

sensibly interposed in his favour, and prevented him from doing a foolish and rash action: an assertion which no man in sober reflection can well believe. How easy was it for his own sense of right and wrong, which Nero might have exercised as well as himself, to furnish the supposed divine direction. God does not promise to protect us arbitrarily from running into what we call danger, nor from the consequences of it, no, not even to protect the bodies of the good from the hand of the assassin. The truth is, that the object of his especial and particular providence over us is, the *salvation of the soul*, and the exercise of it consists in the *application of grace*: and even here there may be numberless difficulties which we cannot, and need not, unravel. But this we know, that "all things work together for good—to them that love God." "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find;"—"for God giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Of this we may be infallibly certain, that he never forsakes those who trust in Him; while the wicked put themselves from under that protection which the good enjoy. Does not the Bible teach us explicitly, that the Holy Spirit is ever present—ever ready to "help our infirmities," and sanctify the heart that sincerely desires Him? Is not our blessed Mediator at the right hand of God as our great High Priest to offer up all our prayers at the throne of grace? Has he not promised his continual presence with the church to the end of time:—that where two or three shall be gathered together in his name there is he? And if this is not asserting—nay almost describing a particular providence for each individual of the human family, what is the amount of such terms of assurance? Are the Edinburgh Reviewers in the habit of praying to a God who, their philosophy tells them, turns a deaf ear to their petitions, because he is engaged in the general superintendence of every thing else? They would most probably set us down as a rash youth indeed, were we to assert, that amidst the general superintendence of divine providence, *this earth* was neglected. But is it more conspicuous and worthy of regard in comparison of the myriads of millions of systems that float around it, than a nation, or even one individual, is to it?

The Scriptures also assure us that God heeds not improper petitions, and will reject them. "Ye ask, and ye have not, because ye ask amiss." How amiss? "That ye may consume it upon your lust." This supposes a particular attention to "every idle word" of bad men; which is nothing less than a particular providence over them also.

But it is chiefly with the notion of particular providence in regard to the affairs of nations, that the Reviewers are so indignant. Without wishing to defend all that they condemn in the authors before them, we will take the liberty of asking, how the promises made by Christ to the Church can be fulfilled without the intervention of a particular providence, not only exercised over the church as such, but as interfering with the concerns of nations for her sake? And is it at all repugnant to the terms of that promise, that particular individuals should be singled out to meet particular occasions? Can it fairly be resolved into a general law of divine legislation, independent of particularity in the administration, that the *Christian Ministry* is secured to the church by a regular personal tradition from man to man? We know that God gives wicked men the liberty of "fighting against" himself, and counter-working his will in regard to religion. We positively know that powerful factions are regularly organized for the purpose of falsifying and driving out of the world the word of God; and we also know the sole and only cause of it. But how is a general providence, which scorns to turn aside and be particular, to meet and circumvent the continually changing particular attacks of the enemy, made against the general unvarying system of God's moral Government, and made at particular times, and on particular quarters? And if he did not interfere, where would this predatory system of warfare end, this continual effort on the part of "the devil and his angels" to "wear out the saints of the Most High?" What counter-working influence will the Reviewers oppose to the infernal policy of "the Holy Inquisition," and to that bloody spirit of extermination which has immolated its hundreds of thousands of human victims on the polluted shrine of papal infallibility? Perhaps we may answer in the Reviewer's own words in Art. XI. p. 562 of the same number. "We rely on the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth, and on the natural tendency of society to improvement." Do the Reviewers include moral truth in this declaration of their confidence in divine providence? "We, too, rely on his [God's] goodness—on his goodness as manifested, not in extraordinary interpositions, but in those general laws which it has pleased him to establish in the physical, and in the moral world. We rely on the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth, and on the natural tendency of society to improvement." If the Reviewers positively meant to

include in the above, *moral* truth, as the language strongly indicates we are utterly at a loss to conjecture how they dispose of the Christian Religion. We are equally at a loss for the evidence of this good moral tendency in the human intellect. In fact we know to the contrary. We know without risk of error in the calculation, that the constant and unerring tendency of the human intellect is *against moral truth, and in favour of moral falsehood*. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Rom. i. 25. All men have a strange and melancholy aversion to whatever is true in morals. If your own observation on "the world which lieth in wickedness," has not taught you this mournful truth, turn to that authority which cannot deceive. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."—"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after God. But they are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become abominable; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Yet in the face of this overwhelming testimony, and pages on pages of the like, the Reviewers have the impudence to assert—and to couple their assertion with a claim of trust in divine goodness in the promises, that they *rely on the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth* for a continual increase in civilization and public prosperity, and this tendency they find in the physical and moral constitution of man! We too, young as we are in experience, and little as we have seen of the great world, have made some observation on human character, and noticed some of the tendencies of the human mind: and it is our deliberate conviction that we never have made trial of one individual who did not give evidence more or less to the truth of the above Scripture declarations. Since we have come, in our official character, in contract with the moral dispositions of men, and compared them with the word of God, we have often paused in wonder, and looked around on the scene before us in utter astonishment at the amazing perversity of the human heart and mind, in every thing connected with religion. "The carnal mind" will at any time toil and sweat to invent and weave the web of sophistry about itself, and, in its love of darkness rather than light, will spare no pains to falsify the word of God, so that it may seem to countenance the deed of voluntary self delusion. Any thing is more acceptable than a command from rightful authority; any thing is easier than to obey God! Even when the mind feels an overcoming necessity for "confessing the faith of Christ crucified," it is a rare thing if it does not resolutely and inch by inch dispute the ground of unreserved obedience, especially in cases of deep rooted habits of vice; and many times it is known to reject the theory of religion in toto after a *partial* examination, purely because it was a standing reproach on its whole moral economy. This is the true secret of "all false doctrine, heresy and schism;" and *self-gratification* is the main-spring that has invariably put them in motion. Why had not the Reviewers the honesty to give the credit to the *implanted grace of Christ* under the gospel, (since they were speaking of Christian countries,) rather than to "the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth?" They agree that nations are preserved, but it is by a constant tendency of the human mind to improvement. They certainly know that nations have come and gone on the face of the earth like the passing clouds on a summer's sky. This may possibly be by a law or laws of cause and effect. But what law of nature, amidst this perpetually mingling and shifting scene, has preserved "the House of Israel" for more than two thousand years, "scattered and peeled" and "sifted" among the nations, yet whole and entire; smitten, and persecuted and pursued for death but not destroyed:—a living, standing miracle before the whole world as a "swift witness" against the gain-sayers of God's word? What tendency of the human mind to improvement has kept her alone alive while others have appeared and vanished, other nations that each in its turn put forth its power to effect her extermination but in vain? Are the prophecies which predict the preservation and final restoration of the Jews, a part of the law of nature, committed to the interpretation of human intellect in its tendency to truth as a means of bringing into practice "those general laws which it has pleased [God] to establish in the physical and moral world" for the singular gaudiness of this most wonderful people? We heartily wish the Reviewers would settle this business, and then make it the starting point of their arguments for overturning the probability of any "extraordinary interpositions" of divine providence in the affairs of this world.

We freely acknowledge that, to all classes of truth but *one*, the human mind has a natural tendency: but they must none of them *savor of pure and undistorted religion*. We are well aware that multitudes of mechanical, scientific, and philosophic truths have been discovered