

feelings of a Jew. And instead of the character of Jesus Christ, we should now have been furnished with the *beau, ideal* of a proud and sanctimonious Pharisee, of an impious Sadducee, or of a quiet and abstemious Essene, according as the opinions of the writers led them to prefer one set of worthies to the other ; and at all events every Jew would have made the most exalted excellence to consist in bringing temporal deliverance to Israel and extending the boundaries of their kingdom to the extremities of the world.

Besides moral worth, there is another part of the character of our Lord which the evangelists never could have reached, we mean the wisdom which distinguished him from all the human race. This is a point which it is impossible to evade ; for it would be removing the difficulty only a single step, to deny the wisdom of the Saviour, if we must admit that in the writings of each of the evangelists, there are marks of wisdom which all the wise men of antiquity could never attain. There are doctrines and precepts in the New Testament which, even our enemies themselves being judges, cast into the shade all the wisdom of the heathen. Whence then came this wisdom, is the point of enquiry. To deny the character of our Lord does not explain the difficulty. Just as if any one wishing to decry the knowledge which the heathen really possessed in regard to religion and morality, were to assert that Xenophon and Plato had invented the character of Socrates and the doctrines which he taught, he would not have gained his object, because he would have been obliged to confess that Xenophon and Plato knew and held these doctrines, which would amount to the same thing in regard to the point at issue. On the same principle, if we deny the reality of the character of Christ, still we must admit that there were four obscure indi-