

SOWING AND REAPING, &C.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh, shall, of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.—GALATIANS, vi, 7, 8.

From the first clause of these passages of scripture, it is quite evident, that persons possessing the inspired revelations of our holy religion, may be so deceived as to its true nature and designs, as to fail of securing its promised salvation and eternal life. Hence the necessity for the warning and exhortation here given,—“Be not deceived ” Of all the subjects on which the human mind may be exercised, religion is the one on which it is naturally the most liable to be involved in ruinous deception. This liability is owing to the native incapacity to ascertain, and truly judge of spiritual and eternal realities; and is one of the fatal consequences of the first transgression; and like all its other results, has been transmitted, and universally prevails. In secular designs or affairs, there is seldom such liability to deception. Those engaged in them know their nature, and the purposes or effects they will accomplish. But naturally it is not the same in religion. Without a divine revelation, man in the most advanced state of his intellect and attainments, never did, and never can discover the true character of the author of his being, his relations and responsibilities to him, and the nature of the worship and service which will be appropriate and most acceptable. It is the testimony of scripture,—“The world by wisdom knew not God.” Moreover, there is not only ignorance in the natural understanding as regards spiritual objects and things, but what is equally, or even more dangerous and delusive, there is the *deceitfulness* of the unrenewed heart. This, by inspired truth, is declared to be “deceitful above all things;” (Jer. xvii, 9) and the description is applied *universally*, and as to all ages and conditions of man’s natural history. The following are further declarations of scripture, to the same effect:—*“They hold fast deceit.”—“A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that

*Jeremiah, viii., 5.—Isaiah, xlii, 20,—Galatians, vi, 3.—Samuel, i, 26.—Revelations, ii, 17.