

holiness, is thus described—"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—*Prov. 4, 18.*

I.—Having thus considered the import of the principal terms used in the text, and regarding the passage as an appropriate theme for our meditations, while we endeavour to improve the death of a late excellent and faithful minister of CHRIST, we shall, in the first place, contemplate the *character* and *office* of John the Baptist, as here described by our Saviour.—"He was a burning and a shining light."

Some maintain that there is here an allusion to a particular passage in the Psalms, which they regard as referring to John the Baptist, as the Messiah's forerunner and herald, and which reads thus—"There (in Zion) will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a *lamp* for mine anointed,"—for my CHRIST. And hence they read the text,—"*He was the burning and shining light,*"—the specific one mentioned in the Scripture.—*Psalms 132, 1st.* The metaphor is intended to describe him as eminent in spiritual graces and gifts; he was conspicuous, or distinguished, in character and office.

John the Baptist was eminent for *spiritual graces*; he was a man of more than ordinary piety and holiness—"a light," yea, "a burning and a shining light." His character was transparent; and a spectator would at once be convinced of his moral worth and sterling piety. There was nothing dark, hidden, or equivocal about him, but everything was open and upright, without the shadow of dissimulation or obliquity; his principles were pure, and his actions were equally free from all that could be condemned: he was altogether