

LECTURE VII.

PSALM XII. 6. *The words of the Lord are pure words ; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

THE connexion of this passage shows that, by “the words of the Lord” here mentioned, we are to understand his promises of mercy and protection to his faithful servants, when they are exposed to sufferings from the treachery of false-hearted men, and when their hopes of aid from their friends are diminished by the death or oppression of the “godly” and “faithful.” In opposition to the flatteries and deceitful actions of an unprincipled party, the author of this psalm exults in the fidelity of God, and the assurance that the fullest reliance might be placed on every authenticated declaration of the divine will. This is illustrated by the metaphor of metallic purity. Silver and gold occur native, in the proper metallic state ; yet, even in that case, they cannot be got free from the stony substances which enclose or penetrate them, without the art of the refiner : but, when the processes of the hammer, the crucible, and the furnace have been duly performed, the precious metal is obtained in a state of high purity, and fit for completely answering every purpose in the arts of life, for which it is adapted.

That which is thus declared concerning the “exceeding great and precious promises” of divine grace, is equally true of every other part of what God has been pleased to reveal, for the purposes of his wisdom and benevolence to mankind ; “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.” The most scrupulous student of the Bible will not accuse me of making an arbitrary application of Scripture, because