

the *Atheist* amid his carnal enjoyments, no less disturbed the *hypocrite*; who, in the plenitude of spiritual pride, thanked God that he had not made him as other men, or even as the humble publican, who, with a contrite and broken heart, was laying a confession of his sins before an offended Deity.

The cause of the Pharisees' unbelief, and their strenuous opposition to the Gospel teachers, had root undoubtedly in our blessed Saviour's detection of their hypocrisy, and his publicly exposing the foul principles and practices which they covered with the most formal affectation of strict holiness. They could not bear the light, which, not content with playing on the outside of their whitened sepulchres, penetrated into their foul charnels, and showed to the public gaze the dust and rottenness which their showy exterior concealed. They could not endure the friendly zeal of the Divine Physician, when he rent from their wounds the balsams with which they soothed, and the rich tissues under which they concealed them, and exhibited festering and filthy cancers which could be cured only by the probe, the knife, and the caustic. Hence they were, from the beginning of our Saviour's ministry until its dreadful consummation, (in which they had a particular share,) the constant enemies of the doctrine and of the person of the blessed Jesus. Under his keen and searching eye, the pretensions which they had so long made in order to be esteemed of men, were exposed without disguise; their enlarged garments and extended phylacteries, their lengthened prayers, their formal ceremonial, and tithes of mint and anise, were denounced as of no avail without the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. Feeling thus their own sanctimonious professions held up to contempt, and their pretensions to public veneration at once exposed and destroyed, the Pharisees became the active and violent opposers of those doctrines to which the Sadducees, with sullen apathy, seemed to have refused a hearing. It was the Pharisees who maligned the life of our blessed Lord; who essayed to perplex the wisdom of Omnipotence by vain and captious interrogatories; and who, unable to deny those miracles by which the mission of Christ was authenticated and proved, blasphemously imputed them to the agency of demons.

But, in particular, their objections were founded upon arguments the most powerful of any with the pride and national prejudices of the Jews, when they objected that Jesus of Nazareth had it in contemplation to innovate upon and destroy the Levitical Law, that ancient and solemn system of institutions committed to the children of Israel by Omnipotent wisdom; the demolition of which must have had the natural consequence of blending together Jews and Gentiles, and stripping the former of all those distinguished privileges which were assigned to them as the children of the promise. Such arguments, we may easily conceive, were more likely than any other to obstruct the progress of the Christian religion. "Who is this," the scoffers might have said, "who is wiser than Moses, and more holy than Aaron? Who is this, who presumes to lower and deface the glory of the sanctuary, and to annul those institutions, to the observance of which such splendid promises, to the neglect of which such direful punishments are annexed in the Mosaic statutes?" *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them:* such are the recorded words of the Almighty—"And who is he," may these blinded Israelites have demanded, "who pretends to relax or innovate upon a system so fearfully sanctioned?" The text which we have before us must be considered as the answer of Jesus to these misrepresentations—*Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* And this declaration will be found equally true, whether we examine it with reference to the doctrines preached and enforced by our Saviour, or to that fulfilment of the law and the prophets which arose from his life, his sufferings, and his death for our redemption.

Considering the text in the first point of view, the principal topics insisted upon in the Sermon on the Mount, show that Jesus, the divine commentator upon a divine work, preached to his disciples, and to the Jews in general, the fulfilment of the Law, by showing them in what the spirit and efficacy of the Mosaic institutions actually consisted.

Although there be no question that the Almighty, through all ages, had been pleased to enlighten the eyes of many individuals among his chosen people, to see and know the secret purposes of his dispensation, yet it is certain that the great ma-