truth of the ſcriptures, as no one man could exhibit ſuch a variety of tempers and language, and appear in ſo many different occaſions, times, and places, with ſuch natural eaſe and propriety as they have done. No number of perſons, not living at the times and places when and where the matters were tranſacted, could have written them as they have, without betraying themſelves, as to language, time, and circumſtances.

FURTHER, it ſhould be obſerved, with reſpect to inſpiration, that it is not always to be conſidered in this primary and high ſenſe, but only as an infallible ſuperintendency of the divine ſpirit over the ſacred writers, in all their preaching and compoſitions, ſo as to preſerve them from error or miſrepreſentation Such a ſuperintendency was neceſſary that they might write

† Exodus iv. 22. and v. 1, and 2 Samuel xii. 11, and in numerous other places. ‡ Chron. xxiv. 20, Iſaiah xlii. 5.

‖ 2 Chron. xviii. 13.

nothing more, leſs, or otherwiſe, than was agreeable to the divine mind. Hence both Jews and Chriſtian divines, who have written on inſpiration, have generally maintained ſuch a ſuperintendency, infallibly preſerving the ſacred penmen from all miſtake with reſpect to any thing they ſpake or wrote as coming from GOD.

THIS kind of inſpiration or ſuperintendency, may, in ſome reſpects, be conſidered as inferior to the former, as to its degree, but not as to the certainty of what has been ſpoken or written. This renders the ſcriptures no leſs a ſure ground of faith and practce, than if every idea and word had been immediately ſuggeſted by the divine ſpirit.

WITH reſpect to ſuch things as could not be diſcovered by reaſon, or ſome previous revelation, it was neceſſary that the ideas of them ſhould be immediately communicated. Of this kind was the creation of the world, of the firſt human pair, the ſtate in which they were created, their lapſe, the manner of the divine conduct towards them, and with reſpect to all ſuch ancient events as had been effaced from the memories, records, and traditions of men, and yet were neceſſary to be known. This kind of inſpiration was alſo equally neceſſary with reſpect to many of the doctrines and duties taught and enjoined in the ſcriptures, and with reſpect to the foretelling of all future events.

SOMETHING like this, doubtleſs, was neceſſary to teach the diſciples all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatſoever CHRIST had ſaid unto them, as he had promiſed the Holy GHOST ſhould do,* when after his aſcenſion he ſhould ſend him unto them. This was neceſſary that they might truly report the life, doctrines, miracles and death of their LORD. Something of the ſame nature muſt have been neceſſary in bringing the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament immediately to their minds, and enabling them inſtantly to apply them without miſtake.

* John xiv. 26.

NOTHING leſs than a divine ſuperintendency in all their preaching and writings was neceſſary to guard them againſt every miſtake with reſpect to facts or doctrines; ſo that every thing might be written according to the will of GOD, and the Bible be juſt ſuch a book as he deſigned.

THIS is the inſpiration which it is deſigned to maintain in this diſcourſe. This it is apprehended is the true idea of inſpiration as applied to the ſcriptures.

IT will not here be pretended, that every word which the apoſtles ſpoke or wrote was inſpired in the firſt or higheſt ſenſe of the word, nor in ſuch a manner, as that they ſpake the very ſame words which CHRIST ſpake, in his ſermons and inſtructions; but that they have delivered the true ſenſe of his words and ſermons, either in his own words and phraſes, or in others of the ſame import. They have truly exhibited the doctrines and duties which he taught, the inſtitutions which he appointed, and have faithfully narrated the facts which they have reported, both as they reſpected their LORD, and as they reſpected themſelves.

HAVING made this ſtatement of the true idea of inſpiration, I proceed,

II. To prove that all ſcripture was given by inſpiration of GOD. This is true with reſpect to every part of ſcripture, as well as with reſpect to it in general; with reſpect to all its doctrines, no leſs than with reſpect to facts, or any thing which it inſtitutes, threatens, or promiſes.

THIS may be ſtrongly argued from the perfection of GOD, and the nature of the thing. If GOD ſaw a revelation of his mind, concerning the ſalvation of mankind, to be neceſſary, and ſubſervient to his glory, he moſt certainly would have made it in ſuch a manner, as effectually to anſwer all the good ends of a divine revelation. He certainly would not have left it in ſuch circumſtances, that it could not be known what was revelation and what was not. This would have been inconſiſtent with his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. He does nothing in vain, nothing but what

perfectly anſwers his deſigns. He hath ſaid, *My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.** But if all parts of the ſacred books were not inſpired, and certainly to be depended on, as a divine word, we are in the ſame ſtate, as though no revelation had been made. GOD has made no revelation to us, concerning which part is divinely true, and which is not. Nothing in this caſe could be proved from it, or decided by it If a paſſage were quoted from Moſes, Peter, or Paul, it would be ſaid, they were not inſpired when they wrote that paſſage, and hence it can decide nothing. In the ſame manner it would be ſaid of all other paſſages when they did not fall in with the opinions and anſwer the purpoſes of wicked men. Every man would receive or reject juſt ſo much as ſuited his own inclinations and purpoſes. In this way, revelation, as to doctrine, duty, comfort, and indeed with reſpect to every thing valuable, would be entirely fruſtrated.

BESIDES, the evidences of the truth of the ſcriptures apply equally to all parts of them, to every book and to its contents, and if they do not prove the whole to be divine, they do not prove them to be true at all. If the various parts be not true, the whole cannot be ſo. The books now contained in the Old and New Teſtament are the very ſame which the prophets and apoſtles left to the church, as a divine word, for the confirmation of which ſo many miracles were wrought, ſo many prophecies uttered and fulfilled, and with reſpect to the truth of which we have ſuch various and abundant external and internal evidence. The books of the Old Teſtament are atteſted by the whole Jewiſh church, as the ſcriptures of GOD, given to them by the prophets, and received and acknowledged by the prophets themſelves, and the whole church as divine oracles. They are known to have been in writing between four and five hundred years before the incarnation of our

* Iſaiah xlvi. 10.

Saviour, to have been tranſlated into Greek, and before the commencement of the Chriſtian era, diſperſed into all parts of the Roman empire. The books of the New Teſtament, it has been ſhewn, were all written within the apoſtolic age, and committed to the churches, in various parts of the world, and are the very books concerning the divinity of which all the arguments relative to the authenticity of the New Teſtament have been adduced. Hence the arguments which have been adduced do in fact prove the whole of theſe ſcriptures to be true. They either prove all ſcripture to be inſpired, or they prove no part of it to have been divinely written. It is a grand abſurdity to maintain, that the arguments in favor of the ſcriptures do, in fact, prove them to be divine, and yet to hold that ſome parts of them are not true.

FURTHER, if the ſacred penmen have failed with reſpect to a true repreſentation of facts, with reſpect to their doctrines, prophecies, promiſes, threatenings, or ſentiments reſpecting morals, it deſtroys their character, as extraordinary teachers, ſent from GOD, and it at once renders it unſafe to depend on what they have written. But further to prove this great truth, that all ſcripture was given by inſpiration of GOD, I ſhall appeal to the ſcriptures themſelves, the expreſs declarations of the inſpired writers. They all ſpeak the language of the text, *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of* GOD.

I. THE prophets claimed to be ſent of GOD, and the word of the LORD is ſaid to come unto them; and GOD is ſaid to ſend them to ſpeak all the words which they ſpake.

ISAIAH, in his prophecy, calls upon all the people to hear the word of the LORD; and he terms what he delivered the *Word of the* LORD, *and the law of* GOD;* importing that what he ſpake was no other than the word and law of JEHOVAH. At other times, he declares, the *LORD of Hoſts, the mighty one of Iſrael*

* Iſaiah i. 10.

ſaith,* at other times, he tells what GOD ſaid.† The like declarations are interſperſed through his whole book, in the ſtrongeſt manner expreſſing that he ſpake in the name of the LORD.

JEREMIAH, in like manner, declares to the princes of Judah, *The LORD ſent me to propheſy againſt this houſe, and againſt this city, all the words that ye have heard. For of a truth the LORD hath ſent me unto you, to ſpeak all theſe words in your ears.*‡ His book is termed the word of the LORD which came to him,§ and he delivered his meſſages in this manner, *Thus ſaith the LORD of Hoſts, the GOD of Iſrael.* In the paſſages to which references have been made, Jeremiah declares that the word of the LORD came to him, and that he ſpake all the days of his prophecy nothing but the word of the LORD. He not only teſtifies that the LORD ſent him, but all the other prophets who had preceded him, and that they, as well as he had ſpoken the word of the LORD.‖

IN like manner, the word of the LORD is ſaid to come unto Ezekiel, and the ſpirit of the LORD is ſaid to enter into him, and he declares, the LORD ſaid to him, *I ſend thee to the children of Iſrael, And thou ſhalt ſay unto them, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD.*¶ The books of Hoſea, Joel, Jonah, and Micah are declared to be the word of the LORD, which came unto them, and they ſpeak in the name of the LORD OF HOSTS. The other prophets are either introduced in the ſame manner, or with a *thus ſaith the LORD* or ſome other term, witneſſing that they were prophets of the LORD, and that he ſpake by them.

FURTHER, the ſacred penmen do the greateſt honor to the law of Moſes, and repreſent it as the great rule of moral conduct.** Indeed it is repreſented as the great ſin of Iſrael, for which they were carried a-

* Iſaiah i. 24. † Chap. vi. 9, and chapter viii. 1.
‡ Jer. xxvi. 12, 15. § Chap. i. 2, 3, and chap. vii. 1, 3.
‖ Chap. xxv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. ¶ Ezek. i. 3, and chap. ii. 2, 3, 4. ** Dan. ix. 11, 12. 2 Kings ii. 3. and chap. xxiii. 25. and chap. xviii. 5, 6.

way captive and puniſhed beyond all other people, that they would not obey this law, and the words which he ſpake unto them by the prophets.*

FURTHER, it is worthy of ſpecial notice, that the prophets of the Old Teſtament repreſent the words and law given in thoſe ſcriptures, as perfect, and as the judgments and laws of the LORD, by which all doctrines, faith, and manners were to be tried. *The law of the* LORD *is perfect, converting the ſoul: The teſtimony of the* LORD *is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple. The judgments of the* LORD *are true and righteous altogether.*‡ *All thy commandments are faithful. Forever, O* LORD, *thy word is ſettled in heaven.*§ *To the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.*‖ Thus do the prophets teſtify to the inſpiration and perfection of the Old Teſtament ſcriptures.

2. CHRIST and his apoſtles have abundantly atteſted the truth of the Old Teſtament ſcriptures. They appealed to them, in their day, as true and genuine.

OUR bleſſed SAVIOUR commanded the Jews to ſearch the ſcriptures as divine oracles, in which only they could find eternal life, and a clear and faithful teſtimony of himſelf.¶ He repreſented, that Moſes and the prophets wrote ſo fully and plainly of him, and of the great concerns of men's ſouls and eternity, that if men would believe them they would alſo believe him, and that if they would not believe them, they would not believe even though one ſhould ariſe unto them from the dead.* He aſſured the Jews, *That till heaven and earth paſs, one jot, or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled.*† In all his preaching to the people, he appealed to the ſcriptures as genuine. Though he faithfully reproved them for their ſins, and the falſe gloſſes which they put upon the ſcriptures, and for making them void through their traditions,‡

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, and Nehemiah ix. 26, 29, 30.
‡ Pſalm xix. 7, 9. § Pſalm cxix. 86, 89. ‖ Iſaiah viii. 20.
¶ John v. 39. * Luke xvi. 31, and John v. 45, 46, 47.
† Matth. v. 18. ‡ Mark vii. 9, 10, 11.

yet he never once blamed them for having, in the leaſt degree, corrupted any part of the divine oracles. Nay, after his reſurrection, he thus rebuked his diſciples, *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! And beginning at Moſes, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf. And he ſaid unto them, theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and in the prophets, and in the pſalms concerning me.*** Thus doth CHRIST, the AMEN, the faithful and true witneſs, atteſt and authenticate the divinity of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament.

THE apoſtles are not leſs expreſs in the teſtimony which they have borne to thoſe ſcriptures. They reaſoned out of them continually, and appealed to them as deciſive, in all matters of faith and practice. Nay, they witneſſed expreſsly that they were given by inſpiration, were the oracles and words of GOD. Thus does the apoſtle Paul, not only in our text, but Rom. iii. 2, and Hebrews v. 12, he expreſsly calls them *the oracles of GOD*. In the firſt chapter and verſe of the ſame epiſtle, he teſtifies, that *GOD at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets*; importing that all which the prophets ſpake at ſo many times and ways, GOD ſpake to the fathers.

THE apoſtle Peter is equally expreſs on the ſubject. This is his teſtimony, *We have a more ſure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day ſtar ariſe in your ſouls. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD ſpake as they were moved by the Holy GHOST.*†† In another remarkable paſſage he repreſents, that every thing which the prophets delivered was ſignified to them by the SPIRIT of CHRIST in them.‡‡.

** Luke xxiv. 25, 27, 44. †† 2 Peter i. 19, 21.
‡‡ 1 Peter i 10, 11.

HENCE we have the moſt ample and determinate evidence, that all the books and parts of the Old Teſtament were inſpired in the true ſenſe of inſpiration. Thoſe were the books at that time received as the oracles and ſcriptures of GOD. To deny their inſpiration, even in part, is nothing leſs than contradicting the prophets, our bleſſed SAVIOUR, and his apoſtles. It is, at once, to make them either impoſtors, or fallible, though honeſt men, and ſo entirely to ſap the foundation of revealed religion.

WITH reſpect to the New Teſtament, that all parts of that were given by inſpiration, is equally demonſtrable. Particularly from the following conſiderations.

1. CHRIST choſe the apoſtles to be his witneſſes of all that he began to do and to teach men, wherever they went, to obſerve all things whatſoever he had commanded them.* They were ambaſſadors for CHRIST,† to make known what were the doctrines and duties of the Chriſtian religion; to perſuade men by the terrors and mercies of the LORD; and to negociate the great affair of man's ſalvation between them and their REDEEMER.

WHEN JESUS aſcended on high he ſaid to his apoſtles, *And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.*‡ *But ye ſhall receive power after that the Holy GHOST is come upon you: and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth.*‖ They were commanded to teach all things which CHRIST had taught and commanded them. They might not keep back any thing, even that which had been whiſpered in the ear, they were to proclaim upon the houſe top; that is they were to preach it in the moſt public manner.§

NOW as their LORD had choſen them to be his witneſſes, and ambaſſadors, in an affair of the greateſt importance to themſelves, to mankind, and the kingdom of GOD, he would moſt certainly furniſh them in the moſt ample manner for their work, ſo that they

* Matth. xxviii. 20. † 2 Cor. v. 20.
‡ Luke xxiv. 48. ‖ Acts i. 8. § Matth. x. 27.

might do it effectually, without miſtake. Not to do this would be to neglect his own honor and kingdom, his father's honor, and the honor, comfort, and ſafety of his diſciples. It would have been hard indeed, as well as unſafe for them, to have ſent them on an embaſſy which they had no power to accompliſh. We argue therefore, with the greateſt certainty, from the wiſdom, faithfulneſs, and love of CHRIST, that they were completely furniſhed for their work. But was this poſſible without the inſpiration of the holy SPIRIT? By no means. What mere man could recollect and certainly know and teach all, which a preceptor had done and taught, and deſigned that he ſhould teach during the term of three whole years? Nay, to recollect inſtantly at all times what theſe things were, and to preach ſuch a portion of them, upon every occaſion, as was beſt adapted to honor their REDEEMER and ſave men? Could they, upon every occaſion, apply the ſcriptures to CHRIST and to goſpel times, immediately and without miſtake, unleſs they had been ſupernaturally taught and aſſiſted? Could they have known what doctrines were implied in particular facts, ſuch as the reſurrection of CHRIST; that he aroſe, as the firſt fruits of them who ſlept, and that from his reſurrection, as a public head of all his believing ſeed, their reſurrection was certainly to be inferred, as the apoſtle Paul aſſures us it was?* Nay, how could they have taught other doctrines, without miſtake, which they appear not to have underſtood until after the aſcenſion of our SAVIOUR? Particularly, the calling of the Gentiles; that they were not to be circumciſed, nor obſerve the ceremonial, or judiciai law? Their commiſſion was, beyond all calculation, the moſt momentous and extraodinary ever committed to men. Can it be believed that the all-wiſe and faithful GOD would entruſt them with it without ſupernatural aid? No, not a moment, not ſo much as once publicly to open their mouths on the ſubject. Though he had

* 1 COR. XV. 20, 21, 22, 23.

taught them three years, and they had heard all his gracious words and witneſſed all his glorious miracles, yet he expreſsly commands, *Tarry ye in the city Jeruſalem, until ye be endowed with power from on high.*‖

2. THE promiſes of CHRIST to be with them alway, to ſend on them the promiſe of his father,* to teach them all things, bring all things to their remembrance, and abide with them forever, give us the fulleſt aſſurance, that they were inſpired, and ſpake and tranſacted every thing which they did, as CHRIST's miniſters, under the ſupernatural influence of the divine SPIRIT.

As our SAVIOUR had aſſured them, that he would ſend them the promiſe of the FATHER, and endow them with power from on high, ſo he had intimated to them, that by this, he deſigned the communication of the inſpiration and miraculous gifts of the Holy GHOST. *But ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy GHOST, not many days hence.*† *I will pray the FATHER, and he ſhall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever. But the COMFORTER, which is the Holy GHOST, whom the FATHER will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.*‡ *I have many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf, but whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak: and he will ſhew you things to come. He ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*§ In theſe moſt remarkable paſſages, CHRIST infallibly promiſes to give his apoſtles the Holy GHOST, to abide with them forever, through the whole courſe of their miniſtry, to bring every thing to their remembrance, which he had ſaid to them in his inſtructions and preaching, and which he had commanded them to preach unto others; and alſo to teach them all the many things which, as yet, he had not ſaid unto them.

‖ Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 8. * Luke xxiv. 49. † Acts i. 5
‡ John xiv. 16, 26. § Chap. xvi. 12, 13, 14.

He alſo promiſed that the Holy GHOST ſhould be in them a ſpirit of prophecy, to ſhow them all future things to come, which it was neceſſary for them to know, and ſhow unto the church. In the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel the ſpirit was to receive all things which related to CHRIST, his glory and kingdom, and reveal it unto them. Hence it is moſt certain, that they were inſpired and aſſiſted, by the ſpirit of GOD, in all things which they ſpake and wrote. The divine ſpirit was not only to aſſiſt them in the relation of all matters of fact, but with reſpect to all their doctrines, the prediction of all future events, and in every thing which they were to do and teach, as the apoſtles of JESUS CHRIST.

3. THE apoſtles conſtantly teſtified, that they were the apoſtles and ſervants of CHRIST, that they preached the things which GOD and their SAVIOUR commanded them; that they ſpake the word of GOD, and the very things which were dictated by the Holy GHOST.

THE apoſtle Paul declares himſelf to be *an apoſtle, ſeparated unto the goſpel of* GOD, and *by the will of* GOD.* *An apoſtle not of men, nor by man, but by* JESUS CHRIST *and* GOD *the* FATHER, *who raiſed him from the dead.*† The other apoſtles, or writers of the epiſtles, declare themſelves to be the apoſtles and ſervants of CHRIST.

WHEN the apoſtles were arraigned before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, they inſiſted that it was in obedience to GOD that they preached the goſpel, and that they muſt obey GOD rather than men.‡ In like manner they declare concerning CHRIST, *We are witneſſes of all things that he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem; whom they ſlew, and hanged on a tree. Him* GOD *raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly, Not to all the people but unto witneſſes choſen of* GOD, *even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of* GOD *to*

* Rom. i. 1, and 1ſt and 2d epiſtle to the Corinthians, at the beginning. † Gal. i. 1. ‡ Acts iv. 9, and chapter x. 42.

*be the judge of quick and dead.** They alſo teſtified, that the word they ſpake was the word of God, and the commandment of God. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.*† The apoſtle Paul made this high demand, *If any man think himſelf to be a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*‡ He alſo terms the goſpel which he preached, *the commandment of the everlaſting God.*‖ And the *glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God.*§ Indeed he affirms, *We have not received the ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God; which things alſo we ſpeak not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy GHOST teacheth.*¶ Speaking of thoſe glorious things which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, he ſays, *But God hath revealed them unto us by his ſpirit.*** The apoſtle John aſſerts, *We are of God: He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us, hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.*†† Hence it is moſt evident that all the writings of the New Teſtament were inſpired, otherwiſe they could not have been the commandments, words, and goſpel of GOD; nor revealed to the apoſtles and ſpoken by his SPIRIT. For the apoſtles to have ſpoken of themſelves, and their doctrines in this manner, had not this been the caſe would have not only been the higheſt degree of vanity and preſumption, but wholly inconſiſtent with the truth.

4. THE apoſtles utterly diſclaim all human policy and worldly cunning in preaching the goſpel, and aſſert their ſincerity and uprightneſs, as always ſpeaking in ſuch a manner as to pleaſe God, and not man:

* Acts x. 39, to 43. † 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.
‖ Rom. xvi. 25, 26. § 1 Tim. i. 11. ¶ 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.
** Verſes 9, 10. †† 1 John iv. 6, and chap. v. 19, 20.

and *by manifeſtation of the truth commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of* GOD.‡ They teſtify that they were ſo far from corrupting the word of GOD, that they preached the genuine goſpel by the authority and influence of GOD himſelf, and as in his immediate preſence. *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of* GOD: *but as of ſincerity, but as of* GOD, *in the ſight of* GOD *ſpeak we in* CHRIST.§ The apoſtle Peter affirms the ſame eſſentially. *For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the coming of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *but were eye witneſſes of his majeſty.*‖

5. BOTH our SAVIOUR and his apoſtles aſſert that mankind ſhall be judged by the word and goſpel which they preached, and the apoſtles denounce the heavieſt curſes upon thoſe who ſhould preach any other goſpel than they had preached, or ſhould add to it or diminiſh any thing from it.

SAITH our LORD, *The word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day,*¶ In like manner the apoſtle Paul aſſerts, *That* GOD *ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by* JESUS CHRIST *according to my goſpel.** At the ſame time he denounces perdition and the curſe of GOD upon all who ſhall diſobey the goſpel, or preach any other than he preached. *Taking vengeance on them that know not* GOD, *and that obey not the goſpel of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST; *who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the* LORD, *and from the glory of his power.*† *Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.* He ſubjoins the reaſon. *The goſpel which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of* JESUS CHRIST.‡‡ What, in this view, can be more certain, than that the whole of the New Teſtament is of divine original, ſince it is the rule of our conduct in

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 2, and 1 Theſſ. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6. § 2 Cor. ii. 17.
‖ 2 Peter i. 16. ¶ John xii. 48. * Rom. ii. 16.
† 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. ‡‡ Gal. i. 8, 11, 12.

life, and the word by which we ſhall be eternally juſtified or condemned at the laſt day; ſince if we corrupt or diſobey the goſpel, we ſhall be forever accurſed and deſtroyed? The awful manner in which the canon of ſcripture is cloſed ſtrongly impreſſes the ſame idea. *Theſe ſayings are faithful and true. For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man ſhall add unto theſe things,* GOD *ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy,* GOD *ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* Surely books to which nothing may be added, and from which nothing can be taken, but upon ſuch awful and endleſs penalties, muſt have been divinely written in all their parts.

FROM this view of our ſubject, a number of remarks, highly important and practical, offer themſelves. Particularly,

I. THAT all objections againſt the inſpiration of the whole canon of ſcripture are wholly invalid.

OBJECTIONS againſt ſuch ſtrong and determinate evidence are unreaſonable; eſpecially, objections which make the ſacred writers inconſiſtent with themſelves, and to contradict the expreſs promiſes of our LORD.

WHEN therefore, the apoſtle ſays, 1 Corinthians vii. 6, 12, 25, *I ſpeak this by permiſſion, and not of commandment; and to the reſt ſpeak I not the* LORD: and *Concerning virgins I have no commandment*, we are by no means to underſtand, that he did not then ſpeak under the guidance of the divine SPIRIT. His meaning, doubtleſs was, that, in theſe caſes, he had no previous, expreſs command of CHRIST, as he had in the caſe of a man's putting away his wife, or a wife's departing from her huſband, to which he had reference in the tenth and eleventh verſes. To underſtand him otherwiſe would contradict the promiſes of CHRIST to his apoſtles, and their ſolemn declarations, that the

things they ſpake were the commandments of the LORD. The queſtions propoſed to the apoſtle reſpected conduct in which the order, and peace of the church and of families, the convenience and comfort of individuals, and even morality itſelf were deeply concerned. Can it be ſuppoſed that in ſuch caſes, CHRIST would leave his people without infallible direction? Beſides, the apoſtle inſiſts, that, even in the very caſes, concerning which he ſays he ſpake *by permiſſion and not by commandment*, he gave his *judgment as one who had obtained mercy of the LORD to be faithful*; that he ſpake for the profit of the Corinthians, *for that which is comely*, and that they might *attend upon the LORD without diſtraction*. But how could he aſſert theſe things if he was not guided by the divine ſpirit? Further he cloſes the chapter in this manner, *I think alſo I have the ſpirit of GOD.** The apoſtle moſt certainly knew when he had the ſpirit of GOD, otherwiſe neither he himſelf, nor others could depend on what he wrote. When therefore, in his own opinion, he was guided by the ſpirit, who will be ſo bold, as to ſay he was not? Eſpecially, when he conſiders how ſoon after, he demands of all who were prophets and ſpiritual, that they ſhould acknowledge, that the things which he wrote unto the Corinthians, without making the leaſt exception, were *the commandments of the LORD*.†

WITH reſpect to the objections, that in many inſtances, the apoſtles and evangeliſts needed no inſpiration, as they knew the facts and were maſters of the ſubject without it; as in the caſe of the ſhipwreck of St. Paul, at the Iſland of Malta, and of the cloke, books, and parchments, concerning which he wrote to Timothy in his ſecond epiſtle; and that therefore, in the ſacred books, many little things of ſo ſmall conſequence, that it cannot be ſuppoſed that there was any

* The Greek word *Dŏkō*, here rendered *I think*, is often uſed to expreſs things poſitively with entire confidence. See in Luke xvii. 9. Acts xv. 25, 28, and xxvi. 9. † 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

divine ſuperintendency reſpecting them, it may be obſerved, that a divine ſuperintendency and guidance were neceſſary, not only to aſcertain facts, but to inſtruct the ſacred writers what facts to record, and in what manner to repreſent them. The apoſtle Paul it ſeems ſuffered other ſhipwrecks beſide that at Malta, when he was in perils of waters, and a night and a day in the deep.* Our SAVIOUR did and ſaid many things which are not witten by the evangeliſts. Why they have not been written, has been doubtleſs owing to a divine ſuperintendency. The manner of writing gives much credit to what is written and tends greatly to the inſtruction and edification of the reader. As the apoſtles were generally illiterate men they certainly needed aſſiſtance in theſe reſpects. The admirable manner in which they have written, ſhows that they were uncommonly aſſiſted. They have not only writteen grammatically, but in the moſt natural and eaſy manner, with a kind of inimitable ſimplicity and beauty. Further, it may be obſerved, with reſpect to the voyage and ſhipwreck of St. Paul in the Mediterranean, that though the voyage and ſhipwreck were certainly known, yet it is not at all probable that Paul, or Luke were eye witneſſes to all the facts and circumſtances related reſpecting them, or that they could have had ſuch perfect knowledge of them all, as to have related them without miſtake, unleſs they had been extraordinarily aſſiſted. Certainly they could not have given the ſpeeches, which were made on the occaſion, in the ſame words, nor, at any diſtance of time, have been able to have related all the circumſtances, even had they known them at the firſt. The ſame obſervations will hold true with reſpect to other facts and their attendant circumſtances.

WITH reſpect to the cloke, books, and parchments, the directions given concerning them, in any view we can take of them, afford important inſtruction. If theſe contained his freedom and privileges, as a Roman

* 2 Cor. xi. 25, 26.

citizen, copies of the letter of the chief captain Lyſias, of the opinion of Felix, Feſtus, and king Agrippa concerning his caſe, they were of great importance in his approaching trial before Nero, and teach us that Chriſtians have civil rights and ought to plead them no leſs than other men: That they were not to make light of their lives, but when unjuſtly impeached, to take every lawful meaſure to vindicate themſelves, and if they were condemned and ſuffered, to make it appear, to the encouragement and benefit of the church, and the honor of their REDEEMER, that they died for no immorality, or crime againſt the ſtate, but merely as martyrs in the glorious cauſe of religion. If theſe books and parchments contained copies of his epiſtles to the churches, as well as other matters neceſſary for him upon his trial, they were of ſtill greater concernment. The directions ſhow the apoſtles' concern for the churches, ſo to take care of his writings and to diſpoſe of them, as well as ſo to die, as ſhould be moſt for their good and the divine glory. The apoſtle Paul was an important character; his example was of great conſideration to the church, in its then infant ſtate, and it needed all the inſtruction which it afforded. Who then may determine that the wiſdom and goodneſs of the divine ſpirit were not concerned and influential in theſe very directions?

As to the little things objected againſt it may be anſwered, that there are innumerable little circumſtances and coincidences in the ſacred writings which greatly contribute to their credibility,* and numerous others which ſerve more fully to elucidate the ſubject, and to render it beautiful and entertaining. That there are any which do not anſwer theſe, or ſome other valuable purpoſe, he muſt indeed be a bold man to affirm. Nor can it, with the leaſt reaſon, be pretended, that it is any diſparagement to him who clothes the graſs with its verdure, and gives to the tulip and to every flower, which bloſſoms in the garden and in the fields,

* This may be ſeen ingeniouſly illuſtrated in Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.

its colors and beauties, to extend his ſuperintending influence to the leaſt matters in that book, in the compoſition of which his own eternal honors, and the happineſs of millions of immortal creatures are concerned.

I AM not inſenſible that it will be further objected, that there are ſome real miſtakes in the ſacred canon, and therefore it could not have all been inſpired. Should it be conceded, that there are ſome ſmall miſtakes, as to numbers and with reſpect to ſome ſmall words, it does not by any means prove, that the whole of the ſcripture was not inſpired. Theſe little miſtakes, alterations, or deficiencies undoubtedly have happened, ſo far as there are any, through the imperfection of tranſcribers. Conſidering the exceeding difficulty which there is in making a perfect copy of any conſiderable work, and in what innumerable inſtances the bible has been tranſcribed, it is admirable that no eſſential miſtake is to be found. In all the different readings, there is no ſuch deficiency or alteration, as to effect or alter a ſingle doctrine, duty, promiſe, or threatening contained in the ſacred books. This can be aſcribed to nothing but the watchful care of divine providence.

IN our SAVIOUR's day, that the Old Teſtament ſcriptures were a divine word, moſt certainly to be depended on, is moſt evident from the teſtimony both of CHRIST and his apoſtles. From that, to the preſent time, Jews and Chriſtians have been a conſtant guard upon each other, with reſpect to the Old Teſtament, to prevent even the leaſt interpolation or alteration.

WITH reſpect to the New Teſtament it has been in ſo many hands, and in ſo many parts of the world, and there have been ſo many ſectaries among Chriſtians, who have kept a moſt watchful and jealous eye upon each other, even from the beginning, that it would have been impoſſible for any material alteration to have been made in it without immediate detection. No interpolations could poſſibly have been made, nor any parts of the ſcriptures been expunged, without diſcovery, unleſs there had been an alteration of all the cop-

ies of them, in the various parts of the world; nor without a general combination of Jews and Gentiles, and of Chriſtians of all ſects and denominations. For had any genuine copies remained, or had there been any ſociety or denomination of Chriſtians, or any number of honeſt men upon earth, who were not in the combination, they would at once have detected the general wickedneſs. Nay, all the apoſtates from Chriſtianity, and all the enemies of it, who had ever been acquainted with the ſacred writings, muſt alſo have been in the general combination, and perſons of all theſe deſcriptions univerſally muſt have kept the ſecret, or the corruptions would have been diſcovered, and the time when they were made particularly noticed.

BESIDES, the doctrines and duties of religion are ſo interſperſed through all parts of the ſcriptures, that no conſiderable alteration could have been made reſpecting them, without altering the whole bible. Were any doctrines taught, or duties enjoined, expunged in ſome places, they would appear in numerous others; and were errors here and there inſerted, they would every where elſe be condemned.

FURTHER there are a great number of very ancient manuſcripts both of the Old and New Teſtaments preſerved in the public libraries of Chriſtendom with which both have been moſt diligently compared.*

IN a word, ſince GOD has determined to make a revelation of his will to mankind, it is certain that his purpoſe has not been, nor can be defeated. We have, moſt certainly, *a ſure word of prophecy* to which it infinitely concerns us *to take heed, as unto a light which ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day ſtar ariſe in our hearts.*

* Dr. Kennicott, within the preſent century, collated the Old Teſtament with a thouſand or more ancient and moſt authentic Hebrew manuſcripts. In the New Teſtament there is not a ſingle verſe but what can be proved to have been found in the moſt ancient and approved manuſcripts. See Travis' letters to Gibbon.

II. We remark the entire inconſiſtency of all ſemi-deiſts, whether Socinians or others, who deny the inſpiration and authority of ſome parts of the ſcriptures, while they maintain the authenticity of others; and inſiſt that the apoſtles are to be depended on as to matters of fact, but not as to points of doctrine.

Since both Christ and his apoſtles have ſo amply atteſted the inſpiration of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament without the leaſt exception to any part of it, to deny the authenticity of any of its books, or parts, is at once to charge them with miſtake, and with bearing falſe witneſs for God. But if they were miſtaken in this great point, how can they be depended on in any other? Their character is ruined, as to their being inſpired and infallible teachers. The apoſtles have atteſted the truth of their doctrines, as ſtrongly as they have the facts which they reported concerning Christ and the goſpel. If they have been miſtaken in one they are not to be credited in the other. Hence there is the utmoſt inconſiſtency, in believing the New Teſtament and rejecting the Old, or any part of it; in believing the hiſtorical, and denying the doctrinal part of the New Teſtament. There is alſo a grand abſurdity in intimations and pretences that the New Teſtament may be proved to be authentic, though the divinity of the Old ſhould be given up: For as the authors of the New have equally atteſted the Old, we can by no means depend on their teſtimony with reſpect to the New, if they have been miſtaken with reſpect to the former. Indeed, if the evidence ariſing from miracles, the fulfilment of prophecy, the internal ſignatures of divinity, and the teſtimony of the whole Jewiſh church fail with reſpect to the proof of the Old Teſtament, by what arguments ſhall we prove the New?

Nothing can be more abſurd and pernicious, than ſuch ſentiments. The authors of them are not only ſemi-deiſts already, but their principles directly lead to a total diſbelief of all revelation, and an entire ſubverſion of Chriſtianity. They in effect render the

ſcriptures uſeleſs, even while they pretend to believe them in part: for every man will be his own chooſer, and will be ſure to believe nothing which thwarts his own corrupt opinions and luſts. They indeed deſtroy all proper reverence for the divine word, and lead to every thing licentious in faith and morals. Men of this character clearly exhibit their hatred of the true ſcriptures, and of GOD their author; they do an incalculable injury to religion, to individuals, to their own families and the community: and as they neither believe, nor obey the goſpel, are in danger of everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the LORD and the glory of his power.

III. How ought this ſubject to impreſs on our minds an entire confidence in all parts of the ſcriptures, and the moſt ſacred regard to them as the word of GOD which abideth forever; and at the ſame time to awaken in us the utmoſt fear and deteſtation of all ſentiments, books, and men, who would perſuade us that any part of the ſcriptures are cunningly deviſed fables, or the compoſitions and opinions of mere fallible men. The importance of receiving the ſcriptures, and the goſpel preached according to them, as the word of GOD, and not of men, is far beyond all calculation. Could this once be the caſe the effects would indeed be wonderful and happy. A THUS SAITH THE LORD, has infinitely more power to awaken, to comfort, and impreſs on the mind the obligations to morality, than all the philoſophers, moraliſts, and fine reaſonings of all the mere men upon earth. This ſhort ſentence, *I will be thy GOD*, affords a nobler ſecurity, and conveys a far richer and more incorruptible inheritance, than all the teſtaments, deeds of gift, and human conveyances ever written. How much more precious are ſingle lines and ſentences, in the ſcriptures, than thouſands of gold and ſilver? Were it realized that they are indeed *the true ſayings of GOD*, would miniſters be ſo daring as to take a text from the prophets, JESUS CHRIST, or his apoſtles, and preach Socrates, Plato, Lord Kaims, Prieſtly, or themſelves? Would any man pre-

ſume to preach another goſpel, than Paul preached, leſt he ſhould be eternally curſed? Would not men of all characters highly venerate the ſcriptures, make them their meditation by day and night? How careful would they be to form their opinions, their faith, and hope, and to regulate all their conduct by the divine word? How ſteadfaſt and immoveable would Chriſtians be, *always abounding in the work of the* LORD? How joyful in hope? How thankful for a DIVINE WORD on which to build their hopes, and reſt their eternal ALL. How would they fear and flee all books and men, which would ſap the foundations of their comfort and beguile them of their hopes. It is the deſign, the whole tendency of this diſcourſe, by the divine bleſſing, to effect theſe practical, and glorious purpoſes.

IV. LET none of us content ourſelves with a mere hiſtorical belief of the ſcriptures, but be deeply concerned immediately to believe to the ſaving of our ſouls.

THERE is a faith which is ineffectual. It is alone, not accompanied with good works. Even the devils believe and tremble. There is often a conviction of the truth where there is no love, or reconciliation of heart to it. There is therefore the higheſt neceſſity that we ſhould believe with the heart, with that faith which purifies it and works by love. The law muſt be written upon our hearts, and the duties which it requires exhibited in our lives. Aſſure yourſelves, that you muſt not only be hearers, but doers of the word that you may be bleſſed in your deeds. Be in earneſt to be thus bleſſed. Take heed to your way according to the word of GOD. Study the doctrines and duties which it teaches, the principles and aims from which it requires us to act; hear its counſels and warnings, embrace its gracious promiſes and overtures; and let your attendance on all its ordinances be conſtant, devout, and ſincere. Without delay, be Chriſtians indeed. Then all the immenſe conſolations and bleſſings of the goſpel will be yours. All things, in the whole compaſs of nature, in time and eternity, ſhall be gov-

erned for your good.* Your fellowſhip will be with the FATHER and with his SON JESUS CHRIST.† The peace of GOD, which paſſeth underſtanding, will keep your hearts. Saith the REDEEMER, *If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*‡ How *bleſſed are they that do his commandments? That they may have a right unto the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city?*§ AMEN.

* Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. † 1 John i. 3
‡ John xiv. 23. § Rev. xxii. 14.

DISCOURSE X.

Objections removed.

ISAIAH lvii. 14.

CAST ye up, caſt ye up, prepare the way, take up the ſtumbling block out of the way of my people.

WHATEVER literal or primary reference theſe words may have to Cyrus, or the children of Iſrael, to the caſting up and preparing of the roads for the marching and victories of the former, or the return of the latter from Babylon to Zion, they have doubtleſs a more ſpiritual and important meaning. Cyrus, as deliverer of the captivated Iſraelites, and their return to the holy land were typical of the MESSIAH and his great ſalvation. The words therefore ultimately relate to him, and the return of mankind, by him, to the heavenly Jeruſalem. They therefore, in the moſt forcible manner, enjoin the removal of all objections and impediments in the way of men's believing the goſpel and returning to GOD by JESUS CHRIST. The doubling and even trebling of the command, and the accumulation of words to repreſent the ſame duty, are expreſſive of its immenſe importance.

They ſhow that no pains ſhould be ſpared to remove and prevent all occaſions of ſtumbling and offence. If it was the duty of the pioneers to mend the ways, fill up the deep places, and make the rough ſmooth, that there might be nothing on which the feeble or dim-ſighted might ſtumble, how much more ought public teachers and all Chriſtians, as far as may be, to remove all occaſions of ſtumbling out of the way of men's embracing the goſpel?

THIS was the great work of John, the harbinger of our LORD, to prepare his way, to make his paths ſtrait and the rough places plain.* Every principle of benevolence, all the commands to love and do good to our neighbour, neither to do, nor ſuffer any thing by which our brother may be offended, ſtumbled, or made weak,† challenge this duty. The divine honor, the ineſtimable worth of ſouls, and the importance of their ſalvation make the ſame challenge.

IT will be therefore acting in character, as a public teacher, a Chriſtian and friend to the human race, to the infidel, the weak, and ignorant, to remove objections and difficulties and to make the way of ſalvation as plain as poſſible.

THIS indeed has been attempted in the preceding diſcourſes. The facts and arguments, reſpecting Chriſtianity, have been ſo ſtated and managed, as to prevent or remove many objections, ſo as to furniſh an anſwer to others, or to ſhow them to be impertinent and ridiculous. Some other principal ones, which came naturally in the way, in the courſe of the foregoing ſermons, have been particularly noticed, and anſwers have been attempted.

OTHERS however there are, which did not naturally fall under any part of the preceding diſcuſſions, which it may be uſeful to conſider.

I. IT is objected, that the bible is a book of myſteries entirely incomprehenſible by the human mind: That contrary to nature every thing in this is marvel-

* Iſaiah xl. 3, and Matth iii. 3. † Rom. xiv. 13, 21.

lous and unſearchable. Hence it is urged, that it is incredible.

It is readily conceded, that *great is the myſtery of Godlineſs*. But, in this reſpect, the ſcriptures are, by no means, contrary to nature. Nay, there is a perfect analogy between them. At the ſame time they equally correſpond with reaſon. Is not this the firſt and moſt natural language of the heart, in view of the divine operations, in the creation and government of the world, *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!** Can any man contemplate himſelf, the fearful and wonderful manner in which he is made, and not adopt the language of the pſalmiſt? *Marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well!*† Are there any of the works of nature, even the leaſt, the atom, the tulip or the worm, which do not contain myſteries which no philoſopher can explain? If therefore the works of divine grace, and God's moral government of the world, exhibited in the ſcriptures, are incomprehenſible and marvellous, they are perfectly analogous to all his other works, and, in this reſpect, bear the ſame ſignatures of his divinity. They are juſt ſuch as reaſon and the works of nature teach us to expect and believe from an infinite God. If therefore we will diſbelieve the ſcriptures, becauſe they contain myſteries, we muſt, on the ſame principles, diſbelieve our own exiſtence, and the exiſtence of every thing in the natural world. We cannot believe our own actions: That by a ſingle volition we can move any joint or limb of our body: For nothing is more incomprehenſible, than the influence of mere ſpirit on corporeal ſubſtances. Nay, the principle will land us in Atheiſm. *For who by ſearching can find out GOD? Canſt thou find out the ALMIGHTY unto perfection?*‡ The deiſtical creed, that there is a ſelf-exiſtent, infinite, eternal God, contains articles, as myſterious as any in divine revelation. Even the doctrines of the trinity, of the incarnation of the ſon of God and of

* Rev. xv. 3. † Pſalm cxxxix. 14. ‡ Job xi. 7.

the reſurrection of the dead are not more incomprehenſible. Deiſts are perfectly inconſiſtent in objecting to the credibility of the ſcriptures, on the account of their myſteries, while they believe either the exiſtence of God or themſelves. Indeed if men will believe nothing but what their ſhallow minds can comprehend, they muſt be ſkeptics and doubt of every thing.

FURTHER, it ought to be obſerved, that though there are myſteries in the ſcriptures, as might be expected in a book revealing the counſels and works of an infinite GOD, yet they make the path of duty ſo plain, that *fools need not err therein.** All the eſſential doctrines and duties of the goſpel are moſt clearly and amply revealed. If there be any obſcurities, in any particular paſſages, they are explained and made clear by others. *He may run that readeth.*† We ſee therefore, the exceeding inconſiſtency and impertinence of all objections of this kind. The very circumſtance objected againſt, that the ſcriptures contain things myſterious and unſearchable, affords additional evidence, that they are divine. Were it otherwiſe they would not bear ſuch ſtriking reſemblances of him whoſe judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out, as are now impreſſed upon them.

2. DEISTS object, that the language of the ſcripture is obſolete; and in ſome inſtances immodeſt; and that the ſacred writers have not attended to a proper arrangement of the ſeveral parts of their inſtructions and prophecies.

To this it is natural to reply, that the great antiquity of the language of the Old Teſtament ſcriptures, the manner in which they are written, the bold and ſtriking figures with which they abound, agreeable to the manner of the eaſtern nations, and of all nations where language is in its infancy, are ſtrong evidences of their antiquity and genuineneſs. That the New

* Iſaiah xxxv. 8. † Habakkuk ii. 2.

Teſtament was written in the Greek language as it was commonly uſed by contemporary authors, and that the ſacred penmen have given the ſame names to cities, places, and countries, which they bore at the time when they wrote, and which long ſince have been changed, is a circumſtance corroborating the evidence, that their writings are authentic and genuine. But had the ſcriptures been written in modern ſtyle, and according to the preſent rules of order and compoſition, which, many ages ſince, have been the work of art and improvement, this would, at once, have betrayed the writers, and have given clear evidence, that they were never written at the time when the facts related are reported to have taken place. Infidels then would have clamored, that the very ſtyle and compoſition of the ſcriptures proclaimed them to be ſpurious. But as they have been written they bear all the marks of antiquity which they claim; and, in theſe reſpects, exhibit the ſtrongeſt evidence of their authenticity and purity.

Besides, with reſpect to order, there are very different taſtes and opinions. Scarcely any two writers adopt the ſame. Thoſe who have a full view of their ſubject, and know the taſte of the age, and the capacities of the particular people to whom they write, are by far the beſt judges of what order and ſtyle are the moſt proper. Theſe muſt be agreeable to the taſte and circumſtances of the people to be addreſſed. What man of common ſenſe would adopt the ſame order and ſtyle in an addreſs to the Laplanders or American Indians, which he would in one to Congreſs, or to any poliſhed and learned auditory?

With reſpect to modeſty, that language which is modeſt in one age, is not ſo in another. Words which half a century ago were eſteemed chaſte, are not judged convenient in modern language. Indeed words which in the moſt poliſhed circles, would be noticed as indelicate, are not ſo eſteemed among the vulgar; and, in them, excite no unchaſte nor diſagreeable feelings. Indeed the ſame words almoſt entirely

change their meaning in a few ages; and that authors may be underſtood, they muſt write in the language of their own times.

But even granting that ſome ſcripture words are become obſolete, and that the order and ſtyle are not the beſt, who, except an infidel, would ever have offered it as an objection to the truth of divine revelation? Are not ancient laws and authors, as fully credited as modern, notwithſtanding the obſoleteneſs of the words and ſtyle? Is ancient hiſtory the leſs credible becauſe it is not written in the order and language of modern times? Why then do all modern hiſtorians write from them? Notwithſtanding the want of order and good ſtyle in ancient hiſtories, records, laws, and manuſcripts, they are eſteemed no leſs authentic, by the univerſal conſent and practice of mankind. They are as ſubſtantial vouchers for the truth, and as valid and pleadable in all courts of judicature, as modern ones. All the credibility of modern writers, with reſpect to the ancient affairs of the world, depends on ancient hiſtory, written without the order or ſtyle of modern ages. Is not this objection therefore, in every view of it, highly abſurd? Indeed the whole honor of it is ceded to deiſtical writers. None but men of their ingenuity and fertility at cavilling would ever have conceived one ſo futile and oppoſite to the common ſenſe and univerſal practice of mankind.

Further, it is but juſt to obſerve, that notwithſtanding the antiquity of the ſcriptures, they abound with a ſublimity of language and ſentiment, and with a beauty and ſimplicity of deſcription and narration, which are unrivalled by any ancient writings. Nothing is to be found, in Heſiod, Homer, Virgil, or any of the ancient poets or writers, to be compared with them. How low are all their deſcriptions of the greatneſs and majeſty of Jupiter and his appearances, when contraſted with the repreſentations which the prophets, evangeliſts, and apoſtles have made of the majeſty and greatneſs of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his appearing and kingdom?

LONGINUS, Mr. Addiſon, and other great judges of good writing, have ſpoken of the ſcriptures as exhibiting the greateſt ſolemnities and beauties, and adapted in the beſt manner to anſwer their deſign.

3. INFIDELS object, that the ſcriptures are a hiſtory of crimes, maſſacres, and deſtructions; and, that ſuch a book cannot be of GOD?

LET it be granted, that the ſcriptures give us the hiſtory of the exceeding wickedneſs of mankind, and of the fearful deſolations which GOD has made in the earth for their rebellions, theſe are all ſo related, as to promote holineſs and effect univerſal good. The crimes and deſtructions, which they relate evince their truth, and ſhow their perfect correſpondence with the ſtate of the world, and with all other authentic hiſtories of mankind. For what is the true hiſtory of mankind, in ancient or modern ages, but a hiſtory of crimes, maſſacres, and devaſtations? As the ſcriptures correſpond with the ſtate of the world and the true hiſtory of man, ſo there alſo appears to be a perfect agreement between the doctrines which they teach, and the facts they relate. Nothing can more fully demonſtrate the deſperate deceit and wickedneſs of man, than the examples of wickedneſs recorded in the ſcriptures. The manner in which they relate the crimes of individuals, and the general profligacy of the world, with the judgments of GOD inflicted as the puniſhment of them, are calculated in a ſtriking manner to ſhow the exceeding evil and danger of ſin. The divine abhorrence of it, is exhibited in the moſt awful manner, to awaken in all men the fear of committing it. In theſe reſpects the ſcriptures not only correſpond with all other authentic hiſtories of mankind, but with the nature of GOD, and the great deſigns for which they were written. Hence the writing of them, in this manner, is an evidence of their divine original, and inſtead of invalidating them, in the leaſt degree, is a circumſtance of corroboration.

BESIDES, the judgments recorded in the ſcriptures, as executed in conſequence of ſin were not only for

their warning, who lived in the ſeveral periods in which they were ſent upon the world, but for the warning and benefit of all ſucceeding ages. They were even for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come. The hiſtory of the deſtruction of the old world, of Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh, the Egyptians and Canaanites, of Jeruſalem and Babylon, of wicked nations and wicked men for their ſin; and the repreſentations of the reign of death over all men, from the apoſtacy to the preſent time, every calamity, pain, and tear, as the puniſhment of it, preſent to the world the moſt awful and energetic motives to forſake ſin and practiſe righteouſneſs. The whole tendency is godlike, and gives to the ſcriptures legible impreſſions of divinity.

4. FURTHER, it is objected, that if a divine revelation were neceſſary for mankind, it ought to have been made from the beginning, and to have been made to all men univerſally; and not to have been confined to one nation only, or to a ſmall part of the human race.

THIS objection lies with greater force againſt deiſm, than againſt the religion of the bible. Deiſm is one of the moſt modern religions. It was not found among the ancient nations: Not among the firſt poets and philoſophers. No, it was left to diſgrace the laſt and preſent centuries. It has not, even to the preſent time, had a general propagation in the world. To follow the profound method of deiſtical reaſoning, deiſm cannot be true. Had it been true or neceſſary it muſt have been from the beginning, and, like the light of the ſun, have been diffuſed over the face of the whole earth.

BUT not to inſiſt on this, for revelation not to have been ſo fully and univerſally made, at firſt, is agreeable to the analogy of nature and the diſpenſations of providence, in other reſpects, towards the human race. All things, at firſt, were in a ſtate of infancy. Among all nations, at the beginning, the degree of knowl-

edge was ſmall, and the progreſs of civilization, arts, and ſciences very ſlow and gradual. Some men and nations became learned and civilized before others, and in time, communicated their improvements to their neighbours. The divine ſovereignty is a moſt conſpicuous trait, which runs through all the works of God. In creation he made angels and men, creatures rational and irrational. Among men ſome are wiſe and others fooliſh, ſome live and become old, while others die in infancy and childhood. The ſame wiſe and holy ſovereignty is ſeen among the nations of the world. Some are learned, poliſhed, and wealthy, others are ignorant, poor, and barbarous. Probably no two men, or nations upon earth enjoy the ſame advantages, or proportion of natural and moral good. Will the deiſt wage war with heaven, that he is not an angel? Or becauſe he does not poſſeſs the riches and wiſdom of Solomon? Or that he may not live as long as Methuſelah? Will he diſbelieve that he is a philoſopher or deiſt, becauſe a great part of the world are not ſo? Why then will he object againſt the truth of revelation, becauſe all have not equally enjoyed it? How puerile are ſuch objections? One would be ready to imagine, from ſuch impertinences, that deiſts had never looked abroad and known that one man was richer, wiſer, and lived longer than another. Nay, that after all their boaſted wiſdom, they had not diſcovered, that ſome ages have been far more privileged and happy than others; and ſome nations more poliſhed, opulent, and powerful than their neighbours.

But further, infidels may be challenged to prove, that revelation has not been from the beginning, and that had it not been for the wickedneſs of man, that the knowledge of it would not have been as univerſally propagated upon the earth, as the human race.

That there was a revelation from the beginning the bible, which hath been proved to contain a divine revelation, abundantly teacheth. Of this the univerſal practice of offering ſacrifices, and the celebration of the ſeventh day, as a ſabbath, afford another incon-

teſtible evidence. That this was ſufficient for all the purpoſes of holy living is evident from the piety and righteouſneſs of Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, before the flood, of Abraham and the patriarchs afterwards, until the giving of the law at mount Sinai.

AFTER the ſettlement of Iſrael in Canaan, the church and ordinances of GOD were exhibited in a very central and conſpicuous part of the ancient nations of the world. The Iſraelites had advantages for navigation, and were well known to all the circumjacent nations. They were often making war upon them, and carrying them away captives into their ſeveral countries; and of them they might have learned the religion of the GOD of Abraham. The fame of Solomon, king of Iſrael, was in all nations round about, and there came of all people to hear his wiſdom.* With equal eaſe might men have gone from the ends of the earth to have heard the wiſdom, power, and love of the GOD of Iſrael, and to have enjoyed the bleſſings offered in his word.

THE captivities of Judah and Iſrael diſperſed them over a great part of the habitable earth. They carried the ſcriptures and their religion with them. The edicts of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius proclaimed the glory of the GOD of Iſrael through their vaſt dominions. The proclamations of Cyrus and Ahaſuerus were calculated to make the Jews and their religion known in their reſpective dominions, and to excite all men even from India to Ethiopia, to enquire after their religion and their GOD. Thoſe eminent prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and thoſe pious men Ezra, Nehemiah, and Mordecai, were in Egypt, Babylon, and Perſia, as well as numerous prieſts and Levites in the various parts of thoſe ſeveral countries, ready to teach all who deſired it, the good knowledge of the LORD.

AFTERWARDS the Old Teſtament was tranſlated into Greek, and by the Jews and proſelytes the ſcriptures were ſpread into all parts of the then known

* 1 Kings iv. 31, 34.

world. The Jews had ſynagouges in all parts, and the ſcriptures were read in them every ſabbath day. At the day of Pentecoſt there were, at Jeruſalem, devout men from all nations under heaven. What then prevented the ſcriptures from being univerſally known, but the fault of mankind; their want of love to them, and zeal to acquaint themſelves with them?

In a ſhort time after our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion, the goſpel was promulgated and churches gathered in moſt of the nations in the then known world. They were planted not only in the principal cities and nations in Aſia, Africa, and Europe, but even among ſome of the moſt unpoliſhed and obſcure people in thoſe quarters of the earth. The goſpel eſtabliſhed its reign even among the ancient Getulæ, in Africa, Sarmathians in Europe, and in thoſe dark and inacceſſible places, in Britain, to which the arms and arts of Rome had never reached. To what then can it be aſcribed, that all thoſe people do not now enjoy the goſpel and the ſcriptures, but their apoſtacy, and want of love to them? To what other cauſe can it be owing that all the nations who bordered upon them, and were connected with them have not a revelation, but this, that they liked not to retain GOD in their knowledge?

BESIDES, what parts of the earth are there which Chriſtians have not repeatedly viſited, for the purpoſes of worldly advantage? What people is there who have not received them? Had the one therefore been as zealous to propagate, and the other as ready to receive the goſpel, as they have been to traverſe the globe, and receive all nations for temporal advantages, would not the whole earth have been full of the knowledge of the LORD? How groundleſs therefore, in every view, is this cavil?

5. UNBELIEVERS further object againſt Chriſtianity, that Chriſtians do not underſtand Chriſtianity alike; but are divided into numerous ſects and parties, ſome teaching one thing and ſome another.

THIS objection, like ſeveral of the former militates no leſs againſt deiſm, than againſt Chriſtianity. De-

iſts are entirely divided as to their particular ſchemes of deiſm. Some hold the immortality of the ſoul, and admit of rewards and puniſhments. Others diſcard both. Some maintain that GOD is a good being, but others will admit of no ſuch concluſion. Some maintain, that deiſm is moſt clear and certain. Others, as ſtrenuouſly hold, that every thing is doubtful. Theſe diviſions among deiſts, as effectually deſtroy deiſm, as diviſions among Chriſtians invalidate Chriſtianity. But the truth is, that the objection is wholly impertinent and affects neither.

FURTHER, though it muſt be granted, that there are differences among Chriſtians, and ſome in eſſential points, yet they have more generally been about modes and forms.

BESIDES, theſe differences do not ariſe, eſpecially in eſſential points, from any want of explicitneſs in the ſcriptures, but wholly from the luſts of men, their hatred of the truth. They wreſt the ſcriptures, and will not ſubmit to the doctrines which they moſt expreſsly teach. *For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light.** Notwithſtanding all the falſe teachers, and all the prejudices of education, good men, who will honeſtly attend to the divine word, may know the truth. *The ſecret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will ſhow them his covenant.*† Saith the SAVIOUR, *My ſheep hear my voice, and they follow me. A ſtranger they will not follow, but flee from him: for they know not the voice of ſtrangers.*‡

THERE are no writings but what artful men will wreſt, miſrepreſent, and miſapply. The apoſtles premoniſh us, that wicked men would wreſt the ſcriptures, and bring in damnable hereſies. This is therefore no juſt ground of ſtumbling at the word. The uſe we ſhould make of it ſhould be, to learn more of the corruption of our own hearts, to make us more

* John iii. 20, 21. † Pſalm xxv. 14. ‡ John x. 4, 5, 27.

circumſpect, and more ſtudious of the word. Eſpecially, it ſhould make us more abundant in prayer, that GOD would preſerve us from prejudices and errors, and lead us in the way everlaſting.

6. ANOTHER objection againſt Chriſtianity is the wicked lives of profeſſing Chriſtians, and the abuſes which have been made of the ſcriptures. It is urged, that if Chriſtians believed the ſcriptures, they could not live as they generally do: and that the ſcriptures have been an occaſion of the greateſt evils; of the moſt implacable hatred and animoſities among men; of wars, perſecutions, and maſſacres. It is affirmed, that they have filled the earth with blood and miſery.

To this cavil, were it of any weight, it might be obſerved that it would prove deiſm to be falſe, as well as Chriſtianity: for many deiſts treat GOD with great irreverence, and exceedingly abuſe the light of nature. Many of them have lived exceedingly wicked and abandoned lives. Indeed, deiſm, in every age and place in which it has prevailed, has been attended with a great corruption of manners, and in numerous, if not in moſt inſtances, has terminated in atheiſm.

BUT it is important to obſerve, that the ſcriptures, in the moſt expreſs and awful language, prohibit all thoſe abuſes, for which infidels ſo ſeverely reprobate Chriſtianity. It has been clearly ſhown, that they contain the moſt pure and ſublime ſyſtem of morality ever exhibited to the world. Were all men truly and conſiſtently Chriſtians, there would be no looſe profeſſors, no falſe brethren, no malice, frauds, ſlanders, licentiouſneſs, violence, or wars. No, all the crimes, which have debaſed human nature, and made the world a bedlam and field of blood, would vaniſh from the earth. The tempeſtuous ocean of this world would be perfectly and perpetually calm. Men, inſtead of hating and perſecuting, would every where be doing good to each other, loving, bleſſing, and praying, not only for their friends, but even for their enemies. Chriſtians, as they had opportunity, would do good to all men: and, rather than injure one another,

the church, or the cauſe of CHRIST, would lay down their lives for them.

THIS certainly is the religion which the goſpel teacheth. Theſe were the effects of it on thouſands in the primitive ages, and which, in a good meaſure it has on thouſands ſtill. That CHRIST and his religion have brought a ſword upon the earth, and not peace,* according to his own prediction, is not owing to the goſpel, but entirely to the luſts of men: to their hatred of the doctrines, morals, and purity of the goſpel, and of the holy lives of thoſe who profeſs and live agreeably to them.

To what purpoſe, indeed, are the idolatries, ſuperſtitions, and maſſacres of the man of ſin, objected againſt thoſe very ſcriptures which predict his riſe, progreſs, and abominations? Which doom him to perdition, and ſhow his fearful end? To what better purpoſe are the bad lives of hypocritical profeſſors alledged, ſince both our SAVIOUR and his apoſtles have foretold them? Since they have repreſented the miſerable ſtate and tremendous end of all thoſe, who tread under foot the SON of GOD, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? Can that goſpel be juſtly blamed which foretels theſe events? Which warns men by every ſolemn, and allures them by every endearing and glorious motive to be good; and excludes them the kingdom of heaven, and appoints them a portion in the burning flame for their wickedneſs?

To what effect is the abuſe of the goſpel alledged? What is there which mankind have not abuſed? Shall we diſbelieve the light and heat of the ſun, becauſe men have abuſed them? Shall we diſcredit and deny the various ſeaſons, and all the comforts they bring becauſe they have been abuſed? Upon the principle of the objection, a man can believe nothing. No, not the exiſtence of the food which nouriſheth him, nor of wine, which maketh glad the heart of man? For what has been abuſed more than theſe?

* Matth. x. 34.

It is, indeed, exceedingly to be lamented, that there are so many Judases, who betray their Lord—So many foolish virgins who have lamps without oil. It is one of the greatest injuries to religion. But does not even this counterfeit coin show that there is a true? Do not even the hypocritical resemblances of religion, afford evidence of its truth? And that even in the opinion of natural men, it is honorable and important? Is it a logical consequence that because some are foolish, there are none wise? Certainly it is not. Though there are false brethren yet there are many true Christians, who like the Roman centurion, and the excellent Dorcas, fear God and work righteousness; are full of good works and alms-deeds; and pray to God alway. They are peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated; and during a long life have not a law suit or considerable controversy with any man. Like the blessed Saviour, they forgive and pray for their enemies, and do good to those who reproach and abuse them. They pay a conscientious and constant attention to the public worship and all divine institutions, are temperate in all things, holding fast their profession even to the end. Such, blessed be God, appear to be found in all our churches. Could this remnant, these precious ones, be separated from the dross and collected into one society, they would exhibit such a example of piety, purity, and brotherly affection and happiness, as never made its appearance on earth since the age of the apostles. Yet even this beautiful and blessed community would have its imperfections, and come far short of the example of its glorious head, and the high demands of his perfect word. A perfect conformity to these would make heaven upon earth.

The happy effects of Christianity, notwithstanding all its abuses and declensions, from the primitive zeal and purity, have been wonderful. To say nothing of the forgiveness of sins, the unspeakable joys of Christians, their triumphs over death, the eternal life of millions in heaven, and the glory of God and the

LAMB, in their ſalvation, how great were its effects in the deſtruction of the idolatry, ſorcery, filthineſs, and abominable cuſtoms of Paganiſm? What immenſe influence has it had on the preſervation of the life and comfort of man, in reſcuing millions of infants from feeding fiſhes, dogs, and wild beaſts; and in cauſing them to be tenderly nurſed, and educated for uſefulneſs? How prodigious have been its effects on chaſtity, and domeſtic happineſs, in conſequence of its precepts reſpecting marriage? How has it ameliorated the life of one half of our ſpecies, by raiſing the woman from a ſtate of vaſſalage, inſignificance, and hard uſage, to that dignity, reſpectful and kind treatment due to ſo amiable and important a part of human nature? To what, but the influence of Chriſtianity, can be aſcribed the humanity exerciſed in modern wars, in compariſon with the ſavage cruelty of ancient times? Whence have hoſpitals, charity ſchools, funds and other proviſions for the helpleſs, poor, ignorant, and diſtreſſed derived their origin but from the ſame benign ſource? Whence but from this have ariſen the numerous exertions and remonſtrances againſt the ſlave trade, the liberation of ſuch numbers of ſlaves, and the melioration of their ſtate, in Chriſtian countries, for years paſt? From what other ſource originate all the charities and labors of Chriſtians to extend the bleſſings of religion and civilization among the Heathen? Has not the effect of Chriſtianity upon the laws of Proteſtant Chriſtendom, and upon the impartiality and righteouſneſs of adminiſtering juſtice, and the humanity and mildneſs of inflicting puniſhments been prodigious? How great are its effects on the conſciences of men to prevent crimes againſt community and individuals, and to produce a ſelf-government in the people, wherever it, in any good meaſure, prevails? No other religion has ever had theſe happy effects.

7. DEISTS object, that there are inconſiſtent and contradictory accounts in the ſcriptures, which cannot

be reconciled. Hence they conclude them to be a forgery.

PARTICULARLY, they ſay, the account given of David's purchaſe of the floor of Araunah, the Jebuſite, recorded in 2 Samuel xxiv. 21—24, and 1 Chronicles xxi. 24, 25, contradict each other; and that there is the ſame inconſiſtency, between the account which Moſes gives Geneſis xlvi. 27, and that given by Stephen, Acts vii. 14, reſpecting the number of Jacob's family, who went into Egypt.

IN anſwer to this, it muſt be obſerved, that it can by no means be conceded that theſe, or any other accounts in the ſcriptures, fairly examined, contradict each other.

WITH reſpect to David's purchaſe of the floor, the two accounts are eaſily reconciled. The purchaſe related by Samuel was of the floor and the oxen only, as is expreſsly mentioned. For theſe David gave fifty ſhekels of ſilver. But the purchaſe mentioned in Chronicles was for the place, as is expreſsly declared. This probably included the whole tract of the mountain, on which the temple was afterwards built, with its appurtenances, the houſe and buildings of Ornan. For the whole he gave ſix hundred ſhekels of gold. It is moſt natural to ſuppoſe, that David, in his diſtreſs made a purchaſe for the then preſent emergency, and that afterwards, when he found that GOD had accepted his ſacrifice in that place, and had choſen it as the mountain of his houſe, where he would receive the offerings and accept the prayers and praiſes of his people, he purchaſed the whole tract, or mountain, on which the temple was erected. The book of Chronicles which was written after the whole was tranſacted, gives us the price at large. In this view there is no contradiction or inconſiſtency in the accounts.

WITH reſpect to the different names given to the owner of the mountain, it need only to be obſerved, that it was not uncommon for the ſame man to have different names, and ſometimes to be called by one,

and ſometimes by the other. The father of the twelve patriarchs is called Jacob and Iſrael, and the ſcriptures furniſh us with other inſtances of the ſame.

WITH reſpect to the Moſaic account of Jacob's family, it is confined to the male heirs of Jacob and his ſons, who are all expreſſed by name; but Stephen's account compriſed the whole kindred of Joſeph, which is a more extenſive expreſſion than the other, and muſt include a greater number. It does not therefore appear that there is any miſtake in the accounts, or contradiction between them. Stephen appears to have followed the account given in the ſeptuagint, which, after giving an account of the perſons mentioned by Moſes, adds five to the number; and only reckoning the five eldeſt ſons of Manaſſeh and Ephraim, expreſsly named in Chronicles, makes the ſeventy-five. There is another eaſy way of reconciling the difficulty. Judah, it appears, had loſt his wife. Reckoning therefore eleven wives for Jacob's ſons, who came into Egypt, makes ſeventy-ſeven. From theſe extract Hezron and Hamal, who are ſuppoſed to be born after the Iſraelites went into Egypt, and the number is ſeventy-five. In either of theſe ways the accounts are perfectly reconciled. Theſe and other ſimilar difficulties may be ſeen reconciled in the harmoniſts.

IMPORTANT is it here to obſerve, that various difficulties are found in the ſcriptures from the conciſe manner in which things are related. The mentioning of a few circumſtances attending a fact may render the whole ſtory perfectly plain and conſiſtent; and the omiſſion of them may render it dark and unaccountable. At the ſame time it may be perfectly true and conſiſtent. This is doubtleſs the caſe in thoſe places of ſcripture, where any thing occurs which appears inconſiſtent and difficult to reconcile. The prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning Zedekiah, king of Judah, that he ſhould be taken by the king of Babylon, that he ſhould behold him, and ſpeak with him mouth to mouth, and be carried to

Babylon and die there, and yet never ſee it with his eyes, were ſuppoſed by Zedekiah to contradict each other. This has been aſſigned as a reaſon, why he and his courtiers did not believe them. But the relation of this circumſtance, in the ſequel, which was not mentioned in the prophecies, that his eyes were put out at Riblah in the land of Hamath, after he had ſeen the king of Babylon, removed all the difficulty. Had this circumſtance only been omitted the enemies of revelation would have cried out, Contradictions, lies and lying prophets! Indeed had this been finally omitted it would have been difficult to have reconciled the prophecies. Nevertheleſs, they would have been as true as they now are, and would have been as literally accompliſhed. Were there therefore ſome inſuperable difficulties of this kind, it would be no evidence that the ſcriptures even in thoſe very caſes were not ſtrictly true and conſiſtent.

But ſhould it be granted, that through the miſtake of ſome tranſcriber, in the numerous copies which have been taken, there ſhould have been an error with reſpect to a name, a number, or the price of ſome article, it could effect no duty, no doctrine, no promiſe, threatening, or motive of the goſpel. It could not make the leaſt alteration with reſpect to faith or practice. The ſcriptures in all theſe reſpects would be juſt the ſame as though theſe never had been.

8. Objections are made to the doctrine of atonement, as revealed in the ſcriptures. It is declared to be inconſiſtent with reaſon, juſtice, and goodneſs, to reckon the ſins of tranſgreſſors to an innocent perſon, and to put him to ſhame and death to ſave the guilty; and to beſtow great and endleſs bleſſings upon them for the ſake of his ſufferings and obedience.

To this it may be obſerved, that mankind univerſally, even from the beginning, appear to have had the general idea of an atonement, and of the neceſſity of a propitiation, that the gods might be made propitious, and that tranſgreſſors might be forgiven. Sacrifices have been offered in all ages from the earlieſt

period, ſo far as the moſt ancient hiſtories give us any information. Theſe were offered as an act of worſhip, to placate the DEITY, and obtain his favor. We are informed of no time nor place in which this was not in practice. This could have been of no ſignificancy or advantage, but as it reſpected an atonement, the remiſſion of ſins through the ſhedding of blood. If this general idea was obtained by the light of nature, then it would follow, that the doctrine of an atonement was ſo far from being inconſiſtent with reaſon and juſtice, that it is perfectly conſonant with both, and a part of the religion of nature. In this view it would entirely obviate the objection. But ſhould it not be granted, that the practice originated from nature, then it muſt have been from revelation, and of divine inſtitution. It could originate from no other ſource but one of theſe. But granting that it was of divine revelation and inſtitution, it will equally ſilence the objection: For none certainly will maintain that the inſtitutions of GOD are unreaſonable, unjuſt, or inconſiſtent with goodneſs. This would be at once to impeach the divine character, and to charge fooliſhneſs, injuſtice, and cruelty upon the MOST HIGH. This is no leſs inconſiſtent with deiſm, than Chriſtianity. Let the deiſt therefore adopt either of the ſuppoſitions, his objection is overthrown. The latter is doubtleſs true. There is no other ſource, but divine revelation and inſtitution from which it could have been ſo univerſally derived. Of this we have the moſt abſolute certainty. The ſcriptures aſſure us that Cain and Abel, Noah and the patriarchs ſacrificed to GOD long before the Moſaic inſtitution. The ſcripture aſſures us, that Abel offered his ſacrifice in faith, and that it was accepted of GOD.* Sacrificing therefore was then an inſtituted part of worſhip; otherwiſe Abel could not have offered in faith and obedience, nor would GOD have accepted him. He accepteth of no

* Gen. iv. 4, and Hebrews xi. 4.

worſhip, which is merely of men's invention, and not of his own inſtitution. Noah built an altar and offered of every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl; and the LORD ſmelled a ſweet ſavour and bleſſed him.* Hence ſacrificing was of divine inſtitution from the lapſe, and the doctrine of atonement and ſalvation by ſacrifice hath been preached, by divine appointment, from the apoſtacy to the preſent time. It cannot therefore but comport with conſummate wiſdom, juſtice, and mercy.

FURTHER, ſcarcely any thing is more common among men than ſuretyſhip; and when a man is become ſurety for another, of his own free conſent, it is agreeable to the common ſenſe and feelings of mankind, that he ſhould ſuffer on his account, if it be neceſſary to ſatisfy his creditors, or to indemnify and ſave the commonwealth harmleſs. How often are numerous lives, fine tracts of country, towns, and cities ſacrificed for the defence of a nation or commonwealth. It is not judged unwiſe, nor inconſiſtent with reaſon, to ſacrifice an advanced guard, or a forlorn hope, for the protection of an army, a noble general or prince for the good of his country and the ſafety of a kingdom. It is a dictate of common ſenſe, that it is better, that one man die, than that a whole nation ſhould periſh. When one man offers himſelf freely to ſuffer for the good, and in the place of another, and to give full ſatisfaction to the law, it has not been judged inconſiſtent with juſtice, wiſdom, or goodneſs. The juſtice and compaſſion of Zaleucus, the famous lawgiver of Locris, have always been celebrated as great and ſingular, who, when his ſon was condemned for his ill conduct, to looſe both his eyes, in vindication of the law and to ſave his ſon, put out one of his own eyes and one of his ſon's and ſatisfied the law and juſtice, and yet ſaved one of his ſon's eyes. It was judged to be no injuſtice or want of goodneſs to pardon and diſcharge Æcbylus on the ac-

* Gen. viii. 20, 21, and chap. ix. 1.

count of the important ſervices rendered his country by his brother Amintas. When the latter appeared in court to plead his brother's cauſe, and liſted up his arm without a hand, ſignifying what he had loſt in the ſervice of the commonwealth, his brother was ſet at liberty without his ſpeaking a word. How often are ſingular benefits beſtowed on the undeſerving, in conſequence of the good ſervices of their anceſtors or friends? What injuſtice then could there be, in the Father's giving his ſon a ranſom for many? Eſpecially, when he moſt freely conſented to it, ſaying, *Lo, I come?* When he had power *to lay down his life*, and *to take it again?** Surely, if for the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame; if he ſaw of the travail of his ſoul and was ſatisfied, there was no injuſtice, in his bearing our ſins in his own body on the tree; in *making him ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of* GOD *in him.*† GOD *the* FATHER *hath highly exalted him, to be head over all things to the church, and given him a name which is above every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come.*‡ As CHRIST fulfilled all righteouſneſs, magnified *the law and made it honorable*, more honorable than the obedience and ſufferings of all creatures could have made it; more glorioufly exhibited the inflexibility of GOD's juſtice, and his infinite abhorrence of ſin, there could be no injuſtice in the forgiveneſs of ſins through the blood of the croſs. GOD can be *juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him who believeth in* JESUS.§ At the ſame time, he hath made a moſt glorious diſplay of the riches of his mercy in the ſalvation of countleſs millions of the human race. Herein he *hath commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners,* CHRIST *died for us.*‖ All his perfections have a moſt harmonious and godlike manifeſtation. *Mercy and truth are met together: righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.*¶ GOD *hath*

* Pſalm xl. 7, and John x. 17, 18. † 1 Pet. ii. 24, and 2 Cor. v. 21. ‡ Epheſ. ii. 20, 21, 22, and Phil. ii. 9, 10.
§ Rom. iii. 26. ‖ Rom. v. 8. ¶ Pſalm lxxxv. 10.

*abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence.** After all that the Jew, or the Greek, the deiſt or any oppoſer of the atonement and vicarious righteouſneſs can object, *The fooliſhneſs of* GOD, in this great and glorious work, *is wiſer than men; and the weakneſs of* GOD *is ſtronger than men.*†

9. BOTH Jews and infidels object and are ſtumbled at the low appearance of JESUS CHRIST: That he was the ſon of Joſeph the carpenter, and of Mary, and that all his brethren were poor people, deſtitute of wordly riches, honor, and fame.

THIS objection is as old as Chriſtianity. It was the language of unbelievers in our SAVIOUR's day. *Whence hath this man this wiſdom and theſe mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's ſon? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? And his ſiſters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all theſe things? And they were offended in him.*‡ The objection originates from a wrong taſte, and from the want of a proper attention to the work on which our SAVIOUR came, *not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.*§ Mankind reliſh the pomp, riches, and honors of this world; every thing which belongs to the pride of life; *but the things which are highly eſteemed among men are an abomination in the ſight of* GOD. JESUS CHRIST came to meliorate the taſte, correct the miſtakes, and humble the pride of men: To teach them ſelf-denial, meekneſs, patience, abſtraction from this world, and to ſet their affections on things above. It was his deſign to ſhow them that the ſmalleſt degrees of true Chriſtian humility, meekneſs, and condeſcenſion, are far more valuable than all the pomp and enjoyments of this world. For him therefore to have appeared in worldly pomp and magnificence would have been entirely inconſiſtent with the deſign of his coming. It would have been inconſiſtent with the prophetic repreſentations of the Meſſiah, as making his appearance

* Epheſ. i. 8. † 1 Cor. i. 25. ‡ Matth. xii. 55, 56, 57, 58.
§ Matth. xx. 28.

when the houſe of David was reduced to the loweſt ebb; ſo that he would come forth as *a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe*,* *a root out of a dry ground*, who *ſhould have no form or comelineſs*—be *a man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief*:† It was predicted, that *many ſhould be aſtoniſhed at him*, becauſe *his viſage ſhould be more marred than any man's and his form more than the ſons of men*.‡ Had he appeared with worldly ſtate and magnificence, how could the ſcriptures have been fulfilled, or it have been known that he was the SAVIOUR?

FURTHER, as he undertook to be the SAVIOUR of ſinners, who were wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked, who had forfeited all good and juſtly deſerved all evil, to be a ſin-offering and a curſe for them, it behoved him to appear in the form of a ſervant, for our ſakes to become poor, and to humble himſelf, and make himſelf of no reputation, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. This exhibited his peerleſs love and condeſcenſion, as well as his Father's grace, in a far more aſtoniſhing and conſtraining point of view, than if he had appeared in the majeſty of a prince with all worldly royalty and magnificence. His extreme poverty, ſhame, humiliation, and agonies, while he ſuffered as the ſurety of ſinners, manifeſted the evil of ſin, the low and wretched ſtate to which man had reduced himſelf, in a far more affecting, ſtrong, and beneficial point of view, than they could poſſibly have been made known to creatures, had not the SAVIOUR thus humbled himſelf. Had not this been the caſe he could not have been ſo tenderly touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and from his own experience ſo well known how to ſuccour and ſympathize with his poor, deſpiſed, and afflicted people.

BESIDES, the example of CHRIST is far more glorious, important, and uſeful to his people, than it could have been had he appeared in worldly greatneſs. CHRIST came to be their example, as well as righteouſ-

* Iſaiah xi. 1. † Chap. liii. 2. 3. ‡ Chap. lii. 14.

neſs and ſalvation. His exemplary indifference to t e world, and the contempt he poured upon all the purſuits of worldly men, his meekneſs, condeſcenſion, patience, and heavenly mindedneſs were of immenſe importance to his church, and to all his diſciples to enforce the doctrines of ſelf-denial, weanedneſs from the world, condeſcenſion, patience, fortitude, contentment, meekneſs, and heavenly mindedneſs, which he taught. There is a wonderful conſiſtency and harmony between the doctrines which he taught and the example which he hath exhibited to his followers. It is entirely adapted to their ſtate of trial, and to the nature of that ſpiritual and holy kingdom which he came to ſet up in the world. But had the SAVIOUR appeared in the fulneſs, parade, and magnificence of the princes and great men of the world, it would have been entirely the reverſe. His people would have loſt all the advantage of his ſelf-denial, meekneſs, patience, and abſtraction from the world; and inſtead of being taught to lay up treaſures in heaven would have been taught to ſeek great things for themſelves on the earth. His conduct would not have harmonized with the deſign of his coming, with the doctrines he taught, nor with the nature of his kingdom. Hence there would have been leſs of true greatneſs and wiſdom and leſs appearance of divinity than there now is.

INDEED, there was in JESUS, amidſt all his poverty and ſufferings, a greatneſs, fortitude, and majeſty, in his victory over the world, his perfect ſelf-government, his forgiveneſs of enemies, in his cauſing the winds and ſeas to obey him, the deaf to hear, the blind to ſee, and the dead to live, at his word, than the Alexanders, Cæſars, or any of the princes and great men of the world have been ever able to manifeſt. The manner of his operations, healing the leper by, *I will, be thou clean*;* raiſing the dead by ſaying, *Maid, ariſe*;† *Lazarus, come forth*,‡ was far more glorious and godlike than if he had appeared in all the

* Mark i. 41, 42. † Luke ix. 54. ‡ John xi. 43.

pomp and ſplendor of an eaſtern monarch, or ſummoned to his aſſiſtance myriads of angels. He appeared like him, who ſaid, *Let there be light: and there was light:** Who made the heavens by his word. *He ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.*†

THE external ſtate and equipage of men is a badge of their real want of greatneſs, and becomes neceſſary to ſupport their authority, and keep up the idea of their importance; becauſe they have no ſuch internal dignity and excellency above others, as to maintain their influence without them. But in JESUS CHRIST there was uncreated, infinite dignity and excellence. All fulneſs dwells in him.‡ He hath *power over all fleſh, to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him.*§ There is therefore no ground of offence, at the croſs of CHRIST.

DEISTS and infidels have ſpared no pains to invalidate divine revelation, and ſap the foundations of all the hopes and comforts of Chriſtians. They have attempted, from the Egyptian Dynaſtes and the Chineſe chronology, to prove that the ſcripture chronology is erroneous, and that the world is many thouſands of years older than the Moſaic account makes it to be; but thoſe accounts, upon the moſt critical examination, have by the moſt certain facts, been ſhown to be without foundation; and the ſcripture account has been eſtabliſhed upon the moſt convincing evidence. Bedford in his chronology, by the calculation of eclipſes, the places and ſituations of the planets, at various times, by moons, paſſovers, computations and compariſons of the lives of men in different nations, and ages, and by a great variety of circumſtances, has clearly evinced the authenticity of the ſcripture account.‖ No man of reading and candor, I preſume, in future, will think it of any weight, or even honorable to his underſtanding, to produce thoſe extravagant and falſe accounts, as in the leaſt degree invali-

* Gen. i. 2. † Pſalm xxxiii. 9. ‡ Col. i. 19. § John xvii. 2.
‖ See his numerous Tables, and his treatiſe of the Egyptian Dynaſtes and the Chineſe accounts, Chr. Chap. VI. p. 55, to 91.

dating the chronology of the bible, and the truth of divine revelation.

DEISTICAL writers have urged the different ſhapes and complexions of the human ſpecies, as an evidence that all men could not have deſcended from the ſame anceſtors, Adam and Eve; and hence that the ſcripture account cannot be true. But it is impoſſible for them to prove that all the differences are not owing to nature, to different food, climates, manner of living, and various other circumſtances. There are unaccountable and wonderful differences in children of the ſame family, and of the ſame conception and birth; as in thoſe twin brothers, Eſau and Jacob. According to hiſtorians, people who have been tranſported from their native countries to diſtant iſlands and climates, have, in proceſs of time, become like a different race of men, as to ſhape, complexion, ſize, and genius. Different employments alter the ſhape of the body, legs, and arms; and different climates, both the ſkin and temper. In America, we ſee the ſooty African changing his ſkin, and the tawny Indians becoming white, like Engliſh men.¶ Theſe differences therefore, undoubtedly, originate in natural cauſes, in the ſame family or race of beings. They are poor arguments indeed to ſhake our faith in the divine oracles.

HAVING in this and the preceding diſcourſes anſwered ſome of the principal and moſt plauſible objections againſt revelation, I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with ſeveral obſervations.

I. IT is natural to remark, that although deiſtical writers profeſs themſelves to be wiſe and learned above other men, and glory in the ſtrength of their arguments, yet there is no claſs of writers who have ever appeared, whoſe reaſonings have been ſo inconſiſtent and puerile, ſo deſtitute of candor, and ſo fraught with miſrepreſentation as theirs. I am willing to ap-

¶ Witneſs the white negro, who, a few years ſince travelled through the country, and two laboring healthy Indians of the ſix nations, who turned white.

peal to the common ſenſe and conſciences of all ſober men, whether there is any real weight or ſolidity in the moſt plauſible of them? Whether they do not generally as ſtrongly militate againſt deiſm, as againſt divine revelation? Whether they are not directly oppoſed to the analogy of the divine works both of creation and providence? Nay, whether they are not ſo groundleſs and futile, ſo contrary to the common reaſoning and practice of mankind, with reſpect to other ſubjects, as that every man who wiſhes to preſerve the honor of his underſtanding, would not be far from adopting them? The weakneſs and impertinence of their arguments and cavils, their uncandid and groundleſs inſinuations, their ridicule and groſs miſrepreſentations of the ſcriptures, their unparalleled bitterneſs and blaſphemies ſet the weakneſs and badneſs of their cauſe in a flagrant point of light. Had deiſm any foundation, but in a wicked heart, it would have no need of ſuch miſerable defences. Perhaps theſe words of the apoſtle were never more applicable to any claſs of men, than to the infidel philoſophers, *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.*

II. SINCE the commands of GOD and all the principles of benevolence require, that the ſtumbling blocks ſhould be removed and that no offence ſhould be given, how ineffable is their guilt, who are filling and hedging up the way with them? This the profeſſed enemies of Chriſtianity are doing with all their arts and powers. They are doing it by falſe reaſonings, miſrepreſentations, reproach, and ridicule; by falſe charges and groundleſs inſinuations, and by ſpreading books of infidelity in the country, and eſpecially among young people. In Connecticut and New-England they are acting this horrid part under the meridian luſtre of the goſpel, and under all the advantages of a Chriſtian education; againſt the commands, mercies, and threatenings of almighty GOD! Againſt the counſels, intreaties, prayers, and tears of pious parents, whoſe hoary heads, by their contempt of the

goſpel and looſe lives, they are bringing down with ſorrow to the grave. Nay, they are acting againſt all the piety and wiſdom of thoſe renowned anceſtors who laid the free, civil, and religious foundations of theſe commonwealths; and againſt the long experience, which, for ages, their deſcendants have had of their good effects, in the enjoyment of ſuch perſonal, domeſtic, civil, and religious peace, order, freedom, and happineſs as no other people ever enjoyed. They are not only deſtroying themſelves but others; depriving them not of natural life and happineſs, but of life and bleſſedneſs eternal. How inconceivable is the enormity of ſuch a conduct? Do not all the denunciations of heaven againſt apoſtates and unbelievers, ſtand charged againſt them. Is not this *the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkneſs rather than light?*

III. We cannot but reflect, that the ſin of hypocrites and looſe profeſſors is great beyond all calculation. While they are under the higheſt obligation to remove the ſtumbling blocks, to walk inoffenſively, and perfect holineſs in the fear of the Lord, they are occaſions of the greateſt ſtumbling and offence. Like Judas they betray their Saviour with a kiſs—Give an occaſion to the enemy to blaſpheme—Grieve their brethren and prejudice many againſt Christ and his holy religion. Notwithſtanding their ſolemn vows and diſtinguiſhing privileges, they are abettors of Satan and his inſtruments in their oppoſition to Christ and all righteouſneſs. Nay, they are themſelves his inſtruments, and children, diſhonoring and crucifying the dear Saviour afreſh, bringing his cauſe into contempt, and deſtroying the ſouls of men. They are doing the ſame infernal work, in the viſible family of Christ, which atheiſts, deiſts, and the moſt profane and abandoned ſinners are doing without. Alas! to what an awful doom are they haſtening? With what ſerioufneſs ſhould Chriſtians examine themſelves, that they may know their ſtate?—Whether they are acting this dreadful part or not? What reaſon is there, that

fearfulneſs ſhould ſurpriſe all hypocrites, and that they ſhould fly, without a moment's delay, to lay hold on the hope ſet before them? What danger is there, that GOD, in his great diſpleaſure, will ſoon ſeparate them with Judas, infidels, and apoſtates, to their own place? Will he not *cut them aſunder and appoint them their portion with hypocrites, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth?*

IV. Is it of ſuch importance that the ſtumbling blocks be removed, how indefatigably ſhould Chriſtians labor to be rich in knowledge, faith, and good works? that they may be able to vindicate the truth againſt gainſayers—to remove occaſions of ſtumbling, and give a reaſon of the hope which is in them—that by the light of their doctrines and good works, they may engage and conſtrain men to embrace the truth, and glorify their father who is in heaven. Nothing can have a more happy influence on Chriſtianity than theſe. They were efficacious means of ſpreading the goſpel in the primitive ages. They moſt effectually remove ſtumbling blocks, and allure men to walk in the path of life. Would Chriſtians therefore prevent the increaſe of infidelity, ſave immortal ſouls, and glorify their Redeemer, let them be eminent in the knowledge of CHRIST, hold faſt their profeſſion, *be ſteadfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

IN a word, let all be penetrated with a ſenſe of the weakneſs, preſumption, and incalculable madneſs of deiſm; of its infinite criminality and danger; of its danger not only to themſelves, but to their poſterity, friends, connexions, and to all the intereſts of ſociety, civil and religious. Let all take the alarm, and fly the tremendous precipice. AMEN.

DISCOURSE XI.

On the advantages of walking with the wiſe.

PROVERBS xiii. 20. The firſt clauſe of the verſe.

He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe.

THE influence which connexions, company, and example have upon men admits of no calculation. Theſe moſt commonly form and fix their characters in life, and lay a foundation for honor or ſhame, happineſs or miſery, in time and eternity. It ſeems to have been the deſign of the ſacred penman in this verſe to ſhow the wonderful influence which a man's ſociety has upon him to purify and ſave, or to corrupt and deſtroy him. It was conſidered as true even to a proverb in Iſrael, by the wiſeſt prince who ever ſwayed a ſceptre, that thoſe who were ſo happy as to form connexions and walk with the wiſe ſhould ordinarily become wiſe themſelves. Indeed the proverb has an higher origin than the Iſraelites or their royal preacher; the mouth of the LORD hath ſpoken it. It contains a truth of the greateſt and moſt ſolemn importance to mankind univerſally, but eſpecially to young people, who are beginning the world and forming their friendſhips and connexions for life. That it may

be exhibited in the moſt uſeful point of light, it is propoſed,

I. To ſhow who the wiſe men are with whom the text directs and encourages us to walk.

II. WHAT it is to walk with them.

III. THE happy conſequences of aſſociating and walking with ſuch excellent company; we ſhall probably become wiſe ourſelves.

I. WHO are the wiſe with whom the text directs and encourages us to walk?

IN the writings of David and Solomon, true religion is generally repreſented under the idea of wiſdom; and pious and righteous men are termed wiſe. This is exemplified in the following and ſimilar paſſages, *The fear of the* LORD *is the beginning of wiſdom.** *The wiſe ſhall inherit glory, but ſhame ſhall be the promotion of fools.*† The wiſe therefore are the ſame as the righteous. They are thoſe who love and fear GOD and under the influence of divine principles, pay a conſcientious regard univerſally to all his commandments. According to theſe royal writers the firſt ſtep, the very beginning of wiſdom is the fear of GOD. All men, however wiſe they may be in other reſpects, who are deſtitute of this, in the language of the ſcriptures, are fools.

THE wiſe more particularly, are men who have been deeply convinced of ſin, and ſeen themſelves to be guilty, ſelf-ruined, inexcuſable offenders, whom GOD might juſtly deſtroy. They have been brought off from every falſe refuge and creature dependance, and known practically, that by the deeds of the law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified. They have been born again, *not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of* GOD.‡ The light of his glory hath ſhined in their hearts in the face of JESUS CHRIST. They *believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.*‖ Their hearts are warm-

* Pſalm cxi 10. † Prov. iii. 35.
‡ John i. 13. ‖ Heb. xi. 6.

ed with divine love, and purified by faith. They are penetrated with a ſenſe of the greatneſs, perfection, and uncreated glories of JEHOVAH. They rejoice in his ſupreme, everlaſting dominion, conſummate and unchangeable bleſſedneſs. They delight in his law after the inward man. They believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the well-beloved and eternal SON of GOD, an all-ſufficient, and the only SAVIOUR of men. They embrace him as the pearl of great price, and the goſpel as *glorious, a faithful ſaying and worthy of all acceptation.* They worſhip the FATHER in ſpirit and in truth; embrace his promiſes, believe his threatenings and tremble at his word. Their hearts are wedded to his people and intereſts, preferring Jeruſalem, his great moral kingdom, to their chief joy. They are inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon to hear the word preached and to attend all divine inſtitutions.

THEY are ennobled with an univerſal philanthropy; *do good to all men, as they have opportunity, and eſpecially to the houſehold of faith.* They *ſpeak the truth every one to his neighbour*, and are punctual to their engagements. Like Cornelius and the excellent Dorcas, they *work righteouſneſs, pray to GOD alway*, and *are full of good works and alms-deeds.* Like Abraham and Joſhua they teach and command their families to ſerve the LORD. By faith they overcome the world, and as to the governing and general tenor of their lives, walk in all GOD's ſtatutes and ordinances blameleſs. They chooſe religion for their buſineſs and pleaſure, GOD and heaven for their portion. While others are ſeeking a portion of this world, *they deſire a better country, that is an heavenly: Wherefore GOD is not aſhamed to be their GOD: for he hath prepared for them a city.** As they ſhine as lights in this world, to the glory of GOD and the good of men, *they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament and as the ſtars, nay as the ſun in his ſtrength in the kingdom of their father, forever and ever.*

THESE are the wiſe, the only wiſe in GOD's account. They are wiſe as they chooſe infinitely the beſt por-

* Heb. xi. [illegible].

tion, act from the nobleſt principles, purſue the beſt ends the glory of GOD and the good of his moral kingdom, and adopt the beſt means to accompliſh theſe glorious purpoſes. This prepares the way,

II. To ſhow what it is to walk with them.

THIS implies that we make them our companions, and conſtantly aſſociate with them for example, inſtruction, and counſel. We cannot walk with them unleſs we make them our aſſociates. That a man may walk or journey with others, he muſt join himſelf to them and go on with them in the ſame road. Walking with others commonly implies the familiarity and intimacy of friends. Friends who aſſociate and travel together are generally familiar with each other, opening their minds freely, and communicating their ſentiments, views, hopes, fears, ſorrows, and joys to each other. They will converſe of the ſubjects which are moſt intereſting and pleaſing to them. Walking with the wiſe not only implies this familiarity, but an earneſt and fixed attention and exertion to become intimately acquainted with their doctrines, examples, and conduct as they reſpect GOD and men. It imports an earneſt inquiſitiveneſs into the reaſons of their hopes and conduct. Wiſe men can render a reaſon of their faith and practice. Their lips preſerve knowledge. Their converſation, inſtructions, and counſels will be wiſe, divine, and momentous. They will *lead in the way of righteouſneſs, in the midſt of the paths of judgment.** In walking with them, men treat them as wiſe, pay an early, earneſt and ſubmiſſive attention to all that inſtruction, reſtraint, and diſcipline, which GOD hath appointed, and which they practiſe in their families; that thoſe under their care may be brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the* LORD. An equal attention muſt be paid to public worſhip and to all public inſtructions. With the wiſe we muſt hear the word always, watching daily at the gates of wiſdom and waiting at the poſts of her doors. We

* Prov. viii. 20.

muſt take heed how we hear, knowing that it is not a vain thing; becauſe it is for our life.

WALKING with the wiſe, implies a conſtant exertion to know, as far as poſſible, their experience: How they came to forſake the fooliſh and live; and, with ſuch engagedneſs and perſeverance, to go in the way of underſtanding: What was the manner of the divine conduct towards them, what were their feelings, views, aims, and reſolutions, and we ſhould ſearch the ſcriptures, to know whether the things we are taught and hear are ſo. In theſe ways, we ſhould as ſoon, and as far as poſſible, ſtrive to acquaint ourſelves with the whole theory of doctrinal and experimental religion. People ſhould open their hearts freely to miniſters, and to people who are moſt eminent for their knowledge and experience in religion, and enquire what doctrines, what preaching, what books, what events and things have been moſt ſerviceable to them in the divine life? They will delight to converſe on theſe ſubjects, and to communicate all the light and inſtruction in their power. Inquiſitiveneſs reſpecting them will excite their concern for ſuch enquirers, and influence them to intercede and wreſtle with GOD for them, that they may know the truth as it is in JESUS. We ſhould with the deepeſt attention receive their communications, and carefully attend to their examples. We ſhould obſerve their piety towards GOD, righteouſneſs and charity towards men, and their ſobriety as it reſpects themſelves; their peaceableneſs, contentment, patience, and ſubmiſſion to the divine government. While we obſerve we muſt imitate theſe excellencies, and be aſſiduous and perſevering in our obſervance and imitation.

THE great deſign of walking with the wiſe, is to make us really wiſe and holy as they are; to love and practiſe as they do. To this all the perfections, commands, and mercies of GOD oblige us every moment. *Now GOD commandeth all men every where to repent.* To this all the inſtructions and examples of the wiſe urge us. Until we have the wiſdom which begins in the

love and fear of GOD we are fools and do nothing which can please him. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD.** *Without faith it is impossible to please him.*† Until men believe in *JESUS, the wrath of GOD abideth on them, and they cannot see life.* They can have no security for one day or hour from going down into the pit whence there is no redemption. How deeply should every mind be impressed with a sense of the importance of so walking with the wise as to become immediately like them! How should every one instantly *cry after knowledge, and lift up his voice for understanding? Seek her as silver, and search for her, as for hid treasures?* That he may *understand the fear of the LORD: and find the knowledge of GOD.*‡

THIS brings me,

III. To show the happy consequences of associating and walking with such excellent company; we shall probably become wise ourselves.

IT will here be of great importance to state and illustrate the true idea of the text and of other similar passages of scripture. This shall be done with integrity and freedom, paying the strictest attention to the analogy and general language of the scripture. To give even general satisfaction on the subject, while such different opinions are entertained with respect to what have generally been called the means of grace, I am deeply sensible will be extremely difficult if not impossible. But whatever difficulties may attend the subject, it is of great importance to know whether there be any such things as means of grace, or whether the divine institutions have any instrumentality, in the conviction, sanctification and salvation of men. It is of immense importance to know whether there are any teachings, examples, or companions which an unregenerate man can have, or any circumstances in which he can be, which may render his sanctification and salvation more probable than if it were otherwise, that he might immediately enjoy those teachings and compan-

* Rom. viii. 8. † Heb. xi. 6. ‡ Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

ions, and if poſſible be put into thoſe circumſtances. It muſt alſo be of great moment to others to know, what is their duty towards their children, and towards mankind in general, and eſpecially towards the Heathen; and what reaſons and encouragements there are for inſtructions, reſtraints, and human exertions with reſpect to the ſalvation of ſinners. If any thing can poſſibly be done to render their ſalvation, under the divine economy of mercy, more probable, than if it were not done, it is of incalculable importance that it be immediately effected. But if, on the other hand, there are no means of grace, as ſome maintain, and the goſpel and its inſtitutions have no effect or inſtrumentality, in the conviction, converſion, and ſalvation of ſinners, what reaſons and encouragements are there to inſtruct and reſtrain children, to preach the goſpel to ſinners, to ſend miſſionaries and bibles to the Heathen? What encouragement or motive can there be for children and the unregenerate to read the word, or attend the preaching of the goſpel? What encouragement to keep good company rather than evil? On this ground, how can we maintain the wiſdom or goodneſs of GOD in his own inſtitutions? Or how can it be ſhown, that he honors them as his own? I freely acknowledge and avow it as my opinion that the goſpel and its inſtitutions, under the divine economy, are means of grace. From the ſcriptures I am conſtrained to believe, that ordinarily GOD ſaves none without them: For how ſhall men *believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of* GOD.* Since this is the caſe there muſt be a greater probability of the ſalvation of impenitent ſinners, other things being equal, under the enjoyment of goſpel inſtitutions, than where they are not. Eſpecially, if the goſpel be preached clearly and powerfully, and if there be good men whoſe lights ſhine before others, and who educate their chil-

* Rom. x. 14, 17.

dren *in the nurture and admonition of the* LORD. This truth it is humbly conceived, is expreſſed in my text. *He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe.* The word he is not reſtricted to any particular claſs of people; but appears to be uſed as an univerſal term, for any he, and every he, or perſon, who ſhall walk with the wiſe. The clauſe oppoſed to it is alſo univerſal, which is a further evidence that the he, and companion are uſed in the univerſal ſenſe. The words therefore expreſs the ſtrong, natural tendency which an intimate and perſevering walk with the wiſe, has to make men doctrinally and ſpiritually wiſe. They import, that this, ordinarily, is the way in which thoſe who ever obtain wiſdom become wiſe; and that there is no rational proſpect of obtaining it in any other. It is apprehended that they do not contain an abſolute promiſe; but expreſs the natural and general tendency of walking with wiſe men; and the greater probability which, according to all human experience and obſervation, and the common diſpenſations of providence, there is that they will be made wiſe rather than others. There are other paſſages to be underſtood in the ſame light. Particularly Proverbs xxii. 6. *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go: and when he is old he will not depart from it.* That is, the happy impreſſions made, and the habits formed, in childhood, will ordinarily remain and extend their happy influence through life. The writings of all men of learning and obſervation, and all ancient and modern experience atteſt this truth. The beneſits of a good education, to individuals, to families, to church and commonwealth, have been found to be incalculably great. Nevertheleſs, neither this nor ſome other ſimilar paſſages are to be underſtood as univerſally true. Experience demonſtrates that in many inſtances this is not the caſe. This proverb, like the text, expreſſes the ſtrong natural tendency of ſuch an education to ſecure the event, and the greater probability of it in this way, than in any other.*

* Some divines conſider this as an abſolute promiſe to thoſe who dedicate their children in faith, and educate them

To the ſame effect is 1 Timothy iv. 16. *Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.** The words, at leaſt, import that in this way a miniſter will moſt probably obtain the ſalvation of his own ſoul, and be a ſucceſsful preacher, ſaving the ſouls of his hearers. It cannot be reaſonably pretended that this is an abſolute promiſe that a good miniſter ſhall ſave all univerſally who hear him; but it expreſſes a greater probability of his ſucceſs in this way than in any other; and that ſinners under ſuch a miniſter are more likely to be ſaved than under one of a different character.

It is readily conceded, that there are no abſolute promiſes of ſalvation made to any unregenerate men: That they never will do any thing while unregenerate and unbelieving to prevent the wrath of God from abiding on them, nor be in any circumſtances in which God is under the leaſt obligation to them, by promiſe or otherwiſe, to ſave them, or in which they are not expoſed to eternal condemnation. Regeneration is undoubtedly an unpromiſed favor effected ſolely by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Nevertheless, there is a far greater probability of the ſalvation of ſome unregenerate men than others, and the uſe of means, or a moſt ſerious and conſtant attention to them is of infinite moment. This, it is apprehended, is not only taught in the paſſages already adduced, but it is the inſtruction which the whole tenor and general language of the bible gives us. All arguments which ſhow the neceſſity of a divine revelation, and God's giving it to us evince this truth.

agreeably to the divine will. Taken in this view, it would prove the point under conſideration more forcibly than in the other.

* Some by *hear thee*, in this text, underſtand *obey thee*, but this is making the text, or the apoſtle, to ſay nothing for the encouragement of the good miniſter; for ſuch wicked miniſters as propheſied in Chriſt's name, caſt out devils, and did many wonderful works, ſaved all their hearers who obeyed the goſpel.

For if mankind could as probably have been saved without a revelation as with, it cannot be shown how a revelation was necessary, why God hath given one, or that there is any wisdom or goodness in his giving us the scriptures. Why are not they and all divine institutions in vain to natural men, if they are not means of grace; and do not render the salvation of men more probable where they are enjoyed, than where they are not? But certainly God does nothing in vain; nothing but what is, in the highest degree, wise and good. To suppose that he has given his word, and ordained a variety of institutions which are not adapted, in the most wise and happy manner, to answer the end of their appointment; or that he will not honor his own institutions, and succeed them beyond all other means, is indeed an high reflection on his wisdom and goodness. Hence it is evident that the salvation of sinners, under the enjoyment of the gospel, other things being equal, is much more probable than the salvation of those who do not enjoy it.

FURTHER, the scriptures more clearly determine this point, as they declare, that divine instructions are appointed and designed of God for this very end to prevent men in general, sinners as well as saints, from abandoning themselves to wickedness, and to make them holy and happy. Most expressly in point are those words of the Psalmist, *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known unto their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them unto their children: that they might set their hope in* GOD, *and not forget the works of* GOD; *but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation.** The Psalmist here doubtless refers to that remarkable precept given by Moses, Deut. vi. 6, 7. *And these words*

* Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

which I command thee this day ſhall be in thine heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. His words therefore ſtrongly imply, that this is of vaſt moment, and by far the moſt probable way, nay, the only probable way in which men may be kept from a fixed courſe of rebellion againſt GOD, and be influenced to repoſe their confidence in JEHOVAH, and keep his commandments. The words of the Pſalmiſt not only expreſs the deſign of GOD in giving this precept, but his influence to make the enjoined inſtructions ſucceſsful. They therefore who walk with ſuch wiſe people as have the law of GOD written in their hearts and zealouſly and diligently teach it, with all his wonderful works unto their children, domeſtics, and fellow-men, as they have opportunity, are certainly in a more probable way to become wiſe and be ſaved than others.

SOLOMON aſſures us, that he wrote the book of Proverbs, *To give ſubtilty to the ſimple, to the young man wiſdom and knowledge.** If this was his deſign, and the deſign of the holy ſpirit in inditing it, then certainly thoſe who have the Proverbs are more likely to become wiſe than others who have them not, eſpecially if they ſeriouſly and diligently attend to them.

INDEED the divine word is declared to have great effect and influence in convincing, humbling, and converting ſinners. In the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, it is written, *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the LORD is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple.*† *Is not my word like as a fire? ſaith the LORD: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*‡ GOD repreſents, that it ſhall as certainly have its effect, as the rain and ſnow which come down from heaven, and water the earth, and cauſe it to bring forth and bud, and yield all manner of fruit. Saith he, *So ſhall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it ſhall not re-*

* Prov. i. 2, 3, 4. † Pſalm cxix. 7. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 29.

*turn unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſend it.** The divine word, in the economy of ſalvation, is here repreſented, juſt as efficacious in moral productions, as the rain, ſnow, and dews are in thoſe which are natural. Natural means have no efficacy in the productions of nature, without the divine agency, more than moral ones have in thoſe of the moral kind. GOD as abſolutely claims to be the author of all exiſtence, life, events, and things in the world of nature, as in that of grace; and they are as fully aſcribed to him. It is written, *Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. In him we live, and move, and have our being. He preſerveth man and beaſt*; and *giveth food unto all fleſh.* But does he effect theſe things without means? Or can they, according to his eſtabliſhed mode of operation, be effected without them? Is not this truly the caſe with reſpect to ſpiritual productions in general?

IN the New Teſtament, ſanctification, faith, and all the graces which CHRIST aſketh for his people, as their great interceſſor, are aſcribed by him to the efficacy of the goſpel. He aſks and wills that they ſhould all be given through the word. Read his interceſſory prayer. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word.*† Our bleſſed SAVIOUR certainly knew the divine mode of operation on the human mind, and what efficacy, or inſtrumentality, was to be aſcribed to the word, and he uſes the moſt expreſſive prepoſition in the Greek language, to denote cauſality and efficacy, in both the forequoted verſes. It is the ſame which is uſed John i. 3, where it is written, *All things were made by him.* It is the ſame which the apoſtle uſes Romans xi. 36, where ſpeaking of GOD, he ſays, *And through him are all things.* The ſame is alſo uſed in Coloſſians i. 16, where it is written concerning CHRIST, *All things were created by him.* Can it there-

* Iſaiah lv. 10, 11. † John xvii. 17, 20.

fore be modeſt, after theſe ſtrong repreſentations and all-availing interceſſions of JESUS, to pretend that the written word and preached goſpel are not means of grace, or that unregenerate ſinners who enjoy them are not in a more probable way of ſalvation than others?

FURTHER, the apoſtle aſſirms, that *by the law is the knowledge of ſin*; and that it *was a ſchool maſter to bring us to* CHRIST:* That *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through* GOD *to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations and every high thing which exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of* GOD *and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of* CHRIST.† He alſo declares, that *It pleaſed* GOD *by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*: and that the preaching of CHRIST, *unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, is the power of* GOD, *and the wiſdom of* GOD.‡ Theſe paſſages import, that the goſpel is the grand and only means of ſalvation, and that by the power of GOD, operating in the churches and places where it is read and preached, it is made powerful and efficacious to the effectual calling and eternal ſalvation of all the choſen and called. Paul was ſent to the Gentiles, and miniſters are all ſent to mankind, as he was to them, *to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto* GOD, *that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them that are ſanctified through faith.*‖ Indeed the ſaints are declared to be begotten by the miniſtry;§ and *to be born again by the word of* GOD.¶ They are repreſented as carried forward, in all the various grades of their ſanctification, by the goſpel, until made perfect in CHRIST. By its miniſters and ordinances, they are kept from being children toſſed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine; and are edified until they *all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the ſon of* GOD, *unto a perfect man, unto*

* Rom. iii. 20, Gal. iii. 24.
† 2 Cor. x. 5, 6.
‡ 1 Cor. i. 21, 24.
‖ Acts xxvi 18.
§ 1 Cor. iv. 15, and Philemon 10.
¶ 1 Peter i. 23.

the measure and stature of the fulness of CHRIST.* Nay, the church is represented as being washed, as universally by the word, as by the blood of CHRIST. *Even as* CHRIST *also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word.*†

MOST certainly therefore unregenerate sinners, under the enjoyment of the gospel, are in a far more probable way of salvation than others, who have not this invaluable treasure. Nay, according to the scriptures which have been quoted, some unregenerate sinners, under the light of the gospel, are in circumstances in which their salvation is much more probable than that of others. Those who have parents, masters, and connexions who love CHRIST, and are eminent for piety and righteousness, and educate them, as the word teaches them; and who are attentive and obedient to their instructions and restraints, are more likely to be wise and happy, than those who have been suffered to grow up in ignorance and vice. Those who sit under an evangelical, searching, and powerful ministry, whose examples, as well as doctrines, are good, and whose labors are abundant, are more likely to become wise and good than those who have teachers of an opposite character. When men are so constant and attentive in studying the scriptures, and in attending the word preached as to become well indoctrinated, the probability is still increased. If they become deeply thoughtful, are convinced of their sin, misery, and danger, and cry out with earnestness what they must do to be saved, the probability becomes still greater. If the spirit of GOD be poured out in an extraordinary manner, and sinners are flying to CHRIST as clouds and doves to their windows, and if saints act in character, and their lights shine before men, the probability that sinners will be converted to GOD, becomes proportionably greater. The divine

* Ephes. iv. 11, 14. † Chap. v. 25, 26.

word, all experience and obſervation, I am perſuaded, will warrant theſe obſervations.

It is important nevertheleſs to obſerve, that theſe probabilities do not ariſe, in any of theſe caſes, from any good qualifications in unregenerate men, but wholly from what God is doing and others are doing for them, and from what has been found ordinarily to be his mode of operation in ſimilar caſes.

Nor are theſe means, in any meaſure, the leſs neceſſary, nor the probabilities, in theſe caſes, in the leaſt diminiſhed from the conſideration, that regeneration is the peculiar and ſole work of the holy SPIRIT; or that means themſelves, independent of the divine influence, can effect nothing. If God will not operate without means, or but where they are uſed, they are juſt as neceſſary as though they in themſelves were efficacious. It was juſt as neceſſary to the taking of Jericho, to compaſs it about ſeven times and to blow with the rams horns, according to the divine precept, as though this would have opened all its gates, and ſhaken it to its foundations. Nor was it leſs neceſſary for Naaman to dip ſeven times in Jordan, than if the waters had been efficacious to heal him independent of the divine operation. When the rod of Moſes was appointed as the mean, or ſign of working the miracles in Egypt, it was juſt as neceſſary in their production, as though the rod itſelf had been ſufficiently efficacious to have wrought them. Neither the rod nor Moſes himſelf had any power to effect theſe wonderful works more than the means of grace have to renew and ſave ſinners; but thoſe wonders never could have been wrought, the ſea divided, waters brought out of the rock, and Iſrael ſaved without them. The probabilities, in the caſes mentioned, are juſt the ſame, whether the means themſelves produce the effects, or whether God, when he has brought men into ſuch and ſuch circumſtances, of his ſovereign mercy renews them by his ſpirit independently of all means. It is abundantly evident, from the ſcriptures which have been adduced, that the goſpel and its in-

ſtitutions are of abſolute neceſſity, and under the divine ſuperintendency and influence, of great efficacy, however ignorant men are of the divine mode of operation.

HENCE, as all theſe means and circumſtances, by which the ſalvation of men is made probable, are found, in a peculiar manner, among the wiſe, ſo thoſe who walk with them are much more likely to become wiſe than others. Particularly,

1. As walking with the wiſe will be a powerful preſervative from many temptations and dangers, to which otherwiſe men will be conſtantly expoſed, and which will increaſe their folly, render it habitual, and their ſalvation very improbable.

IT will moſt effectually guard them againſt evil company, corrupt examples and books. Evil company and examples are exceedingly dangerous and corrupting. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.** *One ſinner deſtroyeth much good.*† The profane and filthy converſation of wicked men, their corrupt principles and licentious examples, lead on to every kind of wickedneſs; to the moſt fatal errors, to contempt of GOD, his word, and of all divine inſtitutions; and to all the groſs iniquities, which diſhonor and ruin individuals and families, injure ſociety, diſturb its peace and mar its beauty. The influence of ſuch men is like a deadly contagion. By connexion with them perſons at once become contaminated, imbibe the worſt ſentiments, and contract the worſt habits, and ſoon become ſo accuſtomed to do evil, that they can no ſooner learn to dó well, than *the Ethiopian can change his ſkin and the leopard his ſpots.* Their hearts are hardened, and the divine ſpirit, grieved and quenched, forſakes them. Given up to their own luſts, they work iniquity with greedineſs, and their ſteps take hold on death. Such company is moſt dangerous to all, but eſpecially to young people. How many thouſands and millions are ruined by it, not only

* 1 Cor. xv. 33. † Eccl. ix. 18.

with reſpect to the preſent, but future world? But in the company of the wiſe, by attention to their inſtructions, counſels, and examples, theſe dangers and fatal conſequences may be avoided. Men may eſcape the groſſer pollutions of the world, and more probably become wiſe and good.

2. WALKING with the wiſe puts men in the way of all that inſtruction by precept and example, and of that influence from good doctrines and good converſation, by which it pleaſeth GOD, in the common diſpenſations of his providence, to make mankind wiſe unto ſalvation. Some degree of doctrinal knowledge ſeems to be abſolutely neceſſary to the ſalvation of men. They muſt know that there is a GOD, and have ſome juſt ideas of his character, or they cannot love him. They cannot be rational Chriſtians without knowing the evidences of Chriſtianity; nor their exceeding ſinfulneſs without an acquaintance with the law by which is the knowledge of ſin. Until they know their exceeding ſinfulneſs they can ſee no need of the phyſician, nor will they come unto CHRIST that they might have life. That ſinners may be ſaved thoſe impediments muſt be removed. Walking with the wiſe is the moſt ſpeedy and effectual means of doing it. In their ſociety young people become early inſtructed in the doctrines and duties of religion. They obtain that nurture and admonition which GOD has appointed, to prevent their being an ignorant and ſtubborn generation, and to cauſe them to ſet their hope in GOD. It moſt effectually trains them up in the way in which they ſhould go, and ordinarily ſecures them from departing from it, when they are old. This will bring them, in the earlieſt periods of life, into an intimate acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and with the beſt ſummaries of Chriſtian doctrines. The beſt examples will be conſtantly preſented to them. They will ordinarily read the beſt books, hear the moſt ſound, experimental, and powerful preaching. At the ſame time, they will hear the beſt prayers, and enjoy the moſt wiſe and heavenly converſation. The whole

tendency of this will be to give them the earlieſt and deepeſt conviction of ſin, of their periſhing need of the great phyſician; and to awaken them to fly without delay from the wrath to come. This will moſt powerfully conciliate their eſteem for good men and good things, and influence them to continue their walk with the wiſe. This will afford them the beſt advantages, as they advance through the various ſtages of life, to become more wiſe, and to be more uſeful and happy.

3. WALKING with the wiſe ſecures the moſt important friendſhips, and puts men under all that external influence which they can enjoy to make them orderly, wiſe and uſeful.

FRIENDSHIP has an almoſt inconceivable influence upon mankind. If we highly eſteem and have a ſincere friendſhip for a man, and are convinced of his cordial good will to us, his opinions, advice, and example will have a very great effect upon us. The more valuable it is, the more ſalutary and uſeful it will be. As walking with the wiſe conciliates eſteem, it ſecures the moſt important friendſhips, and brings men under the moſt ſalutary and happy influence imaginable. Their friendſhip and influence is above all others uſeful and important. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.** Our bleſſed SAVIOUR aſſures us, that wiſe, evangelical miniſters, and good people *are the ſalt of the earth and the light of the world.*† They, by their doctrines and examples, illuminate and purify it. They preſerve it from univerſal and total corruption and darkneſs. They are wiſe to win ſouls. Their friendſhip is moſt cordial and diſintereſted, moſt faithful and permanent. They above all others love the ſouls of men, and employ their influence, inſtructions, examples, and prayers for their ſalvation. They have known the terrors of the LORD, and taſted of the ſweetneſs of his mercy. They have the moſt affecting views of the worth of ſouls. Hence they

* Prov. xii. 26. † Matth. v. 13, 14.

have the moſt ardent deſires that others ſhould taſte and ſee, that the LORD is good. They will inſtruct, counſel, warn, and converſe with ſuch freedom, tenderneſs, fidelity, and concern as no other people will ever do. Their prayers will be fervent and importunate, calculated to impreſs the mind with a ſenſe of the reality and vaſt moment of eternal concerns. Their prayers are effectual and avail much. What can be more powerful than the influence of ſuch friendſhip to make men wiſe and uſeful?

4. GOD himſelf is near to the wiſe, by his ſpirit and grace. In his church or houſe, where they are, he is preſent in all his ſanctifying and ſaving influences. HE ſays concerning his houſe, or the church, *This is my reſt forever: here will I dwell for I have deſired it. I will abundantly bleſs her proviſion: I will ſatisfy her poor with bread.** CHRIST hath ſaid concerning his miniſtring ſervants, *Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*† To his people he hath promiſed, *Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.*‡ He walketh among his people, in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, to hear their prayers, to quicken the dead in ſins, to illuminate, comfort, and ſave his people. Here, in company with the wiſe, ſinners are born into the family of heaven, as well as ſaints comforted, edified, and prepared for their inheritance in light. *Of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, this and that man was born in her.*‖ Among thoſe who heard our SAVIOUR preach, hundreds believed and became his true diſciples. Of ſinners who attended the apoſtles' miniſtry thouſands were repeatedly joined unto the LORD in one day. When the noble Bereans heard Paul preach the word, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, many believed; but we have no ſuch accounts with reſpect to any who did not hear the word, or had not been trained up in the knowledge of the ſcriptures. Indeed the divine oracles do not give us the leaſt hint, that any perſon

* Pſalm cxxxii. 14, 15,
† Matth. xxviii. 20.
‡ Chap. xviii. 20.
‖ Pſalm lxxxvii. 15.

was ever converted and saved, but by the word. Nay, do they not strongly imply the contrary with respect to all adults?

5. ALL observation and experience teach that walking with the wise is the most probable, nay, the only way to become wise.

MEN of the greatest learning and wisdom, of the most heedful attention to the dispensations of providence, and the manner of the divine conduct towards mankind and the church, in all ages, by their instructions and observations, attest and confirm this truth. Solomon assures us that those who walk with fools will be fools themselves, and be finally destroyed. He directs men to forsake the foolish and live. But he declares, *The tongue of the wise to be health, and the law of the wise to be a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death:** *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: The tongue of the just is as choice silver: The lips of the righteous feed many.*† All commands and dissuasives in the proverbs, and other parts of the scriptures, to forsake the society of evil men; and all precepts and encouragements to engage people to walk with the wise imply its importance; for if there were no more probability of their becoming wise and glorifying GOD in the company of the wise, than among wicked, it would be a matter of indifference with whom they walked. It has ever been found that instruction and example have a wonderful effect to assimilate men into the very image of those whom they see and hear. Those who have been educated by good men, faithfully instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, habituated to secret and family prayer, to sanctify the sabbath, and to reverence the name, house, word, and ordinances of GOD, have generally been peaceable, orderly, and useful through life. Especially has this been the case if they have continued to walk with the wise. This, were it to go no further, is of incalculable advantage to individuals, to

* Prov. xii. 18, and xiii. 14. † Chap. x. 11, 20, 21.

families, and to the community. But these however great are the very least advantages. All experience and observations show, that among these have been found those generally, who have appeared truly to fear God and work righteousness. From these commonly have been raised up the most firm and eminent pillars of church and commonwealth. Of these, and not of the Heathen, not of the untaught and viciously educated, has the church in all ages received her children. By these has it been propagated and supported. This at once shows the immense importance of walking with the wise, and that it is the only probable way in which any may expect ever to be holy or happy.

However, it is of great moment to observe, and it ought to sink deeply into all our ears and hearts, that the greatest probabilities are not certainties; and that unless we become really like the wise, imbibing the same spirit and walking as they walk, we shall most certainly, and it may be, very suddenly perish. The foolish virgins went forth with the wise, but having no oil in their lamps, the door was shut against them, and they could not enter into the marriage. Judas perished from the family of Jesus, and there are first who shall be last. They that are in the flesh, let their advantages be what they may, cannot please God. Without faith it is impossible to please him. His wrath abideth upon all unbelievers. Every hour's delay and continuance in impenitence and unbelief is criminal and dangerous beyond all calculation. Those who like Capernaum are exalted up to heaven in point of privileges may suddenly be cast down to hell.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. The character given of the wise, and what has been discoursed concerning walking with them may lead us, with that seriousness and impartiality which becomes us in a point of such moment, to examine ourselves whether we are wise? Nay, whether we

are even ſo much as walking with them? Have we even the beginnings of wiſdom? Do we fear GOD and depart from evil? Do we love the MOST HIGH and rejoice in him; in his ſupreme everlaſting dominion and bleſſedneſs? Do we love good men fervently with a pure heart? Are they our choſen companions, with whom is all our delight? Do we walk with them in a courſe of hearing and reading the word, of ſelf-examination and meditation; in the practice of prayer, righteouſneſs, and alms deeds? Do we regard the great, ſpiritual, and glorious objects which they love? Are we with them doing juſtice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with GOD? Are we ſeeking our portion in him, and in heaven, among all his ſaved holy ones? Should we find our characters, on examination, to correſpond with that of the wiſe, what joy muſt it give us, as children of the light and of the day! How will it excite our gratitude and praiſe, and conſtrain us more and more to love GOD, and to practiſe all evangelical obedience? If our character ſhould be the reverſe, it may ſerve to convince us of our ſin and danger, and awaken us to flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us. That the word may be profitable to you, I beſeech you, brethren, in the language of the apoſtle, *Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own ſelves: Know ye not your own ſelves, how that JESUS CHRIST is in you, except ye be reprobate?**

II. OUR ſubject teacheth us the ineſtimable worth of good company, and that it is a moſt happy circumſtance in the life of all perſons whoſe lot, in divine providence, has been caſt in the company of wiſe and good men. Their ſociety is far more precious than gold and rubies, than mountains of myrrh and frankincenſe, or than hills of ſpicery and balm? Theſe may enrich, adorn, perfume, and pleaſe men, for a moment; but the former, by the divine bleſſing, may enlighten, beautify, and ſave your ſouls. They may

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

be the means of delivering you from ſhame and numerous evils in this world, from wrath in the future; and of conducting you to the inheritance of all things. If we have been educated in religious families, enjoyed an evangelical miniſtry, and by the influence of pious friends and connexions been reſtrained from the ſociety of wicked men, obſcene and corrupt books, it has been happy for us indeed. In this way we have probably been preſerved from the groſſer pollutions of the world; and it may have been the leading ſtep, the great link in the chain of providence, of the holineſs of our hearts, if indeed we are holy, and of all our preſent uſefulneſs, dignity, and comfort. Very ſmall circumſtances, a good or bad companion, a good or an obſcene or deiſtical book, determine the eternal life or death of thouſands. In the divine purpoſes the means and end are inſeparably connected. Innumerable multitudes are, doubtleſs, now rejoicing among the bleſſed in conſequence of a good education, and of pious friends and connexions, and millions have been miſerable in both worlds by reaſon of the contrary. If we have been favored with the former, with what ardors of love and gratitude ſhould we praiſe our great benefactor? How careful ſhould we be never to forget his benefits? With what holy caution and prayerfulneſs ſhould we improve them to the divine glory and our own ſalvation?

III. Of what inconceivable importance is it that there ſhould be communities of wiſe and good people, Chriſtian families, churches and paſtors? And that aged people be grave and holy, that there may be wiſe men, with whom others may walk and obtain wiſdom? Had not the Lord left unto us this ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been as Sodom, and we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah. Of what infinite moment is it that parents and heads of families be holy, and like Abraham command their children and their houſeholds after them, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment, that the children and domeſtics may not be companions of

fools whom GOD will deſtroy? What can poſſibly have a more favorable aſpect on the uſefulneſs, purity, and happineſs of the riſing generation, and on the peace and proſperity of Jeruſalem, than that heads of families be wiſe? That teachers be wiſe, taking heed to themſelves, to their doctrine, and to the whole flock? And that profeſſing Chriſtians ſhould be wiſe, *blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of* GOD *without rebuke in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom they ſhine as lights in the world?* How do the perfections and commands of GOD oblige us to theſe duties? How does the divine honor, the good of children, the ſalvation of men, and the proſperity of church and commonwealth plead with us to awake to them? O that our hearts might be penetrated with a ſenſe of their immenſe importance. How happy ſhould we be to render ſuch ſervices to men? What a ſweet ſavor ſhould we be unto GOD? Should we not indeed be unto him for a name, and for a praiſe, and for a glory in time and forever?

IV. WITH what fear, caution, and prayerfulneſs ought all to chooſe their company and connexions? Eſpecially thoſe who are moſt intimate and important? With what earneſtneſs ſhould they ſeek and cleave to the wiſe? Attend to their counſels, converſation, and examples? The good or bad conſequences of men's connexions are not confined to themſelves, but often extend to their poſterity through a ſucceſſion of ages. GOD ſheweth mercy unto a thouſand generations, even forever, unto them who love him and keep his commandments.* The good effects of their inſtructions, examples, and prayers extend to poſterity through numerous years. But when parents are looſe and wicked, and neglect the education of their children, ſuffer them to grow up in ignorance and vice, corrupted by examples, and in principles, they not only become a corrupt and abandoned generation, but the wickedneſs is naturally propagated from age to age. Children approve and adopt the wicked principles and practices of

* Exodus xx. 6.

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* Exodus xx. 6.

their fathers, commonly grow worſe and worſe, and the curſe of GOD, for a long time, deſcends upon them, as the natural conſequence of their fathers' ſins. Hence GOD is ſaid to viſit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.† Nothing can be a more powerful temptation to ſin, than evil men; and the more near and intimate, fixed and permanent the connexions are, the more injurious and fatal will they be. Certainly therefore if any thing can challenge the caution or prayers of mankind, it muſt be this, that they form not their connexions and friendſhips with corrupt and wicked men, and that they walk with the wiſe. Surely if we regard GOD, our ſouls, the good of our families, our friends or poſterity, we ſhall chooſe the wiſe for our friends, and be companions of all thoſe who fear the LORD.

V. LET all be exhorted to walk with wiſe men. Highly eſteem them, moſt cordially and intimately unite with them. Know, that the moment you become alienated from them, forſake their counſels, examples, and worſhip, you will probably ſeal your own perdition. As well might the wonders in Egypt and the fields of Zoar have been wrought, the ſea divided and waters brought out of the rock of flint, without the rod of Moſes, as you can be ſaved without the appointed means. The waters of Iſrael, how much ſoever they may be deſpiſed, are far better than Abana, and Pharpar, and all the rivers of Damaſcus! If you have walked with the wiſe, cleave to them with invincible reſolution and perſeverance. If any have companied with the vicious and profane, let them be convinced of their folly and danger, forſake the fooliſh and live. Feel the obligations and motives which preſs you to theſe duties. Do not the commands, the mercies, the promiſes, and threatenings of GOD, your own neceſſities and eternal welibeing require you to go in the way of underſtanding? Hear the commands and expoſtulations of your heavenly Father, *How*

† Exodus xx. 5, 6, and chap. xxxiv. 7.

long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity, and ſcorners delight in ſcorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: Behold I will pour out my ſpirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you * Walking with the fooliſh there will be every thing to deſtroy you. Having refuſed when the ALMIGHTY called, and having diſregarded when he ſtretched out his hand, having ſet at nought all his counſel, and refuſed his reproof, will he not laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh? Will you not eat of the fruit of your own doings and be filled with your own devices? But walking with the wiſe, all external advantages will unite their influence to make you wiſe and happy. You will enjoy the beſt company, the beſt preaching, the beſt books, and the beſt examples. You will be united with thoſe among whom CHRIST walketh, and upon whom his ſpirit is poured out; whoſe prayers he hears, and whoſe inſtructions and examples he bleſſes to the good of ſouls. But I beſeech you, by no means to reſt eaſy with a bare external walk with them; but become immediately wiſe yourſelves. Know that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the LORD. If you remain deſtitute of this, the door may be ſoon ſhut againſt you by him who ſhutteth and no man openeth. Be wiſe indeed. Then you will love the truth, your brethren, the houſe and ordinances of GOD, and nothing ſhall harm or offend you. You will have peace and joy in believing. All wiſe men will eſteem and walk with you; the divine SPIRIT will ſanctify, guide, and comfort you, and the angelic armies will camp round about and miniſter unto you. Imbibing the ſpirit of the wiſe, and walking as they walk, their comforts will be your comforts, their GOD will be your GOD, and their heaven will be yours. With them you will love, adore, and worſhip HIM who ſitteth on the throne and the LAMB for ever and ever. AMEN.

* Prov. i. 22, 23.

DISCOURSE XII.

On folly, its progreſs, and the deſtruction of fools.

PROVERBS xiii. 20. The laſt part.

BUT a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.

THESE important words import, that numbers of mankind, though rational creatures, endowed with noble powers of mind, and though they eſteem and profeſs themſelves to be wiſe, are nevertheleſs the moſt egregious fools. They further import, that ſuch is the depravity and madneſs of men, that many, in neglect and contempt of the wiſe, of all their excellent counſels and examples, and the happy conſequences of walking with them, prefer the company of thoſe fools. By this they demonſtrate their hatred of wiſdom, and love of folly. They at once forfeit the dignity and character of wiſe men, and exhibit a ſtriking evidence of the exceeding madneſs and turpitude of their hearts. The words, at the ſame time, moſt expreſsly declare the fatally dreadful conſequences of their conduct. They *ſhall be deſtroyed.* Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways; and the way of peace

they have not known.* Solomon, in the text, repreſents, in an alarming point of light, the fatal and tremendous conſequences of bad company. More fully to illuſtrate the ſentiments, it is propoſed

I. To ſhow who are the fools of whom he ſpeaks, and to give a ſketch of the progreſs of their folly.

II. WHAT it is to become a companion of theſe fools.

III. THE danger and fatal conſequences of connexions with ſuch wicked company.

I. I AM to ſhow who are the fools of whom Solomon ſpeaks, and to give a ſketch of the progreſs of their folly.

BY fools, in the ſenſe of the wiſe man, we are not to underſtand perſons deficient in their intellects and naturally incapacitated to conduct wiſely; but thoſe who though bleſſed with good natural powers abuſe them, and are deſtitute of ſpiritual diſcernment. In the language of the ſcriptures, fools are oppoſed to the wiſe, in the ſame manner, as the wicked are to the righteous, and include all wicked men of whatever character or denomination. Mankind univerſally, in a ſtate of nature, are termed *fooliſh and diſobedient.*† *There is none that underſtandeth.*‡ *They are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*§ However noble, learned, and wiſe men are in other reſpects, if they have no faith in GOD, nor fear of him before their eyes, in the opinion of David and Solomon, they are fools. Hence it is written, *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no* GOD.‖ *It is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief.*¶ *Fools make a mock at ſin.*** Eſpecially, they are fools, who even in their hearts are ready to wiſh, or ſay, *There is no* GOD; and who live as though there really was none. This is the character of all groſsly impious and wicked men, who caſt off fear and reſtrain prayer before GOD; who ſport themſelves in miſchief, and mock at ſin. This is the character of

* Rom. iii. 10, 17. † Titus iii. 3. ‡ Rom. iii. 11.
§ Jer. iv. 22. ‖ Pſalm xiv. 1. ¶ Prov. x. 23.
** Chap. xiv. 9.

all thoſe, who ſpeak proudly againſt GOD, ſaying, *What is the ALMIGHTY that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?** Who deny the divine omniſcience, ſaying, *The LORD ſhall not ſee, neither ſhall the GOD of Jacob regard it* † *How doth GOD know? Can he judge through the dark cloud?* ‡ Of the ſame character are all thoſe who deny the providence of GOD, and regard not his work, neither conſider the operation of his hands: Thoſe who ſpeak proudly againſt his word, as though it were a human device, or cunningly deviſed fable; and who ſpeak againſt, and profane the ſabbaths and ordinances of GOD, and contemn his worſhip and people. To this claſs may be added, all thoſe, who, in direct contradiction to the ſcriptures, maintain that it ſhall be well with the wicked, and that the reward of his hands ſhall never be given him. Of this character are all who openly profane the name of GOD: Who contemn his wrath and threatenings, his mercies, and the great ſalvation: All wanton, unrighteous, falſe, and perjured perſons: The intemperate, who flow together in places of ſtrong drink, ſpend nights and days in gambling, idleneſs, and paſtimes; and who, in violation of all laws, human and divine, are deſtroying their health, reaſon, reputation, families, ſouls, and bodies in exceſs and diſſipation. Here, in this claſs, are to be found all extortioners, backbiters, thieves, robbers, lovers of pleaſure, the world, and themſelves more than lovers of GOD: All men of wicked hearts and evil practices; all the unbelieving and the abominable, who obey not the goſpel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MEN of theſe characters are termed fools, becauſe they have no ſpiritual underſtanding. They diſcern not the things of the ſpirit of GOD. They are fooliſhneſs unto them. They love folly and darkneſs rather than light. They make the moſt unwiſe and unhappy choice, preferring ſin to holineſs, the vaſſal-

* Job xxi. 15. † Pſalm xciv. 7. ‡ Job xxii. 13.

age of luſt and Satan, to the glorious liberty of the ſons of GOD; the pleaſures of ſenſe to the enjoyment of him, and the inheritance of all things; the unſatisfying enjoyments of a moment to the full joys of eternal life. They feed on huſks and wind, and periſh with hunger, when there is bread enough in the Father's houſe and to ſpare. They hate knowledge, and love death. Hence they are fools. *Madneſs is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.**

THE natural folly of the heart may be greatly increaſed many ways. It is exceedingly increaſed by exerciſe and practice. By vicious exerciſes of heart it is blinded, hardened, and fixed more ſtrongly and habitually in them. All ſin blinds the heart, makes it more inſenſible of the truth, prejudices it more and more againſt it, and all the wiſe and ſalutary inſtructions and counſels of GOD and men. All inward moral feelings and propenſities are ſtrengthened and fixed by exerciſe and habit. The more a man lives in the exerciſes of envy, malice, and revenge, the more ſtrongly thoſe exerciſes operate, and the more fixed and habitual they become. And ſo it is with reſpect to all other vicious exerciſes. Hence as fools live in exerciſes of folly, it is conſtantly progreſſing towards the higheſt degrees of it.

FOLLY is further increaſed by practice, by outward acts of ſin againſt GOD. By the practice of deceit, unrighteouſneſs, pilfering, profanation of the name, word, ſabbaths, and ordinances of GOD, or of any other vices, men grow more and more addicted to them, and the habits of ſinning become ſtronger and are more invincibly fixed. Sin is nouriſhed and greatly increaſed by ſinning.† An inſtance of pilfering ſome trifle, at firſt, may grow up into groſs ſtealing, and confirmed robbery; a profane word may lead on to a fixed habit of blaſphemy. A neglect of public worſhip and the divine ordinances often leads on from one inſtance to another, until men become fixed in the habit

* Eccleſ. ix. 3. † Alitur vitium, creſcitque tangendo. Vice is nouriſhed and grows by touching it.

of a total neglect of them, and live among Christians, and under all the external light of the gospel, like the Heathen. Before men have accustomed themselves to sin, acts of it, though comparatively small, will trouble the conscience and cause remorse, but as they become habituated to it, they lose all tenderness of conscience, and commit the greatest crimes without fear or remorse.

FURTHER, when once the heart becomes bold and hardened in any one sin, men naturally proceed without fear to all other sins. In proportion as it is blinded and hardened, and conscience stupified by the habit of particular sins, men are prepared to commit all sin with greediness. They are naturally led on to the gratification of every lust, and sin upon a more extensive scale. Instead of some particular habits of sin to which they were, at first, more particularly addicted, they now go on with little restraint, or remorse into all manner of sinful indulgencies. Folly therefore, is wonderfully increased, as to its degree, strength, and extent. It becomes irresistible, invincible, and remediless. Hence that remarkable passage, Jeremiah xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Folly is greatly increased by bad books and bad examples. It is a general maxim, That bad books are the public fountains of vice. Bad examples have a great influence both to teach and encourage men to sin.

IT is important further to observe, that in proportion as men make progress in sin, they become more disaffected with the truth, and alienated from GOD. Hence as sin prevails their faith diminishes; and they discredit the word of GOD, commence deists and atheists, denying the LORD who made them. They know that the gospel condemns them, and that if it be true they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; that there can be no hope in their case unless they repent. But they have no sincere desires or purposes to repent. Therefore, blinded and hardened by sin, they, as the

laſt reſort, renounce revelation and become groſs infidels, and finally land in atheiſm. They are ſo abandoned to wickedneſs, and ſo impatient of all reſtraint, that this, for them, is the only way of peace and ſafety. Believing that there is no GOD they commit abominable deeds, robbery, murder, ſuicide, and every kind of iniquity. They wholly quench the ſpirit, and become twice dead, plucked up by the roots. They will not believe, nor come to the light leſt their deeds ſhould be reproved. Thus men progreſs in folly until they fill up the meaſure of their ſin, and become *veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction.** *Evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving, and being deceived.*† I proceed

II. To ſhow what it is to become a companion of theſe fools.

THE word in the Hebrew rendered companion, literally ſignifies to walk with. The verſe as it ſtands in the original text is, He who walketh with the wiſe ſhall be wiſe, but he who walketh with fools ſhall be deſtroyed. To walk with them therefore, chooſing them for our companions, joining ourſelves to their ſociety, and going into their practices, is becoming a companion of them. This, fooliſh and dangerous as it is, men often do, notwithſtanding all the divine counſels and prohibitions, and in oppoſition to all the inſtructions, warnings, and intreaties of parents, miniſters, and good people. The approaches to ſuch company are gradual, and ſometimes almoſt imperceptible. Men are ſnared and taken before they ſee, or even ſo much as ſuſpect the danger. But as ſoon as the company and reſtraints of good people, and the laws of GOD become burdenſome, and the life of the wicked, their gaity, froth, profaneneſs, vanity, and looſe living appears amiable, and the heart deſires to live as they do it is certain that men are far gone in fooliſhneſs. When this is the caſe, and they find pleaſure in hearing the word and ordinances of GOD

* Rom. ix. 22. † 2 Tim. iii. 13.

contemned and ridiculed; when they find ſecret deſires in their hearts that the ſcriptures were not true, or that there was no GOD, and are pleaſed with looſe men, and with books ſubverſive of the ſcriptures and of ſound doctrine, it is certain that they are becoming fools, and entering faſt on the road to everlaſting death. The heart is firſt corrupted, and in this the firſt motions and tendencies of ſin and apoſtacy are to be ſeen. When it becomes thus evil affected, men will ordinarily reſiſt all conviction, break over all reſtraints, and ruſh forward into looſe and vicious company, and go into the ſame licentious courſes to which thoſe with whom they aſſociate have accuſtomed themſelves. They will make light of good men, deſpiſe their counſels, and become alienated from them. They will gradually think lightly of the ſcriptures, contemn and neglect them, with the ordinances and duties which they enjoin. From this they proceed to an open oppoſition of Chriſtianity itſelf. They will reſtrain prayer in ſecret and in the family, and by degrees they will withdraw themſelves from the public worſhip and ordinances. Looſe thinking and looſe living alienate the heart from GOD, and prevent prayer and all communion with him. Men will now join themſelves entirely to wicked company, and will imbibe their ſentiments and gradually be aſſimilated into their likeneſs, and converſe and conduct as they do. If they read at all, it will be their immoral, deiſtical, and corrupt books. When this is the caſe they become indeed companions of fools, and by their conduct demonſtrate that they are fools themſelves. The more entirely they unite with ſuch company, imbibe their wicked diſpoſitions and ſentiments, and walk in the ways of ſuch tranſgreſſors, the greater is their madneſs and danger. As vice increaſes, every thing good is proportionably diſeſteemed, hated, and deſpiſed. In proportion to the turpitude of a man's heart and life, is his blindneſs to divine truth. From ſome low conviction of it, he declines, as vice increaſes, until he has no belief of it, and commences a deni and

from deiſm he progreſſes to atheiſm, and finally to the diſbelief of every thing. This leads to the practice of all things abominable and horrible. This has been the progreſs of wickedneſs and infidelity in France and Germany; and among vicious and abandoned people in other countries. The further men proceed in error and vice, the more entirely they are joined in affection, ſentiment, and practice to wicked men, the more demonſtrably, and in the higher degree, are they the companions of fools. In the more ſingular manner are they expoſed to the threatening in our text.

THIS brings me,

III. To contemplate the danger and fatal conſequences of connexions with ſuch wicked company. *But a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.*

THE words of our text moſt expreſsly denounce deſtruction againſt all who walk with ſuch fools and are companions with them in their folly. Were there no other paſſage in the bible but this, to prove the point, this would be ſufficient to put their deſtruction beyond all doubt. But the ſcripture is abundant in declarations to the ſame effect. All vicious people, who company with fools, are wicked men; and GOD has determined finally and forever to deſtroy all perſons of this character; and has in a great variety of the moſt ſtrong and expreſſive language denounced his judgments and wrath upon them. *But it ſhall not be well with the wicked, neither ſhall he prolong his days which are as a ſhadow; becauſe he feareth not before GOD.** *Wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands ſhall be given him.*† Thus in general terms, the ſcriptures denounce deſtruction againſt all looſe and vicious people. They are deſtroyed in many important reſpects as to this world. Diſappointment, ſhame, miſery, and ſorrow are the inſeparable attendants of ſin in the preſent life.

WHEN once a man commences a companion of fools, the natural tendency of it is to lead him on to

* Eccl. viii. 13. † Iſaiah iii. 11.

remedileſs deſtruction. His very ſtate is that of miſery, and his way is the way of death. All unrenewed men, however good their education, however decent their manners, are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and the whole natural propenſity of their hearts is to folly. Hence it is written, *Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.** No ſooner do they join themſelves to the company of fooliſh men, than every thing unites its influence againſt them. As the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and the habit of it, as has been ſhown, increaſes their blindneſs; and as they will become more and more alienated from good men, and be further removed from all counſels, warnings, advice, examples, and means of reſtraint. This further will be the caſe, as they will not only be removed from all reſtraints and means to do them good, but be in the way of all temptations, inſtruments, and means of further corrupting and deſtroying them. Having joined themſelves to fools, ſinners will conſtantly entice them, and by their evil examples, profane and filthy converſation, will be continually feeding and inflaming their luſts and paſſions. Such miſerable companions will be mutually corrupting, emboldening, and hardening each other in ſin. Satan and his inſtruments will take them captive at pleaſure. Beſides, when men thus rebel againſt GOD, and forſake him, he forſakes them. *Iſrael would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' luſt: and they walked in their own counſels.*† Their condition becomes further a ſtate of death and deſtruction, as their diſaffection to truth and holineſs will be a ſtrong inducement to their embracing all kinds of fatal errors and deluſions; and may provoke their abuſed CREATOR and REDEEMER, to give them up to their own wicked choice. How often has this been the caſe? *And for this cauſe GOD ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie: that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.*‡

* Rom. iii. 16, 17. † Pſalm lxxxi. 11, 12.
‡ 2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12.

PARTICULARLY, it ought to be obſerved, with reſpect to apoſtates from Chriſtianity, who after they have been devoted to GOD, in infancy, and tenderly inſtructed in the things of the kingdom, and accuſtomed to family religion, and public worſhip, if they fall away, ſin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth, their caſe is exceedingly dangerous, if not deſperate. How awful is the language of the apoſtle reſpecting perſons of this character? *There remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* ‖ In what a fearful and tremendous ſtate of miſery and deſtruction are men, when they become the companions of fools? When they forſake GOD, and he forſakes them? This is his language concerning them, *Wo unto them when I depart from them.* § What a fearful proſpect is there that they will moſt certainly be deſtroyed? They will be deſtroyed in many important reſpects as to this world.

THEY will be deſtroyed with reſpect to their character. This is of great worth and importance to men, eſpecially to young men. It is like precious ointment, which is of great value and ſpreads its fragrance far and wide. But as *dead flies cauſe the ointment of the apothecary to ſend forth a ſtinking ſavor: ſo doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wiſdom and honor.* ¶ The wiſe man aſſures us, with reſpect even to one particular vice, that whoſoever ſhall be guilty of it *deſtroyeth his own ſoul:* that a wound and diſhonor ſhall he get, and his reproach ſhall not be wiped away.* When men join themſelves to a company of fools it demonſtrates, that they love folly and are fools themſelves. Their vicious conduct will ſoon be known, and their character will be deſtroyed. *The ſeed of evil doers ſhall never be renowned.* †

THEY are alſo often deſtroyed as to their eſtate, and reduce themſelves to poverty and ſhame. He that followeth vain perſons ſhall have poverty enough. ‡

‖ Heb. x. 26, 27. § Hoſea ix. 12. ¶ Eccl. x. 1.
* Prov. vi. 32, 33. † Iſaiah xiv. 20. ‡ Prov. xxviii. 19.

Among fools there are all the vices which impoverish individuals and families; which destroy health, reason, reputation, life, and the immortal soul. There is idleness, misspense of time and money, intemperance, debauchery, contentions, litigations, frauds, violence, blasphemies, and murders. How impoverishing are these? Hence those admonitions, *Be not amongst wine bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh. For the glutton and drunkard shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.** Does not wantonness bring men to a piece of bread, and cause their wealth to be in the house of strangers? The natural tendency of vice is to destroy health, reason, and life itself; nay, to provoke the ALMIGHTY to destroy them. Is it not therefore written, *The years of the wicked shall be shortened.*† They are shortened by luxury and excess, by the sword of justice, and the judgments of GOD. Fools because of their transgressions are afflicted, and they draw near unto the gates of death.‡ Sometimes they are, for their crimes, deprived of liberty, property, limbs, and life itself by the sword of the civil magistrate. GOD often sends his wrath and curse upon them. For because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience ‖ *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*§ *He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall die in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*¶

THIS destroys men, as to usefulness; so that instead of doing good they do all manner of evil. Like the great adversary of GOD and men, they go about seeking to deceive and destroy mankind; are enemies and opposers of GOD and all righteousness. They are destroyed also with respect to all peace with GOD and communion with him. FOR *there is no peace to the wicked. The way of it they have not known.* Their wickedness and estrangement from GOD exclude them all communion with him. *For what fellowship hath right-*

* Prov. xxiii. 20, 21. † Chap. x. 27. ‡ Psalm cvii. 17, 18.
‖ Eph. v. 6. § Psalm lv. 23. ¶ Jer. xvii. 11.

eouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? And what communion hath light with darkneſs? And what concord hath CHRIST *with Belial?*¶ Thus fools are deſtroyed as to this world. How far they may proceed in ſin, and what evils they may bring on themſelves and others, when once they violate conſcience, reſiſt the light and quench the ſpirit, it is impoſſible to determine.

BE this as it may, all which they can poſſibly ſuffer in this world will be light, and but for a moment, in compariſon with the deſtruction which awaits them in that which is future and eternal. *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget* GOD.* *Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire, and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt: This ſhall be the portion of their cup.*† *As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world. The ſon of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.*‡ *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone.*§ Thus poſitively is it declared, that GOD will deſtroy all the workers of iniquity. In this latter text all unbelievers and infidels of every deſcription, and all the filthy, deceitful, and abominable in the earth, are doomed to the vengeance of eternal fire. Infidels and all who do not obey CHRIST, as well as profeſs his name, and call him LORD, are alſo included in that awful and remarkable paſſage, 2 Theſſalonians i. 7, 8, 9. *When the* LORD JESUS *ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not* GOD, *and obey not our* LORD JESUS CHRIST: *who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the* LORD, *and the glory of his power.* Theſe paſſages doom all the wicked of the earth univerſally to deſtruction. The

¶ 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. * Pſalm ix. 17. † Pſalm xi. 6.
‡ Matth. xiii. 40, 41, 42. § Rev. xxi. 8.

ſcriptures declare the abſolute certainty of this deſtruction; that no arts, numbers, ſtrength, nor combinations of men ſhall be able to prevent its execution. *Though hand join in hand, the wicked ſhall not be unpuniſhed.** *When they ſhall ſay peace and ſafety; then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them and they ſhall not eſcape.*†

IT will be a total deſtruction of all the honor and happineſs of all the fooliſh of the earth. They will awake to everlaſting ſhame and contempt, and GOD will deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell. It will be alſo an unpitied deſtruction, without any abatement, relief, or ceſſation. For now, *He that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favor.*‡ The moſt honorable and wealthy ſinners in this world, who were clothed in ſcarlet and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day, will not be able to obtain a drop of water to cool their tongues, tormented in the quenchleſs flame. *They have no reſt day nor night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up forever and ever.*§ It will be an inſupportable and infinitely dreadful deſtruction. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD!* He makes this challenge of the ſinner, *Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee?*‖ It is a deſtruction compared to cutting men aſunder and grinding them to powder. *And ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.*¶ *Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall it ſhall grind him to powder.***

IN a word, that which above all other conſiderations makes it dreadful is, that it will be an endleſs deſtruction. There will be no remedy in the ſinner's caſe. *He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed and that without remedy.*†† *But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*‡‡

* Prov. xi. 21. † 1 Theſſ. v. 3. ‡ Iſaiah xxvii. 11.
§ Rev. xiv. 11. ‖ Ezek. xxii. 14. ¶ Matth. xxiv. 51.
** Luke xx. 18. †† Prov. xxix. 1. ‡‡ Matth. iii. 12.

*Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** *He that is filthy let him be filthy ſtill.*† Thus ſhall fools be deſtroyed.

As an improvement of this intereſting diſcourſe I ſhall proceed to ſeveral remarks and exhortations.

I. SINCE men become fools and companions of them, and make progreſs in folly as has been repreſented, how dangerous are the firſt approaches to ſin, and all violations of conſcience, eſpecially in the early periods of life? Of what incalculable moment is it to children and youth, that they moſt cautiouſly flee all youthful ſins, and that they contract no evil habits, or courſes which may harden their hearts, blind their minds, and lead them on to deſtruction? With what conſtant caution and prayerfulneſs ſhould they guard againſt ſin, and the very appearance of evil? With what caution and fixed reſolution, dear youth, ſhould you flee all connexions and intimacy with the vicious and profane, with ſcoffers at religion, the ſcriptures, and divine ordinances? How careful with reſpect to what you read? That you fly from books fraught with impiety, filthineſs, profanity, deiſm, and atheiſm? With what attention and ſerioufneſs, with what cheerfulneſs and reſolution ſhould you attend to the voice of your wiſe and faithful teachers? To the counſels, reſtraints, and government of your parents and ſuperiors? Now is the time when the foundations of your happineſs or miſery, of your honor or ſhame, for time and eternity, will probably be laid. You are in a moſt critical and important period of life. You need the help of GOD and all good people. You have need to look well to your goings and to take every ſtep with the greateſt circumſpection.

IN view of the ſubject, who can but remark and feel to his very heart, the immenſe importance of family government and religion? Of all parents and heads of families watching over their children and domeſtics with a jealous eye, to guard them againſt evil men

* Mark ix. 45, 46. † Rev. xxii. 11.

and evil things, and to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the* LORD.* Can any thing be more benevolent or beneficial to them? More important and uſeful to families, to community and poſterity, at preſent, or in the generations to come?

II. SINCE fools deſtroy their companions, and both ſhall finally be deſtroyed, how deſtructive are wicked men to individuals, to ſociety, and to human happineſs in general? No deadly poiſon, no peſtilential diſeaſe is ſo pernicious as their influence. Their corrupt principles, licentious examples, and abominable books ſpread immorality, deluſion, miſery, and death far and wide. They poiſon the hearts and morals of thouſands and ten thouſands. Who can count the numbers whom they corrupt, enſnare, reduce to poverty, ſhame, miſery, and death in the preſent world, and how many they lead on to endleſs perdition in the future? How incalculable are the injuries which they do church and commonwealth? How peſtiferous are thoſe houſes where fools and their companions meet to waſte their precious time, to drink, gamble, concert miſchief, debauch each other, and propagate error and vice?—Where they are connived at and countenanced? What zealous and united exertions ſhould be employed by parents, public teachers, men in civil authority, and all good people to arreſt and reſtrain the progreſs of wickedneſs and wicked men? To ſuppreſs the places where they find countenance, and as far as poſſible to prevent the growth of infidelity and wickedneſs? In proportion to the evils which they bring on individuals and themſelves, and the miſchief which they do to ſociety ought to be the exertions of all wiſe and good men to ſuppreſs their wickedneſs. Piety, patriotiſm, and every principle of benevolence urges us to labor and pray, that the wickedneſs of the wicked might come to an end.

III. How inexpreſſible is the miſery and danger of all wicked people? What reaſon is there that ſinners

* Eph. vi. 4.

in Zion ſhould be afraid and that fearfulneſs ſhould ſurpriſe the hypocrites? That all fooliſh virgins, falſe profeſſors, and ungodly men ſhould fear and tremble? What great occaſion is there for every heart to be penetrated with a ſenſe of the immediate neceſſity of regeneration, a new heart and a new life, that they may not be deſtroyed forever.

CERTAINLY to be expoſed to ſo dreadful a condemnation as that of fools, to all their dangers and miſeries in this life and in the future, is a ſtate of miſery and danger beyond all calculation. Eſpecially, as they are condemned to it already, and as the ſentence may be executed ſpeedily. As their deſtruction may ariſe and come ſuddenly, like a whirlwind, even when they ſhall be ſaying peace and ſafety. This night, this hour, or at any other, O ye fooliſh people, your ſouls may be required of you; and then you will be deſtroyed without remedy, without mercy, and without end. Your miſery and danger are great indeed as you are naturally fooliſh, and deſtitute of ſpiritual underſtanding, as you are far more inclined to walk with fools than with wiſe men; as the world is filled with fools and with folly, and there are every where ſinners to entice and deſtroy you. It is an age of uncommon licentiouſneſs, impiety, deluſion, deiſm, and infidelity. There are great and uncommon temptations, to induce you to become companions of fools, and to continue and periſh with them. O that you would realize your miſery and danger! Be penetrated with a ſenſe of the preſſing, immediate neceſſity of regeneration, a thorough change in all the moral powers of your ſouls, that you may not be ſuddenly deſtroyed with the fooliſh. This is the only expedient which can ſecure you from the miſeries and dangers with which you are now preſſed, and the infinitely greater ones to which you are every moment expoſed.

IV. THE diſcourſe ſhall be concluded with exhortations and expoſtulations naturally ariſing from the ſubject.

LET all be deeply ſenſible of the exceeding criminality and danger of making any intimate friendſhips, or forming connexions, or going unneceſſarily in the company of profane, licentious, and wicked men. Moſt cautiouſly ſhun their ſociety, their examples, their corrupt and blaſphemous books, their filthy, profane, and ſcoffing converſation. Hear and yield all obedience to the divine commands on this ſubject. *My ſon, if ſinners entice thee conſent thou not. My ſon, walk not in the way with them; refrain thy feet from their path.** *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it and paſs away* † With what endearment and energy are theſe admonitions and commands given? How ſtrongly do they expreſs the vaſt neceſſity and importance of the duties they demand? They prohibit your even entering into the way of the wicked, or taking ſo much as a ſingle ſtep in it. They demand that you avoid, turn from it, and paſs afar off, as from a deadly poiſon, the plague, the moſt mortal diſeaſes or enemies. Nay, you are forbidden even to paſs by, or approach the guilty, deadly path. Solomon urges the avoiding of the wicked as a caſe of life and death. *Forſake the fooliſh and live.*‡ The words imply that death is in the ſociety of the wicked. Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways. Life cannot be enjoyed in their community. If you will walk with them you muſt die and mourn with them at laſt. Be intreated to conſider theſe things with the attention and ſerioufneſs which they demand. Know that if you, at any time, make connexions with the wicked, walk in their company and ways, you rebel againſt the expreſs commands of the Almighty GOD; that you do it at the peril of your immortal ſouls; that you will do it with your eyes open. You have now been fully warned, and the danger of it has been clearly repreſented. You will ſin againſt the cleareſt light, and have no excuſe for your ſin. Conſider, I

* Prov. i. 10, 15. † Chap. iv. 14, 15. ‡ Chap. ix. 6.

beſeech you, the certainty and the dreadfulneſs of the deſtruction of fools; and how ſuddenly it may come upon them, and be not the companion of fools. Let all the carnally ſecure and eaſy in Zion, all fooliſh virgins, who have a name to live while they are dead, know, that they are among the fooliſh; and that except they repent and believe the goſpel, they can by no means eſcape the deſtruction of fools. Nay, my brethren, ſettle it in your hearts, that notwithſtanding all your decent and ſmooth living, your fair profeſſions and appearances, that except ye be born again ye cannot ſee the kingdom of GOD. No, ye ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath, and the perdition of ungodly men. Deceive not yourſelves: *for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?*

PERHAPS there are ſome to whom I am ſpeaking, who have already joined themſelves to the ſociety of wicked men, and are vicious and diſſolute perſons, their mouths are ſet againſt the heavens and their tongues walk through the earth; rioting, gambling, wantonneſs, and exceſs are in their goings; and yet they allow that Chriſtianity is true, and paſs under the general name of Chriſtians. Alas! in what an aſtoniſhing ſtate of inconſiſtency and danger are you? Allow that Chriſtianity is true, and yet live like infidels! Acknowledge it to be true, that *a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, and yet walk with them, and ſuffer yourſelves to be like them! Do you allow, the awful truths ſpoken againſt the profane perſon, *As he loved curſing, ſo let it come unto him: as he delighted not in bleſſing ſo let it be far from him. As he clothed himſelf with curſing like as with a garment: ſo let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and as a girdle wherewith he is girded continually,** and yet ſpeak oaths and horrible profaneneſs? Do you indeed believe that *the LORD will not hold him guiltleſs who taketh his name in vain;*† and yet ſpeak blaſphemies? Nay,

* Pſalm cix. 17, 18, 19. † Exodus xx. 7.

do you believe, that *the abominable, and the unbelieving, and all liars ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone,*‡ and yet live in wantonneſs, unbelief, deceit, and falſehood? Or is there among you any ſuch root of gall and wormwood, as that when he heareth theſe things, he *bleſſeth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart,* to *add drunkenneſs to thirſt:* Is it not written concerning him, *The* LORD *will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the* LORD *and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this book ſhall lie upon him, and the* LORD *ſhall blot out his name from under heaven.*§ Will you not be ſtruck, and alarmed at your inconſiſtency and danger? Are not your feet ſet in ſlippery places? May not your deſtruction come as a whirlwind? May you not be caſt down into deſtruction as in a moment, and be utterly conſumed with terrors? O how can you thus rebel againſt your CREATOR and REDEEMER? Sin againſt light, your own mercies and ſouls? Why will you expoſe yourſelves to ſhame, poverty, an untimely death, and all the judgments of GOD in this life? To be deſtroyed and have your portion with fools and hypocrites forever? Are you willing to live only to fill up the meaſure of your ſin, and to become *veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?*‖ To lie down in ſorrow with devils and all the abominable of the earth? To be covered with ſhame, and to *be an abhorring unto all fleſh?*¶ Will you not rather *caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit?** Will you not make haſte to deliver your ſouls from death? Will you not fly as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler? Give not ſleep to your eyes, nor ſlumber to your eyelids, until you have eſcaped from your dangerous, dreadful condition.

POSSIBLY ſome ſecret or open deiſt or infidel may hear this ſolemn addreſs and imagine himſelf to have

‡ Rev. xxi. 8. § Deut. xxix. 19, 20. ‖ Rom. ix. 23.
¶ Iſaiah lxv. 24. * Ezekiel xviii. 31.

no intereſt nor concern in it, and treat it all with a ſneer of indifference and contempt. But have you not, unhappy man, an important intereſt in it, at leaſt, as it reſpects this life. Is not your character of ſome importance to yourſelf and your connexions? Is it of no importance to you, to eſcape poverty, the ſword of juſtice, an untimely death, by your own hands, or the hands of others? Can you have the ſame ſecurity againſt theſe in a life of infidelity and diſſipation, and in the ſociety of knaves, robbers, and fools, as in the friendſhip and fellowſhip of righteous, wiſe, and ſober men? Is your nature ſo pure, that you need no reſtraints from religion and the proſpects of eternity? Can you certainly determine, that when you have ſhaken off all reſtraints from religion, and enliſted under the banner of fools, that you ſhall not proceed too far in vice, for your honor, intereſt, or ſafety? Should you commence the head of a family, could you have the ſame ſecurity that your wife, children, and domeſtics, would be as dutiful, faithful, kind, and uſeful, when you have taught them to deſpiſe the ſcriptures and laugh at all moral obligations, as though they believed them, and acted under the influence of religion? Have you no intereſt in the honor, liberty, and happineſs of your country, and of your friends and connexions which it compriſes? Can a people be free and happy without virtue? Are not free communities founded and preſerved by covenants, oaths, fidelity, and virtue? But what are oaths and compacts, when men diſbelieve the ſcriptures, and deny all future rewards and puniſhments? It was an obſervation of the illuſtrious Sidney, "Liberty cannot be preſerved if the manners of the people are corrupted." This obſervation has been confirmed by the experience of all ages. Have not commonwealths and kingdoms always fallen by their vices? You have therefore intereſts of great importance with reſpect to this world, in immediately forſaking the fooliſh and going in the way of underſtanding.

But you have infinitely greater interests concerned, in the world to come. You have no evidence that deism is true. It is founded in impertinent objections and mistakes only. After all that can be objected, Christianity is true. You are an immortal creature, capable of happiness or misery beyond all finite conception. The destruction of fools is so infinitely dreadful, that if there were but ten thousands, or millions of chances to one, that deism might be false, and one to millions that Christianity might be true, it would be highly prudent to renounce deism and to be a Christian. If Christianity were false it could do us no hurt, as even in the present life, it is far better for individuals and communities than deism. There is nothing to be gained by deism and infidelity; but there is every thing to be lost. In every view therefore, the rejection of Christianity is the height of madness. Those who are guilty of it stand foremost in the list of folly, and are advancing in the first ranks to the destruction which we have been contemplating. Perhaps you were born and educated in a Christian family, and yet are now blaspheming his glorious name into whom you were baptized; rejecting the only name under heaven given among men by which you can be saved. Alas! how astonishing is your guilt and danger? What benevolent heart does not tremble and melt at your situation? Allow me, I beseech you, in the bowels of compassion, to call after and expostulate with you, before you take the dreadful leap into the pit whence there is no redemption. Consider with that anxious and serious attention, which a concern of such moment demands, Whether you have not rashly determined against Christianity? Whether you have not been blinded through the deceitfulness of sin, and acted under the influence of prejudice? Have you not been influenced by wit, ridicule, and bad example, rather than solid argument? Have you ever fairly and thoroughly examined the arguments in favor of Christianity, and the answers to the objections which have been made against it? If you have not;

are you not acting like a madman, and trifling in an affair of the greateſt moment which ever concerned a rational creature? Re-examine the ſubject, I beſeech you, thoroughly and impartially. Make it your firſt employment, your immediate and chief concern. Converſe with able and faithful men on the ſubject. Open your mind freely and candidly to them. State your difficulties and attend to the anſwers which may be given. In this way you may, by the bleſſing of GOD, have your difficulties removed. Repent and ſeek pardon and redemption through the blood of the croſs; and he who pardoned the reviling thief and the blaſpheming Saul will have mercy on you. He is a glorious SAVIOUR though you deſpiſe him. He is mighty and willing to ſave unto the uttermoſt, all thoſe who come unto GOD by him. I plead with you, for the life of your precious ſoul, that you would not reject him. Nay, let me plead with you in behalf of thoſe who may be your boſom friends, your children and neighbours, whom otherwiſe you may corrupt and deſtroy, and make your immortal accuſers and tormentors: In behalf of your parents whoſe hoary heads, by your infidelity, you are bringing down with ſorrow to the grave: Who are daily trembling and mourning, in fearful apprehenſions, that after all their tender care and inſtructions, the fruit of their bodies will be loſt, and given to the burning flame; and that they ſhall be called to teſtify how their own child has hated inſtruction and deſpiſed reproof. Will you have no pity upon them, but oblige them, at laſt, to mourn over you as David mourned over his wicked Abſalom? Indeed will you have no pity upon yourſelf? Will you deſtroy an immortal ſoul of more value than the whole world? A ſoul which when once loſt can never be regained? For what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

CONSIDER what terrors may arreſt you in death. With what horrors have wicked men, and infidels in particular expired? With what ſurpriſing agonies of conſcience did Voltaire and ſome of his companions

cloſe the ſcene of life? How will you die with amazement and diſmay, when infernal ſpirits ſhall ſeize, and the unquenchable flame enkindle upon you? When, notwithſtanding all your unbelief, you ſhall know the ſcriptures to be true, and ſee your deſpiſed SAVIOUR coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory? When, in vain, you ſhall cry, with captains and mighty men, to the rocks and mountains to fall on you and hide you *from the face of him who ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the* LAMB?* Will not the happy ſeaſons you once enjoyed, the inſtructions, counſels, tears, and intreaties of parents and miniſters, and the manner in which you treated them, come into remembrance? Will they not riſe up in judgment and teſtify againſt you? Will not theſe diſcourſes, if you refuſe to hear, bear witneſs againſt you? Will not theſe create reflections, which ſhall be a worm within you, which ſhall never die? Will not the wrath of GOD without, enkindle a fire which ſhall never be quenched? Will you be able to bear the accuſations of your own conſcience? To ſee all your glory turned into ſhame? To be forſaken, unpitied, and tormented forever! Alas! miſerable creature, *to which of the ſaints wilt thou turn! What will ye do in the day of viſitation? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?*† Be warned of theſe awful events. Suffer me to plead, moſt earneſtly to plead with you, for your ſoul's ſake and the Lord's ſake, theſe ſolemn conſiderations. Linger not another moment in Sodom, eſcape for your life leſt ye be conſumed. O moſt glorious and compaſſionate FATHER, for CHRIST's ſake, have mercy upon the infidel, upon all our ſecure and fooliſh people, and turn them from the error of their way to the wiſdom of the juſt!

Now unto him who performeth all things for his people, who will build up Zion and appear in his glory, *to the only wiſe* GOD *our* SAVIOUR, *be glory and majeſty, dominion, and power, both now and ever.* AMEN.

* Rev. vi. 16. † Iſaiah x. 3.

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Mr. John Norton.
Jabez Pain.
Nathaniel Waſhburn.
Rev. Sylveſter Sage.
Mr. Joſhua Stoddard.
Putney.
Mr. Joſiah Goodhue.*

* *As the ſubſcribers generally neglected to give their titles, it is probable, that there are miſtakes reſpecting them. Where inſtances of them ſhall be obſerved, gentlemen are deſired to excuſe them.*

ERRATA.

Page 101, l. 1 for *their* read *they.*
127, l. 11 from the bottom, for *kingdom,* read *kingdoms.*
145, l. 9 from the bottom, for *writ* read *written.*
149, l. 18 from the top, for *remarkable,* read *remarkable.*
204, l. 14 from the bottom, for LORD, read LORD.
263, l. 13 from the bottom, read *the* before wicked.

In ſeveral there is an omiſſion of the comma, which the learned reader will naturally correct.