

From these facts, the design of this letter is apparent. It was *designed* to prevent that apostacy from the christian faith which those persecutors had in view. The infidel Jews designed by their persecutions to cause their brethren, who believed in Jesus, to renounce their profession or confession of him as the Christ; and Paul designed by this letter to dis-appoint them. To understand this letter, it is necessary that this be always kept in mind. No person can be said fully to understand *what* is written in it, unless he know *why* it is written.

To be more particular in illustrating this point, it must be noticed that the infidel Jews attacked their brethren, who confessed Jesus, in two ways—first, by argument, and then by force. If they failed to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, or that the Jews' religion was to be of perpetual standing, their next effort was to inflict upon them corporal sufferings for what was called *obstinacy*. To understand every branch of the argument of this epistle, it is therefore necessary that we should know what the infidel Jews had to say, by way of argument, in support of their views of the excellency and perpetuity of the Jews' religion; for Paul meets their objections or arguments in this letter.

His letter was first to demonstrate that their arguments were incon-clusivo and false; and, having done this, to show that the terrors with which they clothed themselves to induce to apostacy, were not worthy to be compared to the terrors of falling into the hands of the living God, should any be induced, through fear, to renounce the christian profession.

He thus opposes argument to argument, and terror to terror; and his arguments were just as far superior to theirs in weight and importance, as the terrors of the living God are to the terrors of men.

This is the grand key to the whole epistle. When, then, we know what arguments the Jews had to offer in support of their darling hypothesis, we understand *why* the Apostle says what he says, and we understand the true import of *what* he advances.

We shall, therefore, in the first place, glance at the topics from which the infidel Jews argued:—

1. That their constitution and laws were superior to the christian, was argued from the fact, that both were introduced by the ministry of heavenly messengers.

2. That their laws were faithfully represented by the writings of Moses, was argued from the fact, that Moses was a lawgiver of the utmost dignity and fidelity.

3. That their religious rites and instituted worship were most sacred, sublime, and unalterable, was argued from the divine call and consecration of Aaron to be High Priest.

4. That the covenant at Sinai embraced the Jews only as God's people; that it was established on the most excellent promises, and was to be everlasting.

5. That their temple and sacrifices were of divine appointment, and superior to any thing of the kind ever exhibited upon earth.

These items embrace all the capital points which were advanced in the controversy between the believing and unbelieving Jews. Now the Apostle Paul, well versed in all these questions, fully meets them, one