

by the image of a man who sees a valuable work spoiled, a favourite measure frustrated, his intentions thwarted, and his hopes turned to the reverse of just expectation: he therefore bitterly regrets that he had ever formed such a purpose, and undergone the labour of executing it. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually: and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."* In another remarkable passage, this imagery is carried still further, and the Blessed and Glorious Being, "with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning," is depicted as changing his mind a second time. "The Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people; and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people?—" He then uses pleas and arguments to urge his petition,—"Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.—And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."†

One instance more only shall be mentioned. After the awful visitation of the deluge, when Noah with his small household came from their ark of safety and saw themselves the sole survivors of the human race, he presented the adoration of gratitude and prayer to his Almighty Preserver: and this, according to what we think there is evidence to regard as a divine institution, was accompanied by a full offering of sacrifices, in which sin was acknowledged, repentance professed, and the great propitiation anticipated. The God of mercy deigned to

* Gen. vi. 5, 6.

† Exod. xxxii. 9—14.