

being however dignified, must still be infinite, and consequently our highest conceptions must still fall short of his infinite glory, yet the redeemed shall ascend finally beyond the boundaries of faith, and in the presence of God distrust and difficulty may perplex us no more. This clearer understanding of the divine nature and character, and of the wonders and enjoyments of the invisible state will form part of the reward of the redeemed in heaven; and there may also be a clearer view, and a satisfactory justification of all the acts of his government in relation to our world and the universe of created intelligences. Here "his way is in the sea, his path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." The confusion which exists in human society, the sufferings of virtue and the triumphs of vice, the apparently unequal distribution of good and evil, the special mercies of revelation and civilization which are given to one region of the earth and denied to another, will all be made manifest to be parts of a plan wise and beneficent, and merciful and just—a plan, the dim outlines of which, we can even now partially trace, but we know neither the extent nor the proportions of it. The great drama is only commenced, the plot is as yet perplexed and obscure; but in the progress of ages it may be expected to be farther unfolded even to mortals than it is at present; and although we shall have passed off the stage before it can have proceeded much farther, yet revelation inspires us with the hope that we shall, in another state of being, see the complete evolution of the plan, and join in the acclamation that shall arise from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, to him that sitteth upon the throne, all whose judgments are true and righteous, though now his ways be past finding out.

If, therefore, the scheme of revelation be, as we have reason to suppose, a regular scheme, the various parts of which are to be successively developed, (many of the parts which are as yet in embryo, involved in deep mystery and to be penetrated by no eye, which cannot pierce into futurity,) there is reason to believe that in the progressive accomplishment of this scheme much of the mystery that now overhangs it will disappear. If we trace the progress of the heavenly light which has already clearly risen upon us, we shall find that the first streaks of it appeared in a dark morning, pointing out the day, which has now dawned never to close. How obscure, even to the prophets and holiest men, was the path of typical and shadowy ordinances in which they were doomed to travel, and how dark were the visions of prophecy which glimmered before them. Yet the Saviour is come,

a more perfect light has shone around, the types and shadows have met their accomplishment, and the dim and apparently contradictory predictions of prophecy are fulfilled and reconciled. How obscure must have been the notions of the Apostles and early martyrs of the future glory of that kingdom for which they laboured and bled. A few obscure and persecuted individuals amidst the ocean of human society, unpatronized by kings and unknown to courts, labouring to demolish long established creeds and powerfully combined superstitions, contending against a world lying in wickedness—a world ignorant of God, and sunk in idolatry, and almost dead to every moral virtue. How indistinct must their views have been even of that ascendancy of christian influence which we are permitted to behold! And ages hence, have we not reason to believe, that that divine light which has arisen on our climate shall encircle the globe and all men shall behold its brightness.—Then shall the scorn of the scoffer be turned in derision upon himself, when he sees that which is now obscure, clear and plain; and that divine faith which is now partial—very partial in its effects, obtain universal ascendancy, and he shall be compelled to acknowledge the mighty power of God and approve the manner of his working. The whole period from the creation and fall of man till all nations shall be brought under the influence of Christ will appear only as the transient dawn of a day that will never decline—as a mere instant of time compared with the interminable duration in which its *benign influence* shall be felt. While time rolls round the accomplishment of these predicted events, we may be usefully and piously employed in the contemplation of the predictions, and marking their gradual and successive fulfilment; and although we may not always apprehend their precise import, disguised as it is for wise reasons, we may yet be cheered with the hopes they shed around us, and be encouraged to a more ardent piety and a more holy obedience. Thus a part of divine revelation not well understood, because not intended for us, may yet contribute to the improvement of believers by exciting their faith and hope in God till time and events dispel the obscurities in which prophecy is enveloped. For we know in part and prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

But there are other difficulties which arise not from the Bible itself as a revelation, but from our own ignorance, and which, therefore, increasing knowledge will enable us to overcome. In perusing the sacred scriptures it should be remembered, that they comprise a series of books, written at