

and destroys them all. "So it was in the days of Noah, so it was also in the days of the Son of Man," and so it will be to the end of the world. In a word, there is no magic in the Bible to operate without reason and conscience ; and there is no religion in man without revelation. If we lay aside the Scriptures we have no standard to judge by ; and if we have no judgment the standard is of no use.

Let us apply these general observations to particular cases, in order to understand how the Spirit of God "leads" all good men. We have determined that it is by means of Scripture truths, and that it implies the exercise of some dispositions in us. I am aware of the questions you will ask, and I only defer stating the question till it comes properly before us, as it will presently by supposing a case, which is not a mere supposition, because it comes to pass every day. Suppose a man, who had never thought of religion, to lose by death the first of all earthly pleasures, the agreeable partner of his life, or, as a Prophet, calls his wife, "the desire of his eyes." O dreadful calamity, sound fit to raise the dead ! "Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke ! I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died." Awhile the man thunderstruck can hardly believe it true, and hopes against hope, till time, cruel time, kills his hope, and drives him to despair. The more he thinks, the more occasion he sees for grief. Every thing he sees pierces him to the heart, and in every place a lovely picture of her that was, and the ghastly features of her that is no more, meet his eyes, and melt down all his soul in woe. The sun does not shine, the stars do not sparkle, the flowers do not scent, the world does not look as it used to do ; the world seems dead, his house is a tomb, and all his domestics dreary ghosts. Now he feels the vanity of the world, takes up his Bible, perhaps to look after the desire of his eyes, and try whether he can find any thing in her present state to assuage his pain. This man hath religion to seek, and it is indifferent which end of the Bible he begins at—either will "lead" him right. If with the Prophets, they will hand him on from one to another, till they conduct him downward to Christ ; if with the Apostles, they will direct him upward to the same person, who is a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel." This man, thus led to Christ, will be instructed by reading his sermons, by observing his actions, and by examining how his Apostles understood and explained his meaning, by applying it to several cases, both of individuals and collective bodies, which fell out after his death, and during their inspiration ; and perceiving the truth and beauty of all this, and finding a satisfaction in it calming his mind and producing in him a pleasure never experienced before, he will become a convert to the Christian religion, and choose to make the truths of it the rules of his action, and the ground of his hope. This man is led step by step to a moment in life, in which he becomes a new man ; rises, as it were, from the dead into "newness of life," and when he makes his appearance among Christians, the question will naturally be asked, "Who hath begotten me this man ? Who hath brought up this man ? Where hath he been ? Christians, come round this man and inquire ; he is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.