

responding to its first dissemination, have been diffused throughout the Church, and popish darkness dissipated, like the shades of night before the radiance of the sun. No: the overthrow of the obstacles which have stood in the way of it, hitherto, only partial progress, is as wonderful as the removal of these can be which obstruct its universal propagation. Even were it otherwise, there are still no limits to divine power; and if such a glorious result as we speak of be in the highest degree worthy of God—such as might be expected from his mercy; if it be a triumph of Christianity, suitable to its origin and invaluable blessings; and, above all, if it be predicted in Scripture, all doubt and unbelief should vanish. What is impossible with man, is possible with God. The power which is leagued with Christianity, is divine, and therefore perfectly adequate to accomplish such a result. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” In this the religion that has God for its author, differs from all others, that while the latter can triumph only over a certain measure of opposition, obstacles and hindrances are nothing to that supreme power to which the Gospel owes equally, its origin, continuance, and progress. While the success of other religious systems depends wholly upon circumstances, the most unfavourable aspect of these, affords no ground for despairing of this cause; for that supernatural agency which is involved in the very existence of Christianity, has only to be brought to bear upon them, and they become as though they were not. When we think of the mighty obstacles which obstruct the universal spread of the Gospel, we are apt to despair. We see not how every valley can be exalted, and every mountain and hill can be made low; how the

crooked can be made straight, and the rough places plain. We see Heathen idolatry entwined around the affections of its votaries, by its subserviency to their lusts, enslaving them by superstition, and almost impregnable to the assaults of truth through an intractable ignorance and barbarism; the Mahometan imposture, nurturing in its dupes a hatred of idolatry, and arming them against Christianity, which, from its doctrine of the Trinity, it represents as idolatrous, while its pure precepts farther excuse their dislike as slaves of sensuality. We see popery dazzling men through the medium of the senses, favouring by its indulgence the practice of vice, and having a firm hold on its followers through the influence of superstitious fear. We see the followers of Jewish Infidelity, whose inveterate and almost insuperable prejudices against the Gospel, may be estimated by the sacrifices they submit to, in preference to espousing Christianity. We see, in addition to these great barriers to the progress of truth, despotism in various forms, with its host of selfish interests and passions: and in the contemplation of this formidable array of obstacles, we are apt to abandon the cause in despair. But we should, when so disposed, recollect that the spirit of God has only to move over the face of this moral chaos, and order and beauty will be educed from its darkness and confusion. He has only to pronounce the word, and the region and shadow of death will be illuminated with celestial light. The progress which the Gospel has already made—its dissemination, to a certain extent, in every quarter of the globe—is at once an encouragement and pledge of its universal diffusion. And that expansive benevolence which it inspires—that desire it excites in those who share its blessings, to extend to