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SERMON V.

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INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF REVELATION.

PSALM, cxxx. 2.—*Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*

IT is no uncommon thing for men in Christian lands to profess a belief in divine revelation merely from habit and example. Men who from their infancy have been instructed in the principles and duties of christianity, never sink to the degradation of paganism, and it is hard for them to descend to the reproaches of infidelity; though their religion may be only hereditary, and their belief in revelation fortified more by the traditions of their fathers than by any rational and sound conviction. Far be it from me to intimate that this prepossession exerts no benignant influence, or that it is not an influence of the most enviable kind. But this is not the reception which the Bible demands. The credentials of its high-born origin are of such unquestionable force and authority, that it solemnly and fearlessly invites a judgment which is the result of thorough investigation. Such an investigation is demanded, as the only course of safety to the sinner, of strong consolation to the christian, and of due respect to the Great Author of revelation.

In examining the question, Whether the Bible is the word of God, we should expect to find in the *Book itself* decisive marks of its divine origin. Nor is this expectation defeated. God has magnified his word above all his name. There are no such illustrations of the Deity

as are found in his word. Do the heavens and the earth declare the glory of God? Do the works of creation and the administration of providence disclose his divine nature, develop his love and wisdom and power, and all his essential greatness and goodness? and do they bear the impress of his hand? Much more do we see the hand and character of God in the Bible, and read his name, written as with sun-beams, on every page of this holy book.

Were there no other evidence, one would think that the attentive perusal of the sacred pages would be enough to convince any impartial mind that they are not of human invention. I say, an attentive perusal of the sacred pages; for no man ought to consider himself qualified to sit in judgment on the internal evidences of divine inspiration, who is not familiar with the Sacred Volume: And the more familiar he is, the more competent is he to scrutinize and weigh the testimony. The Abbé Winklemann, perhaps the most classical writer upon the fine arts, after descanting with great zeal and eloquence upon the perfection of the art of sculpture, as exhibited in the *Apollo Belvidere*, observes, with great enthusiasm, in recommending it to the admiration of those who would become eminent artists—Go and study it; and if you see no peculiar beauty in it to captivate you, go again; and if you still discern nothing, go again, and again, and again, until you *feel it*; for be assured it is there. To every lover of moral science we would say of the Bible, If he does not see the evidence of its divinity at the first glance, let him look again; and if he does not see it at the second or third perusal, let him look again; and if he fails to see it even then, let him still examine,—for he may be most confidently assured, that the evidence is there to be found.

It is this *internal evidence*, to which we would direct your attention in the present discourse. And we remark,

I. From a careful inspection of the Bible, we find that **THIS BOOK ALONE ANSWERS ALL THE PURPOSES OF A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.**

When we advert to the different systems of religion, which either have obtained, or now obtain, we see they are radically defective, and fail of their object. The systems of natural religion are to a great extent unintelligible, and therefore never have reached the exigencies of the mass of mankind. They are all confused, uncertain, and contradictory; and have never been satisfactorily understood, even by the most reflecting men. On many, and most important points of faith, and duty, and salvation, they furnish no instruction whatever. Every system of human philosophy, or of ancient or modern Paganism, has been complained of by its own votaries; and its best instructed disci-

ples have seen and felt its utter insufficiency to the great purpose of a satisfactory religion.

The religion of the Bible, the more it is examined, will be found adapted to all the purposes for which a revelation could be given. The intellectual, moral, and physical constitution of men, in all the varieties of human ignorance, pollution, want, and misery; in all that is interesting in their hopes, or fearful in their apprehensions,—whether they respect a present or future state of being,—is so kindly and fully consulted by the principles of this revelation, that it must be seen and acknowledged to be without a defect. The Bible instructs men in all they need to know. It proclaims the character of that Infinite Being with whom men have to do: It informs us how this world came into existence, and how, and for what end it is governed: It reveals whatever is necessary for the glory of the Creator, and the happiness of the creature, and discloses the perfect harmony between the honour of the Great Supreme, and the best good of his subjects. It discovers the sinfulness and condemnation of men, and the method of their recovery: It reveals promises that are worthy of God, and threatenings that are required by the character and condition of men: It proclaims pardon, peace, and eternal life to the holy; and disaster, ruin, and death to the unholy: It reveals the object and end of whatever appears unseemly and untoward in creation and providence; and proclaims the design which the Mighty Governor of the world aims at in the whole series of events and revolutions which have taken place from the beginning, or will take place to the end of time: And it brings to our view the close of this earthly system, the day of final account, and the New Earth and New Heavens that shall never pass away. On all these topics, so infinitely interesting to men,—its instructions are clear, full, certain, authoritative. And all this is what a revelation must disclose, to answer the great purposes of religion for a race of fallen beings.

Where is the revelation that makes these disclosures except in the Bible? What other religion informs the world, or pretends to inform it on subjects of such high moment? From what other source can the mind of man receive satisfaction on every point of duty and of hope? Where shall we look for a system of instruction that meets every exigency, and answers all the purposes of a religion, except to the Holy Scriptures? If then it is reasonable to expect a revelation that is intelligible and full—that in all its essential principles is equally adapted to the wise and the unwise—that answers all the purposes for which we can conceive a revelation should be given; and if this revelation is found alone in the Sacred Scriptures, are not these Scriptures a revelation from God? We remark,

II. The inspiration of the Scriptures may be conclusively determined from THEIR HOLINESS AND PURITY.

When you look into the Bible, you see holiness and purity its great characteristics. It bears on every page "*Holiness to the Lord*." When it speaks of God it represents him as the greatest and holiest Being in the universe, and extols his character as above all praise. When it speaks of man, it speaks of his primitive integrity with approbation, and of his subsequent apostacy and sinfulness, with pity and abhorrence. Every where it draws a discrimination between holiness and sin, between good men and bad, and in such a way as to leave the impression, that in the Writer's view, the difference is awfully wide, and the consequences of it everlasting.

The precepts of the Bible are all holy. They begin by requiring holiness in the thoughts and affections; then in the words; then in the conduct. The Scriptures require nothing less than *perfect* holiness. Universal, uniform, persevering holiness alone will bear a comparison with this unerring standard. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is its first and great Commandment. You open the Bible, and you find yourself in the presence of God. Him you are directed to worship in spirit and in truth; to exalt him above every rival; to enthrone him in your heart; to give him all honour and praise; to delight in his character; to be thankful for his mercies; to be submissive to his will; to rejoice in his government; to serve him with the whole heart, and to be assimilated to his moral image. And the second Command is like unto the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here every grace and virtue are required, and every unamiable and unkind affection and action are forbidden. Every act of purity, justice, honesty, and benevolence is required; every act of impurity, injustice, hatred, and selfishness is forbidden. Every thing that can render man honourable and useful is enjoined; every thing that can render him mean, base, and injurious is forbidden. All that can diffuse peace and happiness in his own bosom and throughout the world is required; all that can rob him of peace and joy within, and diffuse disaster and calamity without is forbidden. All that can assimilate a creature of yesterday to his Maker, and prepare him for the family and fellowship of angels is prescribed; all that can render him deformed and odious,—that can sever the bonds of moral union, and fit him to be the companion of foul and miserable fiends, and the eternal outcast from God and holiness, is prohibited. This law of love tolerates no vice, and patronizes every virtue. No liberty is here allowed to sinful passions and propensities; but every corrupt principle, every lurking

source of sin is discountenanced and condemned. To every relation and condition of life the Bible extends the authority of its pure precepts, and prescribes the duties which, in all their diversified circumstances, men are bound to perform: while with unyielding severity, it frowns on every appearance of evil.

Nor are the peculiar doctrines and instructions of the Bible less holy than its moral precepts. The person and atonement of Jesus Christ—the forgiveness of sins through faith in his blood—the gratuitous justification only of penitent and reformed sinners—the office and operations of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul—the love of Christ as the constraining motive to holy obedience—the death and final resurrection of the body—the day of judgment—the retributions of eternity—all announce the immaculate purity and holiness of the Bible.

This too is the character of all its institutions, all its privileges, all its peculiar ordinances, and all its examples. In its legitimate bearings every thing the Scriptures require and teach, every motive by which the Bible excites our fears or stimulates our hopes, is an expression of that comprehensive injunction, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Now is such a book the work of man? Who of all the descendants of Adam is the author of such a volume? All that we know of men represents them either as basely polluted and sinful, or painfully imperfect and depraved in their best estate. Was such a volume ever invented by the depraved mind of mortals? Is it possible that such a system of moral precepts, and such a system of doctrines, so excellent, so perfectly holy, should not have originated from a purer and more exalted Source? If the Bible be a human production, it is the production either of good men or bad. It cannot be of good men, because such men would not deceive the world by a fabrication. It cannot be of bad men; for they would never have thought of such a system of morals and instruction; or if they had thought of it, they never would have given birth to a system of perfect holiness and purest piety. Falsehood and immorality they might have enjoined, as the authors of false religions all have done; but truth and purity, such truth and purity as the Bible reveals, come from a far different Source. Infidels have found no other way of replying to this argument, than by preposterously denying the purity and holiness of the Scriptures. But our appeal is to the Bible itself. "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." We also remark,

III. Another argument in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures may be deduced from **THEIR PERFECT HARMONY.**

There is a perfect harmony in all the varied contents of this book. There is a perfect harmony in its history, in its doctrines, and in its duties. Every writer agrees with himself, and all agree with one another and with facts.

The Scriptures were composed, not in a single age, but in the progress of sixteen hundred years; a period during which the views and opinions of men were in a state of great fluctuation; and yet the views and opinions here introduced are ever the same.

They were not written by one man, but by a great variety of men—men in different classes of human society, men imbued with different prejudices, men of science, and unlettered men; and yet perfect harmony and consistency pervade all their writings.

They all wrote upon subjects also, upon which men are peculiarly prone to disagree,—the subjects of religion. No writings could have been more liable to inconsistencies; and yet no one of them controverts the statements or opinions of another.

Most of the writers were entirely unacquainted with each other, and entirely unknown to each other; and yet in sentiment, in design, in every thing essential to harmony, there are the same facts, the same principles, the same grand object. If the writers of the sacred books then were not under the divine direction, whence this unexampled harmony?

Infidels we know have denied that this harmony exists. But the unfounded charge has been abundantly refuted by the critical investigation and faithful research of the abettors of divine inspiration. If we consider the different sources from which the inspired writers drew their narratives; the different designs which they had in the composition of them; the facility with which names and numbers are altered by imperfect readings; the omission of some events by one writer and the insertion of them by another; the different methods of computing time, which on close examination will be found to be perfectly consistent; the ambiguity of particular passages of which more ample illustration is to be found elsewhere; the use of the same word or term in different senses in different paragraphs;—we shall find that the detached passages on which infidels have laid so much stress, afford no ground for impugning the consistency of the Sacred Writers. The alleged contradictions, though at first glance apparent, are found on examination not real. Nor is there a single instance that does not admit of a rational solution. It would indeed require patience to illustrate passages seemingly at variance. The late Bishop Horne remarks, "Many and painful are the researches, usually necessary to be made

for settling points of this kind. Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the subject. And as people in general, for one reason or other, like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation, the odds must ever be against us; and we must be content with those for our friends, who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience, to study both sides of the question.

After all that has been written on this subject, we are justified in saying that the harmony of the inspired writings is inexplicable upon any other supposition than that they are of divine original. You find the penmen of the Sacred Volume, whatever be their subject, all expressing the same thing. When they speak of God; when they speak of man; when they speak of holiness and sin, of redemption by Christ Jesus, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit, of heaven and of hell; there is no discrepancy,—but one grand design, one undivided scheme of truth, and duty, and retribution runs through the whole. However the sacred writers may vary in the manner and extent of their illustrations, they are all perfectly congruous. It is impossible this harmony could have been the result of any preconcerted plan; and if they did not speak under the influence of the same Spirit, how is this harmony to be accounted for? In the writings of what two uninspired men do you discover such wonderful consistency upon so nice and interesting a subject? You see the various schemes of human philosophy, the boasted treatises of natural religion, are one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow. They vary with the wisdom, or the folly, or caprice of their authors, and change with every passing century and every revolution of public manners. But the Bible is ever the same. Not one principle of it is at war with another. The light which beams from its pages may have different degrees of brightness, but it all emanates from the same glorious Fountain; and wherever its rays are condensed and combined, they present the image of Him, who is himself Light, and in whom is no darkness at all. But, we observe in the next place,

IV. THE BIBLE IS THE MOST INEXHAUSTED, EXHAUSTLESS BOOK.

There is no book in any language, or of any age, that in this respect can be compared with the Bible. It is what its name denotes it to be, the *Book of all books*. The Bible is more inexhaustible than all other books, in as much as the uncreated intelligence is more inexhaustible than the intelligence of creatures. The extent, number, variety, and importance of the subjects which it treats; the weight and pertinence of its instructions, and the illimitable prospects it opens to

the mind, give it a pre-eminence in an intellectual view, unutterably beyond all other books that ever were written. It is truly a book of wonders. Its fulness is like that of the rising and full-orbed sun. The more you gaze at its unclouded splendour, and the more its emanating effulgence is diffused, the more do its resources appear unwasted and unwasting.

The Scriptures have taught all that men know concerning morals and religion. There is no article of faith, and no moral duty known by men, which is capable of being clearly illustrated and satisfactorily proved, which is not either expressly declared, or fairly and unquestionably implied in the Scriptures. The deep treasures of the Bible have exhausted many a vigorous and capacious mind; but there is no mind so vigorous and capacious as to have exhausted the Bible. There are men who have read and studied this volume most thoroughly and intensely, and who, the more they have read and studied it, have the more been charmed with its clearness and simplicity—who, at the same time, have been, at every step of their progress, more and more deeply convinced that it is a fathomless profound of light and knowledge. There are men who have made the Scriptures the object of their investigation for half a century, and who have examined every chapter and every paragraph, fifty or an hundred times; and who, with every fresh perusal, have discovered new thought and new causes for admiration and joy. The Bible has been read and studied, in all ages of the world, a thousand fold more than any other book. It has occupied the time and thought of men of the profoundest intellect, and of the most unwearied and patient research. What years and ages have passed away in the study of the Scriptures! What multitudes of individuals have been occupied in this elevated investigation! Reflect on the number now existing in different countries, faithfully devoting their time and talents to the study of the Bible; survey the immense libraries that have been written in defence and illustration of its truths; and though in every effort you shall see some new light elicited, you shall stand amazed to hear all confess that so much remains to be illustrated. The more deeply men have been absorbed in their contemplations upon the Bible, the more thorough has been their conviction of its illimitable resources. And it has been a conviction which has uniformly grown with their acquaintance with the Scriptures; which has never been diminished even by all the honesty, and prayer, and humility which they have brought to the research.

Now we maintain this is one of the grand peculiarities of the Bible. It is literally exhaustless; which cannot be affirmed of any other book. There is no book, except this, which a few careful readings of a sound

and retentive mind will not exhaust. And whence this peculiarity which may be claimed for the Bible? It is not voluminous; though on the subjects which it professes to treat it contains more than all other volumes combined. Whence is it that this little book should be literally so exhaustless? There is but one answer to this question. It is the production of the Infinite Mind. The Mighty Intelligence of the Only Wise God employed its energies in composing the Bible, and has condensed in this little volume facts, thoughts, principles and counsels, which will remain a source of instruction till the heavens shall pass away, and still be inexhausted and inexhaustible. We add,

V. The inspiration of the Scriptures may also be conclusively argued from the **ELEVATION AND GRANDEUR OF THEIR DESIGN.**

The Bible, as a composition, exhibits a unity and greatness of contrivance and plot, if I may so speak, altogether above the reach of human invention. Let a man sit down to the perusal of this book from beginning to end, as he would sit down to the perusal of a tragedy or epic poem, and he will discover the traces of a plan, which, in its commencement, its progress, its filling up, its close and catastrophe, lies far beyond the most inventive genius that was ever created. If the Bible be a human production, then with respect to its general device and contrivance, it is a most wonderful production, and such as never has been and never can be equalled. No unprejudiced man can take a comprehensive view of this Book, without being convinced that it presents a view of truths, and a system of operations, and a motive and end of its constitution, which could have been devised only by the All-Wise God. The Bible presents a plan which none but God *knew*, and which therefore none but God could *reveal*.

The Bible carries you back into the ages of eternity, where its wonderful plan was devised. It tells you of a method, a scheme of operations, which was laid out by the Eternal Deity, when there were no depths and no fountains of water, and before ever the earth was. The first visible expression of this mighty design was made in the creation of the world; and the earth we inhabit, was constituted the beautiful theatre on which this wonderful drama was to be exhibited. The Actors in this drama are the three glorious Persons in the Ever-blessed Godhead, angels, and men;—the inanimate creation, with all its richness, grandeur, and beauty, having been made and continued only in subservience to these, and destined to pass away at the consummation of this extended design. The spectators of this great drama are all intelligent beings. They constitute "the eye of the Universe;" and while each in his proper place has a part to act, he is the immediate

witness of the whole transaction. The time occupied by this sublime and momentous exhibition, extends from the creation, down to a period yet far distant and unknown, when time shall be lost in eternity, and these heavens and this earth shall flee away, and no place shall be found for them. The interest involved is the interest of every mind in the universe; for on the part he acts, is suspended the painful or blissful immortality of every individual in all worlds. In the early and progressive developement of this design, the Scriptures inform us, that a part of the angels kept not their first estate, and that through their instrumentality, the first parents of the human race fell, and introduced sin and misery into this world from generation to generation. On this apostacy they reveal a promised Mediator, who was to be the seed of the woman, and to the introduction of whom, in the fulness of time, all the dispensations of a general and particular providence bore a visible relation, and maintained a uniform tendency. They speak of a universal deluge—of the division of the earth among the descendants of its survivors—of the separation of a particular family and nation from the rest of this corrupted world, as the lineage of the predicted Deliverer;—they speak of the revolution and destruction of empires with a view to His advent, and the establishment and final glory of His kingdom. He is the Hero of the mighty drama, and when he appears, the Scriptures invest him with a character which the human mind would never have thought of. He is the child of an humble virgin, and yet the Mighty God; he is an infant in the manger, and yet the Everlasting Father; he is the reproach of men, and yet the adoration of angels; he is the crucified Saviour, the only Propitiation for sin, and yet the Lord of life, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Head of a redeemed and sanctified kingdom, for whose sake he controls the kingdom of providence, sends down his Holy Spirit, and involves in his Administration all the concerns of men. As the part he acts becomes more prominent, and his merciful designs are evolved, every thing gradually assumes a new aspect. The conflict between light and darkness, holiness and sin, truth and error, happiness and misery, between himself and the powers of darkness, becomes more vigorous, and less doubtful in its issue, till he triumphs over all his enemies, and his kingdom is established from the rising to the setting sun, and maintains its supremacy, its purity, its peace, its joy, till near the close of this earthly creation. This great mystery is to be perfected,—the wonders of this august scheme are to be fully unfolded at the Last Great Day. Then the Hero—the Great Redeemer, shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe: Then the ultimate end of the whole plan shall be brought out to the view of an admiring universe, and it

shall be seen that the glory of its Author and the happiness of all the holy, were the moving impulse of the entire design : Then will the Redeemer descend from heaven in clouds, surrounded by the glory of his Father, and attended by all his holy angels : The dead will be summoned from their graves, and innumerable nations gathered around the throne of Eternal Justice : Then the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal : Then will the visible heavens pass away with a great noise ; the elements melt with fervent heat ; and the earth be burnt up : Then the Son will deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, and God will be all in all.

This wonderful plan is revealed in the Bible. And was such a device, such a drama within the scope of human invention ? Could such elevation and grandeur of design ever have entered into the head of man ? O how God-like ! Kings and heroes, nations and empires, in their earthly relations, are here as the drop of the bucket. Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs—the general assembly and church of the First Born—principalities and powers in heavenly places—the glorious Persons in the Godhead—earth, heaven, and hell ; these are the persons and objects which here pass in review. Here are presented the perfections of God in unexampled greatness, loveliness, and beauty. Here are unfolded the mysteries of providence and the wonders of redemption. Every thing is noble, every thing refined, every thing holy, every thing advancing toward an issue which will ascribe “ Salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever ! ” Well may angels desire to look into these things. Well may they watch the progress of this magnificent system with anxious scrutiny ; for it is enough to enlarge the understanding and exalt the views of seraphim before the throne. We ask again, is such a plan the result of merely human invention ? Is there not something here which must for ever have remained far beyond the grasp or discovery of mortals unenlightened from above ? Would any child of Adam ever have thought of inventing such a plan ? What human mind ever possessed so mighty a grasp, as to comprehend and originate this God-like design ? But this God-like design is revealed to us by men, in most instances of no extraordinary talents ; some of them plain shepherds, or humble, illiterate fishermen and carpenters : and yet they speak of these great subjects with the facility and dignity with which men of sound judgment speak of the common concerns of life. And how do you account for this mysterious fact ? “ What cause expanded the minds of these humble men over this unlimited field of thought ? Whence is it that they never fell beneath the grandeur of their subject—never wandered amidst its complications ”—never sunk in its unfathomable depths ? We leave these inquiries with the rejecters

of revelation. To us it is clear, that no human mind ever invented this wonderful design,—that it bears the intelligence and signature of Heaven,—and that the men who were selected to disclose it, spake not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. There is a majesty in this plan and in the manner of disclosing it, an elevation of thought, a strength, and extent, and greatness of conception, which cast the proudest efforts of human genius into the shade, and which indicate a far higher Source.

To the preceding we will only add,

" VI. The inspiration of the Scriptures abundantly appears from **THEIR POWER AND EFFICACY.**

It is impossible to exhibit the force of this argument within the compass of a few paragraphs, when volumes have not exhausted it. It is a species of evidence of great importance, particularly to the mind of an unlettered man, while it has equal influence with the learned. Many an unlearned Christian may not be able to give a single reason for his confidence in divine revelation, deduced from a course of logical argumentation ; while he can say, " I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the *power of God* unto salvation." He can tell you with emphasis, that he *knows* the Bible to be true, from the testimony of his *own heart*. " He that believeth hath the witness in himself." As he takes the Bible into his hands, he can declare that this book, under the influence of the divine Spirit, is able to separate his soul from sin ; and that because the best feelings of his own soul are in such exact accordance with what the Bible reveals, he is abundantly satisfied it is the word of God. Others may hesitate and " go away ;" but he will say, with Simon Peter, " Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life ; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." He has a knowledge of the truth of divine revelation which is peculiar to himself. He knows the Bible to be true by his own experience. He loves the truths it reveals, and sees the beauty, and feels the infinite importance of them, as the food of his spirit and the foundation of his eternal hopes. The weakest and most ignorant child of grace will tell you, " Whereas I was once blind, I now see." And if you hesitate and complain, he will reply, " Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." Once I was dead in trespasses and sins ; now I am alive unto God. With all my remaining imperfections, I trust I am a new creature. I have new objects of affection, new motives of conduct, new hopes, new fears, new joys, a new character. I dwell as it were in a new world. I seem to have passed from death unto life, and to be under the influence of principles, which

while they humble, exalt me; while they purify, make me supremely happy; and the only counterpart to what I find within my own bosom, is in that sure word of prophecy, which shone as a light in a dark place, till the day dawned and the day star arose in my heart.

To this we know the infidel may reply, All this is of no avail so long as it extends not beyond the bosom of the narrator, nor can it be considered in any other view than as the result of strong impulse and ardent enthusiasm. But what if we could show the infidel ten thousand instances of this sort,—and these not confined to the unlearned,—nay, ten thousand times ten thousand instances in which men of the soundest discretion, and of acknowledged integrity should furnish the same narration! Ought not the testimony to avail? and would it not avail with ingenuous minds? And if in addition to this, it should appear, that in each of these multiplied examples, the transformation within has been followed by an accordant transformation without, and that the moral influence of the Bible upon the visible character and conduct is as great as its moral influence upon the soul!—Would not this constitute evidence which even a disingenuous mind would find it hard to resist? And yet, this is the evidence which has been constantly accumulating wherever the Bible has exerted its native energy. Witness the extensive propagation of Christianity and its correspondent results. Destitute of every adventitious advantage, supported by no secular power, and upheld by no worldly interest,—with no other recommendation than its intrinsic excellence, and no other patron than the God of heaven,—the gospel of Jesus Christ has triumphed over the opposition of men and devils,—visited every land and nation,—and in all its progress has multiplied its converts like the drops of morning dew. Its primitive promulgators and their successors have gone forth under the high sanction, “Thus saith the Lord,”—and nothing has been able to retard their career. They have marched onward in defiance of all the indifference of a world that lieth in wickedness, of all the arts of philosophy, and all the virulence of relentless persecution. Other religions have been devised by human wisdom, and propagated by the secular arm, and they have passed away, and left no memorial behind them, except the deleterious influence they have exerted on the human character; while the religion of the Bible has lived, and spread, and left its memorials in the moral purity and happiness of a great multitude which no man can number. There is not a spot on the globe, where the Bible has been suffered to exert its influence, but it has produced a moral reformation. Paul informs us what the effect of the gospel was upon the early Christians, where, after having enumerated “idolaters, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,” he adds, “And such were

some of you ; but ye are washed ; but ye are sanctified ; but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Wherever the Bible has found access to the mind, it has been the light that has dispelled darkness ; the voice that has disturbed the slumbers of sin ; the sword which has pierced the soul ; the hammer that has broken the flinty heart in pieces ; the ethereal fire that has enkindled every gracious affection. Think of the myriads of each sex and every condition, rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, who have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son ; cast your eye back through the long tract of preceding ages upon the multitudes, whose pagan ignorance and sottishness have been chased away ; whose views have been rectified ; whose passions have been restrained ; whose consciences have been awakened ; whose hearts have been sanctified ; whose lives have been conformed to moral rectitude ; and who have themselves been made meet for the coming inheritance ; and you will have some just conceptions of the moral tendency of the Bible. Go and stand in the midst of some of those numberless scenes of wonder and of mercy, of sovereignty and omnipotence, which have thrown such a charm over these latter days and these ends of the earth, where the Spirit of Jesus has moved the assemblies of his people as the trees of the wood are moved by a mighty wind ; where hundreds have trembled on the verge of eternal wo, and where after the storm was past, a "still, small voice" has whispered divine peace, and awoke their everlasting song ; and you may appreciate the influence of the Bible. O ! what an unbending heart must that be, that has witnessed one Revival of religion, and can still be in doubt, whether the Bible is the word of the all-powerful and all-gracious God !

And with these, there are effects still more extended, that are the legitimate results only of the Bible. The effects of the Bible on human society are such as no other cause has produced. It has mitigated the horrors of war ; it has given effectual obligation to the nuptial vow ; it has elevated the character and condition of one half the human species who were unnaturally degraded because they were not men ; it has thrown its guardianship around helpless infancy and rescued it from the floods and from the flames ; it has interposed its benig- nity in behalf of the inferior and dependent ranks of human society ; it has constituted every church of God, and every Christian community an asylum for the widow and the orphan and for the poor and the needy ; it has softened the rigours of despotism and broken the yoke of the oppressed ; it has diminished the number of sanguinary revolutions, and given mildness, permanency, and force to public law ; it has proved the

unchanging friend of literature and the arts; it has in every view diminished the sources of human misery and multiplied the sources of human happiness. It has opened rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of valleys. It has made the wilderness a pool of water, and dry land springs of water. From a world of barrenness and death, where there were nothing but briars and thorns and beasts of prey, already has it made a world of fertility and life, where trees of righteousness spring up and bear unwithering fruits, and where the lion and the lamb lie down together, and where, at no distant period, there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

These effects of the Bible, also, are uniform. Wherever they are found, the Bible has preceded them; wherever they are not found, the Bible is either unknown or has received no serious attention. Go where you will, where the Bible has exerted its proper influence, and you shall see its unvarying tendency, in the same holiness of heart and life, the same peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, the same social and public welfare. And in view of this native power and efficacy of the Bible, we ask, can it be a cunningly devised fable? Does not its moral influence furnish distinct and decisive evidence of its divinity? Let the infidel produce a volume which has accomplished what the Bible has accomplished, and I will at once receive it as from God. And if from a view of what the Bible has done, we reflect for one moment, what would be its influence on the world, were its principles and its spirit universally adopted, the argument in its favour is overwhelming. If we look forward to what it will yet accomplish, when every mind shall be illumined by its revelations, every heart purified, every life renewed, every land redeemed from its corruptions and bondage, and the whole world assume a character which shall be the exact counterpart of this omnipotent revelation; how irresistible will be the evidence, that the Bible is in truth the word of the Living God. This wonderful Book resembles its wonderful Author. From what we know of God in the visible universe, we need only to be acquainted with the Bible to be satisfied that it emanates from him.

Thus we see, that the *fitness of the Bible to all the purposes of a divine revelation*—its holiness and purity—its perfect harmony—its inexhaustible fulness—its elevation and grandeur of design—its power and efficacy—all combine to demonstrate that it comes from God. And what God hath written shall remain for ever. The heavens and the earth may pass away, but "my word," saith Jehovah, "shall never pass away."

God speaks to us, my friends, from every paragraph and sentence of

this Holy Book. It is his voice that we hear; his signature that we behold; his ineffable glory,—which, the more it is viewed in this bright mirror, may the more powerfully command our wonder and praise. When we approach these divine Oracles, and hear the voice of God sometimes speaking out of the midst of the fire, but more often from the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; we may well bend our knee, and take the shoes from off our feet, for the ground on which we stand is holy. O, that divine influence might come down upon us from the Spirit of truth and grace, and beams from the Sun of righteousness break in upon our minds, as we contemplate these intrinsic glories of the Bible! Let the truth and weight of these revelations sink deep into your ears. As men of this world merely,—as creatures of time,—but especially as the proprietors of immortality,—you have a thousand fold deeper interest in the Bible, than in any other, or all other books. It is just as important, that you who have the opportunity, should become acquainted with the Scriptures, and believe, and love, and obey them, as it is that you should be saved. This book offers to you, beloved hearers, that which most you want,—that which is infinitely more to you than all other things,—glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. I cannot but look upon the prevailing indifference with which the Word of God is regarded as one of the evils over which we are loudly called to mourn. You send the Bible to the ignorant and destitute; you carry it to every cottage and waft it to every clime;—and thanks to God that you do so; but to what extent is it studied in your chambers, read in your families, taught to your children? There is no surer evidence of living without God in the world, than living without intimate communion with the Bible. Who that does not mean to remain in impenetrable obduracy; who that does not purpose effectually to grieve away the Holy Spirit; who that does not form the deliberate resolve to close every avenue to the divine influence;—that is not prepared to plunge the dagger of the second death into his own bosom,—can live in the neglect of these Scriptures of God? And if you believe them, and understand them, will you refuse them the submission of your heart and your everlasting obedience? Do you accredit the stupendous truths contained in this Volume? and shall they waken no deep interest, and urge to no solemn preparation for your last account? I beseech you, think seriously of the weighty truths herein revealed from heaven. There is not one among them all that will not prove a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death. It is even so. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.