

the influence of persecution. For example—"Think it not strange," says Peter, "concerning the fiery trial which is to try you"—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of old, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is," says Paul. "The hay, stubble, wood, shall be burned—the gold, silver, precious stones, will stand the fire," &c. &c.

The prophecy in Malachi which exhibits the Messiah as a "refiner's fire and the fuller's soap," is still more unfortunately advanced in proof that *fire* and *spirit* are two names for the same influence. Our most learned expositors, who are most conversant with the imagery of the Old Testament, do not hesitate to expound Malachi in these words: "He," the Lord, "shall consume the wicked by his judgments, and purify those that are sincere by his doctrine;" and this indeed is free enough: for the *refiner's fire* is for consuming the dross, and the *fuller's soap* for separating the filth. But who are the *dross* and *filth* in that context? Not the sins of men, but the sinners amongst God's people. It is thus explained by the Prophet: "I will come near to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, the adulterers, the false swearers, the oppressors, and those that fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." These are the *dross*—these the *filth* that the Messiah would consume; of which, more particularly in its proper place: for, indeed, our Lord is "a consuming fire." "I am come," says he, "to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?" "I have first, continues he, "to be baptized, and *how am I straightened till it be accomplished:*" then will I send the fire: for "suppose you that I am come to give peace to the earth? I tell you nay; but rather division." As the canons of criticism will not allow us to apply to the *Spirit* what is said of the *Messiah*, so neither will the sacred usage allow us to make the established symbol of punishment the emblem of holiness and peace.

If, then, to be "baptized in fire" mean to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit," it is not merely a pleonasm, but a solecism—an anomaly in the Bible. 'But hold,' says a late expositor, 'does not this *baptism in fire* refer to the day of Pentecost; and was there not an immersion in fire on that day as well as in the spirit?' No fire appeared on that occasion: but on the Apostles appeared the figure of tongues, clear and bright as fire; not fiery tongues, but tongues as of fire, or of a fiery brilliancy, sat upon each of them. The beauty of this fine figure is undiscovered by those who imagine that the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is the baptism in fire. *Tongues as of fire* is quite another thing than they imagine. These holy men, now filled with the Holy Spirit, were now to utter "*the word of the Lord.*" The word of the Lord was now to go forth from Jerusalem. It was to be spoken by human tongues and in all languages; and as the word of the Lord compared to fire in the Prophets, what more apposite in the fitness of imagery, than that tongues resembling fire should sit upon the heads of those who were now to utter the last message of Jehovah to the