

ness to come, but it was the office of our blessed Lord to communicate to mankind the mercy of his Father, and to instruct them in the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable his judgments are and his ways past finding out.

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul quotes the same prophecy, "for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor," anxious to remind us of our limited faculties, and that although in many essential things light had come into the world, we were yet unable to comprehend the nature, extent, and variety of God's moral government.

It is not intended in this essay to give an extensive illustration of the truth included in the question of the Apostle, or to point out with minuteness the sources of consolation which the answer presents to Christians under every vicissitude and calamity that awaits them in this transitory portion of their existence, but to confine ourselves in their application to the recent melancholy event, in which we are all so nearly concerned.

Ist.—Who hath known the mind of the Lord ?

The progress which we are daily making in the acquisition of knowledge, instead of becoming a cause of exultation, serves to remind the humble Christian how little we yet know, and how much more remains concealed. It is nevertheless true, that the knowledge of the present age is vastly greater, both as it respects the arts and sciences, and pure religion, than that possessed by mankind in any former period. But, a remarkable difference presents itself to serious minds, between the progress which we have made in religious and other sorts of knowledge. In true religion, mankind have never made any progress without the help of special revelations; on the contrary, they seemed to lose what had been once known, unless strengthened and refreshed by new communications; but in the arts and sciences, they have gradually advanced, without any similar assistance.

It is not religion of the understanding, but religion of the heart, which is the great want of the present times. The proofs are well understood, and the doctrines and precepts admirably explained, but a knowledge of the Gospel is too generally considered a sort of speculative science, which it is in some degree necessary to know, but which is seldom applied to our wants and necessities. Hence we are