

## THE BIBLE.

There is, perhaps, no book read more than the Bible, and it appears as though no book generally read, was less understood. This, no doubt has arisen from a combination of causes which exists in relation to no other book in the world. If any other book in the English language had as many commentaries written upon it, had as many systems based upon it, or upon particular constructions of it; if any other book was exhibited in the same dislocated and distracted light, had as many debates about its meaning, and as many different senses attributed to its words; if any other book were read as the scriptures are commonly read, in the same broken, disconnected and careless manner; with the same stock of prejudices and pre-conceived opinions, there is every reason to believe that it would be as un-intelligible and as little understood as the bible appears to be. We often wonder at the stupidity of the Jews in our Saviour's time in relation to his pretensions and claims, and no doubt posterity will wonder at our stupidity and ignorance of a book which we read so often and profess to venerate so highly. There is a greater similarity in the cause and reasons of their and our indocility, than we are aware of. The evil one has the same interests in obscuring this volume which he had in obscuring the evidences of his mission: and the vitiosity of man, both natural and acquired, exhibits itself in the same aspect towards the bible as it did in reference to the person concerning whom it was all written.

But among the myriads who religiously read the bible, why is it that so little of the spirit of it, seems to be caught, possessed, and exhibited? I will give one reason, and those more wise, may add to it others. Many read the bible to have a general idea of what it contains, as a necessary part of a polite education; many read it to attain the means of proving the dogmas which they already profess; many read it with the design of being extremely wise in its contents; many read it that they may explain it to others; but alas! but few appear to read it supremely and exclusively that they may practise it: that they may be conformed to it, not only in their outward deportment, but in the spirit and temper of their minds. This is the only reading of it which is really profitable to men, which rewards us for our pains, which consoles us now, and which will be remembered for ages to come, with inexpressible delight. In this way, and in this way only, the spirit of it is caught, retained and exhibited. Some such readers seem to be enrapt or inspired with its contents. Every sentiment and feeling which it imparts seem to be the sentiments and feelings of their hearts; and the bible is to their religion, what their spirit is to their body; the life and activity thereof. The bible to such a person is the medium of conversation with the Lord of Life. He speaks to Heaven in the language of Heaven, when he prays in the belief of its truth, and the Great God speaks to him in the same language; and thus the true and intelligent christian walks with God and converses with him every day. One hour of such company is more to be desired than a thousand years spent in intimate converse with the wisest philosophers and most august potentates that earth ever saw.