

religion, the internal and practical principle of all piety, virtue, morality, rests upon *Theology*. And what is theology, but the knowledge of that which is in itself *true* and in its relations to us infinitely *important*, concerning the SUPREME BEING, his perfections and works and purposes, the duty which we owe to him, and the hopes which we are permitted to entertain of the greatest blessings by his bestowment ?

We have the most satisfactory proofs, that this all-perfect Being has not only given us mental faculties, by which we are capable of making ever progressive improvement in the study of the dependent universe of which we are a part, and in which so bright rays shine forth of his “eternal power and godhead ;” but that he has further dignified our present condition of existence, by the *communication of positive information* concerning our relations to himself and to each other, and the results of those relations in the eternal state to which we are hastening.

Christianity rests upon the explicit acknowledgment of a succession of such communications, commencing with the earliest epoch of the human history, and growing in comprehension and clearness, till the series is completed in the doctrine of Jesus “the Saviour of the world.” Of these communications we have written monuments, proved to be genuine and authentic ; presenting the truths, laws, promises, warnings, and threatenings, of the Divine Government ; and containing the history of the persons and the circumstances connected with those successive revelations. The earlier of those records are far more ancient than any monuments in alphabetical writing known to exist : and the most early of them affirm the fact of both the universal creation of the world, and the preparation and adaptation of that part of it which was designed to be the habitation of man.