

CABINET OF THEOLOGY.

THE EVIDENCE FROM MIRACLES AND PROPHECY.
ITS NECESSITY AND NATURE.

We must admit also that the great laws of the material universe are so uniform in their operations as that if any marked suspension takes place—if in the midst of their even and regular career they are suddenly stopped, and a power greater than their own interposes to control them, that power is God's—and if the man in whose favour such interpositions are granted, claims to be commissioned to reveal the will of God to man, and such interpositions is brought upon the laws of nature in such connection with his revelation as to evince that claim, it is the testimony of God—it is the great seal of Heaven stamped upon his commission—it discloses the omnipotence of God, sanctioning his claim to inspiration.

A voice from heaven would not answer the purpose. If a man were to inform the world that he had heard a voice from heaven, how few would believe him! How much room would there be for skepticism and ridicule! You heard a voice, did you? You heard a voice, saying, "I am God, and such is my will," &c.? But how do you know it was the voice of God? Other invisible spirits may speak, possibly, and claim to be God. How do you know but it may have been they who spoke? A bright angelic visitant, with sparkling eyes, and glittering wings, and glowing tongue, would not suffice, without the proper signature of God to his own mission. For who can tell whether he was truly an angel of light, or Satan transformed? Our faith would not rest on God, but on the angel; and whether he came from heaven or not, would rest on his own testimony, not on the testimony of God. Suppose a man should present himself to me and say, "Sir I perceive you are in great darkness, and I am sent to teach you the way to God." I would reply, "Sir, I am much obliged to you, but what evidence have you to show that heaven has sent you? I am much in the dark, and need teaching, but I want to know who my teacher is, and whence he derives his commission to teach." He says, "I can perform a thousand wonderful feats, whose manner of operation you cannot explain." "True, but they contain no evidence of superhuman power—I know that you know how you do them, though I cannot tell the manner, and I see no reason to think them above the cunning, craftiness and dexterity of man. They are all sleight of hand. They are none of them works which none but God can do. They are lying wonders, and give me no confidence in your authority." "Well, I can perform things superhuman, and show you wonders which no mortals can perform." It may be so; and yet these wonders may not surpass the power of created agents; for heaven and hell are full of mighty spirits; and how am I to know that your aid is not from the father of lies to deceive me? Can you govern the laws of nature at your bidding—can you command or stop the showers of heaven—can you send pestilence and drive away diseases—can you raise the dead—can you stop the sun? These are the seal of Heaven. Show me this seal on your commission, and I will believe you are sent of God, and are authorised to teach his will.

I know that if he can do all this, he must come from God. If he can stop the sun in his course—if he can produce rain for ten days at a given hour—if his

power be to shake the pillars of heaven, I ask no more. I am certain this is God. No man, nor devil, nor angel, can do that. I know that God is with him, and have confidence that his mission is authentic.

But such are the evidences upon which we rely to substantiate the Bible as the word of God's revelation for our guidance, for time and eternity. And this evidence is contained in the miracles and prophecies connected with that book.

A miracle is such a control of the laws of nature, as none but God, who made the world, can accomplish. And in such relations to a revelation as give it the divine attestation.

And prophecy is such a record, in the revelation of future events—such and so many as no finite mind could foresee or conjecture.—*Beecher.*

THE JUDGMENT.—When the first day of judgment happened—that of the universal deluge of waters upon the old world, the calamity swelled like the flood, and every man saw his friend perish, and the neighbors of his dwelling, and the relatives of his house, and the sharers of his joys, and yesterday's bride, and the new-born heir, the priest of the family, and the honor of the kindred—all dying or dead, drenched in water and the Divine vengeance; and then they had no place to flee unto—no man cared for their souls; they had none to go unto for counsel, no sanctuary high enough to keep them from the vengeance that rained down from heaven; and so it shall be at the day of judgment, when that world and this, and all that shall be born hereafter, shall pass through the same Red Sea, and be all baptized with the same fire, and be involved in the same cloud, in which shall be thunderings and terrors infinite; every man's fear shall be increased by his neighbors' shrieks, and the amazement that all the world shall be in, shall unite as the sparks of a raging furnace into a globe of fire, and roll upon its own principle, and increase by direct appearances, and intolerable reflections. He that stands in a church-yard in the time of a great plague, and hears the passing-bell perpetually telling the sad stories of death, and sees crowds of infected bodies pressing to their graves, and others sick and tremulous, and death-dressed up in all the images of sorrow, round about him, is not supported in his spirit by the variety of his sorrow: and at doomsday, when the terrors are universal, besides that it is itself so much greater, because it can affright the whole world, it is also made greater by communication and a sorrowful influence; grief being then strongly infectious, when there is no variety of state, but an entire kingdom of fear; and amazement is the king of all our passions, and all the world its subjects: and that shriek must needs be terrible, when millions of men and women, at the same instant, shall fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, with the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens, and the crack of the dissolving world, when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes.—*Jeremy Taylor.*