

monial, more easy than compliance with the benevolent precept enforced as well in the Law as in the Gospel. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* Lev. xix. 18. But such an investigation would lead us too far from our present purpose.

Secondly. The Law was not only expounded by Jesus in reference to its being fulfilled in spirit and in truth by his disciples. This exposition indeed was all that could be distinctly understood by the ears which his immediate discourse made blessed; but there was a further and more mysterious meaning, not to be understood at the moment by those to whom the text was addressed, but upon which future events, the death and resurrection of our blessed Saviour, and the general increase of Christianity, have cast an awful and important light. The Law and the Prophets were not to be destroyed, but to be fulfilled, not only by the doctrines which Christ preached explanatory of their true import, but by the events of his life, and by the scheme of redemption which he promulgated. And it is here that infidels, availing themselves as usual of an insulated text, and subjecting it to their own exclusive interpretation, have asked the Christians triumphantly, in what manner the words of the Founder of our religion have been verified. "Come not he," say such cavillers, "to destroy the Law and the Prophets, briefly after whose advent Jerusalem and her temple were destroyed, her sanctuary defiled and violated, and the observances of the Mosaic Law rendered in many instances impossible, even to the scattered remnant who yet profess obedience to them? Are not these," such persons urge, "the direct consequences of the Christian religion?—is not the destruction of the law of Moses included in the detail which we have given? and even then he said that the Founder of the rival dispensation came upon earth not to destroy the old Law, but to *fulfil* it?"

Such are the objections to which it is our duty to be prepared with an answer, "showing a reason for the faith that is in us." We shall for this purpose view the text both in the negative and positive branch, and endeavour to prove, 1st. That Christ came not to destroy the Law. 2dly. That by his coming the Law was fulfilled; and to such an extent, that as never a richer propitiation was made to offended justice, never were unhappy criminals, if enabled by faith to discover the true way to safety, more fully entitled to sue out their pardon under a law, which, however rigid, had been, by the sufferings and death of our blessed Redeemer, completely satisfied and fulfilled.

First. Our blessed Saviour came not to destroy the Law of Moses; and that the typical ceremonial, the national and peculiar enactments of the Jewish legislator should be abrogated, was no condition of the Gospel offered to them, but a consequence of their own rejection of the terms of proffered salvation. God was not forgetful of the promise he had made to his servant Abraham,* and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple are to be charged, not upon the divine Legislator, but upon the infamous presumption of the Jewish teachers, and the judicial madness of the people in general. The gate of salvation was opened for the Jews, long before the Gentiles were called upon to enter in, nor was it until the wicked labourers had slain and cast forth his only Son, that the Lord of the vineyard was moved to destroy these wicked labourers, and let his vineyard to other labourers, who should render to him the fruits in their seasons.

The truth of what is above stated is evident, when we consider that our holy Saviour was born a Jew, and from his birth to his death was strictly subject to the Dispensation of Moses, complying in his own person with all its ceremonials, and recommending similar compliance to all his disciples and followers, in order that by no neglect of the typical or ceremonial part of their religion, the Pharisees might be justified in the calumnies which accused him of an attempt to destroy the law of Moses. In the very lesson which inculcates the superiority of the duties of benevolence to the payment of tithes and other matters of observance, both are mentioned as existing duties, though precedence in weight and importance is given to the

* John viii. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.