

height and a depth of mystery in this which even eternity itself shall not enable us to comprehend.

I do not, at present, enter into the discussion of all the ends which the sufferings and death of Christ were intended to serve. Suffice it to say that His death, as an atonement for our offences, and the Saviour of all who believe, is the greatest and most important truth which the Word of God was intended to teach. To this truth "the law and the Prophets and the Psalms" continually refer. The chief aim of all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law was to prefigure it. The grand design of Providence, in all its dispensations, was to prepare the way for it. Blot out this truth from the Bible, and you leave it a body without life. You deprive man of all well grounded hope in the future, and involve the government of God in inscrutable mystery.

The Word of God, then, is important truth, not merely because it gives us the only authentic account of the origin and early history of this world; not because it contains a vast variety of interesting information which is nowhere else to be found; not because of the wonders which it records of Jehovah's doings in the times of old; but chiefly because it reveals to fallen man, through a Redeemer, the way of pardon, peace, and everlasting happiness. Had it not been to convey this message to our ruined race, no prophets would have foretold a Deliverer, no angel would have sped on his errand of love to this apostate world, or proclaimed at midnight's silent hour to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy; to you is born a Saviour." And were it not to make known, throughout the length and breadth of the world, this all-important truth, Churches would never have been erected, ministers would never have been set apart and commissioned to go forth, as ambassadors of Heaven, to "plead with men to be reconciled to God." The condition of man would have been miserable here, and the darkness of despair would have settled down on his prospects in eternity. This brings us to the

III. Proposition,—That the Word of God is Truth undiscoverable by man: but having already occupied your time so long, all that we can do is barely to glance at it.

As the Bible addresses us on subjects so infinitely above our comprehension, it is almost self-evident that the truths which it contains are beyond the powers of the human mind to discover. You have heard much of the wonderful capacity and restless activity of the human mind. Many talk as if there were no subject of enquiry too difficult to be undertaken by it, no investigation so dark or mysterious that it could not find its triumphant way through all its intricacies, and discover truth wherever it might be concealed. And if we contemplate its achievements in the fields of science and philosophy, we shall find them, indeed, sufficient to fill us with wonder, and to give us a most exalted conception of those astonishing powers with which God has furnished the mind of man. On the wings of thought he has ascended into the heavens—weighed the planets as in a balance, measured their distances, and calculated their motions. He has penetrated into the bowels of this globe, recorded the history of the pre-Adamite earth, and described the forms and habits of animals that dwelt upon it thousands of years before the first progenitors of the human race were placed in the bowers of paradise. He has subjected a vapour to his will, and forced it to do his bidding, to propel his vessels across the ocean, and to wheel the car with a rapidity that has passed into a proverb. He has seized upon the lightnings of heaven, and made them convey his messages over oceans and continents, quick as thought itself, so that I can now converse with my friend, at the distance of three thousand miles, almost as if he were at my side. In short, what are the fields of speculation into which the mind of man has not ventured, and returned victorious from its daring inroads? No