

the walls and furniture of the stately mansion. Its gorgeous lustre imparts an air of magnificence to all around it; and if, as some think, this psalm was the composition of Solomon, in whose temple and in whose palace there was such a boundless profusion of the precious material, the statement of the text, coming from one who had so passionate a taste for the splendid and the luxurious, is stamped with a peculiar significance. Moreover, gold is the purest of all metallic substances. Though exposed to the action of the hottest furnace, it loses nothing of its nature, of its substantial properties, or characteristic appearance; and, though freed from all mixture of alloy, it remains as solid and weighty as before. Then, again, as a circulating medium in the social intercourse of life, it is the only thing capable of universal use. Other means may be conventionally employed in certain places, and in a certain state of society; but beyond that limited range, they are unknown and useless; whereas gold is adapted for all quarters of the world. People of all ranks and of all regions have learned to appreciate it, as its worth, unaffected by any changes, either of time or society remains the same as when it first came into the hands of its possessor. And, last of all, it is the standard by which the value of all other things is estimated. Whatever charms an object may possess in the eyes of its maker, or however highly prized it may be by him who owns it, the ideal merit ascribed to it by such partial and interested judges, is never regarded by the world as an evidence of its worth; and its real value is left to be determined by the price it will bring in gold.

In all these respects, this precious metal is a fit emblem of the Scriptures, and the whole range of nature could not have furnished to the imagination of the sacred poet a more appropriate subject of comparison by which to describe the transcendent excellence of the Word of God. The high-toned purity that pervades it, and by which it is distinguished above all other books, notwithstanding the crust of earthly corruption with which it is necessarily associated in recording the history of the Church in the world; in its being adapted for the benefit of men in every rank and condition of life, and in all countries and ages of the world; its being the only Divine and perfect standard by which the value of things in the world must be determined—by which all characters are judged, all actions are weighed, and the lawfulness or excellence of all pursuits are tried;—these characteristics of the Scriptures are well represented by the precious metal alluded to in the text; and in all these points of comparison, the Scriptures, amongst books in the possession of men, stand equally high as gold does among the substances of the natural world.

But at this point all equality or fitness in the comparison ends; and in other respects, far more important than any I have yet men-

tioned, the Scriptures possess such an unequalled superiority, that all who have learned to estimate them at their true value, will say, in the language of the text, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." And in what respects is their superiority so surpassingly great above gold, and the finest gold? Consider the origin and nature of each. Gold is a material substance, formed in subterranean mines by some unknown and unseen agents of nature. It is found in certain countries chiefly, concealed in the bowels of the earth, imbedded in heaps of sand, or adhering to the mountain debris, which is washed down by the rivulets that descend into the neighbouring valleys. It is not till it has passed through the hands of the refiner, and been purified from the baser materials with which it may happen to be mixed, that it becomes fit to be moulded into the coin of the realm, or fashioned into that infinite variety of light or solid finery to which the art of man can apply it. But how lustrous soever may be its beauty, and how gorgeous soever its magnificence, it is of the earth, earthy; and although it constitutes one of the chief elements that impart grandeur to rank, splendour to affluence, and that form the emblems of authority and power to the great, it is after all no more than a piece of matter, superior indeed in appearance, but the same in substance with the dust on which we tread.

Turn now to the Word of God; and when you consider its origin and nature, you will perceive how much more it is to be desired than gold, or the finest gold. It is not of earthly origin—for it is not the growth of nature—it was not born with man, nor had it a local habitation, when, on the completion of his creative work, God looked on all that He had done, and pronounced it good. It was introduced long after from a special cause; and although its statements of necessity passed through the minds, its words were uttered by the lips, and recorded by the pen of men,—it bears so little resemblance to any production of theirs ever known or heard of in the world, as plainly bespeaks its having come from a higher quarter. Its style is so much more dignified and commanding than the greatest or boldest of mortals would dare to assume—its discoveries stretch forward in a direction so remote from the course, which all human researches have ever uniformly taken,—the principle that pervades it is so humiliating to the native pride of man, and the whole of its details of a kind to the invention of which the powers of man are so manifestly unequal, that every intelligent and reflecting mind must be convinced, that he is not the author: and then, when we consider its character, it is of such pre-eminent purity, it breathes such a spirit of holiness, displays such stern opposition to every form and degree of iniquity and vice, makes such an effectual provision for the banishment of all un-