

give mankind correct notions and impressive sensations of his divine meaning, qualities, and character, he might have a people distinct from the rest of the world, with whom he could have, upon his own plan, and in his chosen manner, that intercourse and those dealings on all the great subjects that arise in human life between man and God, which would exhibit himself from time to time in such actions and communications as would fully teach and lead us to conceive rightly of him—to feel and cherish due sensibilities towards him—to know and understand, clearly and impressively, his mind and will; and by these means to become as much acquainted with him, from personal conduct, as we are with any human individual whom it is necessary for us to know.

This is the paramount value of the Sacred Scriptures to myself. I see my God acting, speaking, thinking, and reading before me, with such assimilations to human nature, so much like my own modes of thought and feeling, though without my errors and imperfections, that I can always comprehend and appreciate him. My sympathies follow him in every part; the perceptions he wishes to be in my mind of him and from him, arise accordingly as I read and meditate on what I read. I understand him more and more, as I more attentively peruse what is recorded for my knowledge, in this spirit and with this desire. The Scriptures are thus really a sensorial history of the Deity to us—a portraiture of the divine mind and feelings, in an instructive and vivid train of actions and expressions, and made to be as analogous to our own as they possibly could be.

Thus the Jewish history is the intended portraiture of the Deity to us, as the various incidents there narrated, occasioned him to display himself to his selected people, and thereby to all mankind, to whom the account of his transactions with them should, in

the course of the following ages, by these writings, or by oral teaching from them, be individually communicated.

This plan of selecting a particular nation to be the special subject of an avowed divine administration, and of making special communications of the divine meaning and intentions to some individuals occasionally in it, had other important effects. It enabled the Deity to explain his mind, and meaning, and objects to those whom he addressed in the first instance, and to all afterward, to whom the accounts should spread; and by an adapted course of events, and their completed series, to instruct mankind as by a grand providential drama, carrying on a visible succession of scenes and incidents to that termination, which was intended to impress permanently the resulting moral with monitory efficacy.

This was steadily done in the history of the Jewish nation; for this was indeed but a large and grand illustration of the first scene in paradise, and of the principles and results inculcated by that. Obey me and be happy; neglect and disobey, and certain calamity will be the final issue of that sin and folly. The felicity which would attend obedience was shewn, by a powerful nation being reared from one single child, and by all the riches of temporal prosperity accompanying their multiplication; but when the violation of his laws, and the substitution of false Gods, took place, national decline immediately commenced. A repetition of the kindest warnings was given to them by the prophets, at the command and in the name of their Deity, to explain to them the principles of his government and providence, and to prevent the fatal consequences of their persisting in their abandonment of his worship and moral regulations. But all these admonitions were disregarded. The infatuation was invincible. The Jewish people preferred their new divini-