

## Theological.

## STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

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By too many the Sacred Volume is utterly neglected—permitted to lie on the shelf, unmoved and unopened, so as to render it possible to write their doom in the undisturbed dust which has gathered thickly upon its covers. For the proper condemnation of such conduct, language sufficiently reprehensible can scarcely be found:—it involves criminality of the highest character, and consequences the most appalling and ruinous to the parties concerned.

Others peruse the Sacred Volume but occasionally, and even then, only in a cursory manner, without that deep and lively interest, which its contents so pre-eminently demand, and of which they are so transcendently worthy. Though not so highly culpable as the conduct of those above animadverted upon, this practice cannot be successfully relieved from the just preferment of charges of aggravated guiltiness, evincing as it does an under-estimating of that precious boon, to equal which in value, the most prolific of golden mines would be thrown in the scale in vain.

THE BIBLE, it is deeply to be lamented, is, alas! by too many regarded as a mere historical depository, possessing no claims of sanctity superior to works, the literary production of the mere, unassisted, powers of men—the consequence is, when perused, there is the absence of that hallowed feeling, that just deference, and exalted veneration, which it rightfully claims, and which should impress the mind of every reader whilst perusing its sacred pages.

The attention of individuals should be directed to this most important subject, not only from the PULPIT, but also through the PRESS; in the accomplishment of which, I gladly unite my humble efforts, with the endeavours of others, and now offer a few remarks upon it for the consideration of those whose eyes may scan this article.

By those who wish to form a proper estimate of the value of the Sacred Scriptures, *their peculiar character should not be overlooked*. It cannot be too much insisted upon, neither can it be too clearly realized, that, they contain not the opinions or decisions of men, however exalted in point of rank, intellect, or mental acquirements—if so,—then they would necessarily partake of the fallible character of their authors, and all ground and certainty and authority, would be removed, and every person would have an indisputable right to assent to, or dissent from, the opinions proposed, as he might in his own judgment consider them right or wrong, without the least incurrance of guilt, or the exposure of himself to censure. If the peculiar character of the Sacred Scriptures be denied, then the unavoidable inference is,—there is no authenticated and authoritative rule to bind either our faith or practice, and we are cast upon the dark and tumultuous ocean of uncertainty, without pilot, or chart, or compass, or star, by which to direct our bark! This peculiar character of the Sacred Scriptures is

their *divine inspiration*. That they are thus inspired and contain the words of God, who is infinite in wisdom, goodness, and truth, is evident from the acknowledgment of the writers of them themselves. They do not profess to give their own opinions or the result of the operations of their own imaginative and reasoning powers; but the words they pen are all without exception referred to the direct and immediate inspiration of Deity itself. One speaking for all says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” They were, also, endued with supernatural power to work miracles and utter prophecies, in attestation of the divinity of the truths they delivered; and this power they exerted. God is thus immediately and ostensibly connected with their mission and teachings, which is in itself a convincing proof that they wrote and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:—unless, to free ourselves from this overwhelming species of evidence, we take shelter in the most absurd of all absurd beliefs, that God would directly interpose his own power for the support and propagation of the most palpable falsehoods. The inspired character of the Sacred Scriptures secures their *truth*. They contain truth without mixture of error. Their source is perfect TRUTH, and it would not be so absurd to suppose that the “same fountain sends forth at the same place sweet water and bitter,” as to suppose that falsity can in any measure be the offspring of the *true* God, of whom it is said, “the works of his hands are *verity* and judgment; all his commandments are sure: they stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.” The divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures also secures their *authority*. Claiming God for their author they possess an authority over our faith and practice: the most absolute and peremptory. It is not now a matter of indifference whether we assent or do not assent to their truth, doctrines, or precepts, or whether we obey or do not obey their sacred requirements. We are endued, it is true, with the power to believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey: but they make unbelief and disobedience capital crimes, committed against God himself and against his positive enactments, and, as such, threaten the guilty with interminable suffering in the eternal world. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” This is the fearful and solemn alternative:—believe or be condemned—obey or be banished from the presence of God and the glory of his power, and punished with everlasting destruction, enduring “the vengeance of eternal fire!” “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” How carefully, and with what deep concern and anxiety to know the mind of God, should His Sacred Word be read! If we neglect this imperative duty—it is at our own peril.

(To be continued.)

Holiness is the true dignity of the soul: and sin, its vilest degradation.

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