

from this particular instance, upon the principle of evident analogy, I deduce a universal truth. That truth is, that every declaration contained in the writings of the prophets and apostles, which has a respect to the faith, the obedience, the consolation, and the usefulness of believers ; and when understood in the sense intended by the Author of inspiration ; possesses the purity of the best refined silver, the INFALLIBILITY of unmingled TRUTH. The sentiment in this enlarged form is given by the son of the writer of this psalm ; “ Every word of God is pure. He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”* Every serious mind will perceive how solemnly this caution bears upon our proceeding, in the endeavour to elicit the sense of the Scriptures. It not less clearly follows, that one of our first duties is to ascertain, by those means which God has put into our possession, *the genuine meaning* of the divine oracles, without prepossession in favour of some interpretations, or prejudice against others. Our honest question must be, “ *What saith the Lord ?*”

It is not, I trust, in disregard of this caution, that I avail myself of the analogy suggested by our text, as an instructive direction, not of fancy, but arising justly and naturally out of the imagery employed. The use of silver, though it is often found native in metalliferous veins, would be confined within narrow limits, if mankind could employ only the native metal. The quantity obtained, and the capacity of even the best specimens for being applied to the many valuable purposes for which the providence of God has given us that metal, would be very small, were it not for the skill and laborious diligence of the metallurgic workman. So the treasures of the heav-

* Prov. xxx. 5, 6.