

with many grievous plagues, and at last their king and army were destroyed in the Red Sea. The Canaanites were extirpated both by pestilence and war, and disinherited of their land by strangers. The Ninevites, for the same cause, were threatened with the destruction of their city; though the calamity in consequence of their repentance and application to divine mercy, was averted. The prophecies are filled with denunciations of divine vengeance against various nations which were rendered ripe for it by their provocation; and the fulfilment of these threatnings history has amply recorded. But of all the nations whose history we have in scripture, the Israelites afford the most numerous examples of the invariable procedure of the Almighty. For their murmurings amidst multiplied mercies—their erection of the monuments of idolatry amidst the clearest evidences of the divine existence, power, and goodness—and their contempt of the warnings and denunciation of the prophets, notwithstanding the most satisfying credentials of their divine commission, judgements were repeatedly threatened and inflicted. In the time of Moses and Joshua who were at pains to instruct them in the divine law, and who succeeded, to a considerable extent, in leading them to obedience, they enjoyed, with few interruptions, success and prosperity. But in the time of the Judges, when, chiefly from the want of religious teachers, they sadly degenerated, they were visited with a succession of calamities. Under their pious kings, whose example doubtless had a beneficial effect on the morals of their subjects, they generally flourished; while in the reign, again, of their wicked and idolatrous monarchs, whose example would have an opposite tendency, their history was generally one of adversity. During the reign of Ahab and his successors, they were, for their rebellion and obduracy, visited with a series of judgements of increasing severity; and which, finally, on their proving irreclaimable, issued in the Babylonish captivity. While for the still more hardened impiety of rejecting, persecuting, and murdering the Prince of life, after suffering a complication of unparalleled miseries, they were utterly annihilated as a nation, and scattered over the face of the whole earth. And examples of the same procedure might be adduced in more modern times. What dreadful miseries were inflicted on unhappy France, when in her public capacity she abjured Christianity, and declared herself a nation of infidels; and what severe scourges, especially those of war, have been experienced by those other nations of continental Europe, whose soil has been drenched with the blood of martyrs, who were guilty of waging a war of cruel extermination on the abori-

ginal inhabitants of this new continent, while with guilt, of not a lighter dye, they embarked their national resources in the slave trade—the horrid traffic in human beings. Judgements on nations guilty of such crimes are designed to operate in the way of warning; and wicked as the world is, it would advance to still greater extremes in depravity were it not for such restraints. Of the wisdom displayed in such visitations we have abundant evidence, not only in their natural tendency, but in their effects. Thus, the calamities which befel the Israelites, unless when they sunk to an extreme of hardness, had the effect of extorting from them confessions of sin, leading them to deprecate farther vengeance, and to evince contrition by amendment. Thus we find that the narratives of their various oppressions in the book of Judges are for the most part, if not uniformly, followed up by penitent confessions and supplications, and this happy result of their chastisement is adverted to by the psalmist. “When he slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and enquired early after God, and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.” The Jews, it must be confessed, had peculiar reasons for profiting by divine judgements. They not only had the voice of conscience which uniformly, unless suppressed, suggests to men that their troubles are a punishment of their transgressions, but they had specific threatnings of calamity in case of apostacy, uttered by their prophets, and contained in their sacred records. If under the present dispensation nations and communities have not specific threatnings addressed to them individually, to prevent them more effectually from mistaking the end of their public evils, they have what is equivalent, far more examples than the Jews had of the connection between national sins and national punishments; so that for men to display insensibility to this connection in the midst of public calamities argues extreme ungodliness and infatuation. And as the repentance and reformation of men is the main object of public chastisements, so when this spirit is manifested there is reason to hope they will be removed; and the removal of judgements in this case is quite in unison with the design of their inflictions, which is to soften the hearts, and amend the lives of men; and when this happy result flows from such severe visitations, they have answered their intention, and may be regarded as no longer necessary. And the removal of judgements, when thus improved, is a beneficial example to men, as it encourages them when suffering these chastisements to fall in with the design of them, by forsaking that iniquity on account of which they have been