no means ſuch diſcoverers as they are ſuppoſed to be by their illiterate admirers.

The ſtudent having made himſelf maſter of natural the­ology, and carefully endeavoured to aſcertain its limits, is now prepared to enter upon the important taſk of ſearching the ſcriptures. In doing this, he ought to diveſt himſelf as much as poſſible of the prejudices of education in behalf of a particular ſyſtem of faith, and sit down to the ſtudy of the ſacred volume as of a work to which he is an entire ſtranger. He ought firſt to read it as a moral hiſtory of facts and doctrines, beginning with the books of Moſes, and proceeding through the rest, not in the order in which they are Commonly publiſhed, but in that in which there is rea­ſon to believe they were written (ſee Scriptures). If he be maſter of the Hebrew and Greek languages, he will doubtleſs prefer the original text to any verſion ; and in this peruſal we would adviſe him to conſult no commentator, becauſe his object at preſent is not to ſtudy the doctrines Contained in the bible, but merely to diſcover what are the ſubjects of which it treats. Many hiſtories of the bible have been written ; and were we acquainted with a good one, we ſhould recommend it as a clue to direct the young divine’s progress through the various books which compoſe the ſacred volume. Stackhouſe’s hiſtory has been much ap­plauded by ſome, and as much cenſured by others. It is not a work of which we can expreſs any high degree of approbation ; but if read with attention, it may no doubt be uſeful as a guide to the ſeries of facts recorded in the ſcriptures. Between the Old and New Teſtaments there is a great chaſm in the hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation ; but it is ſupplied in a very able and ſatisfactory manner by Dr Prideaux, whoſe *Old and New Teſtament* connected is one **of** the moſt valuable hiſtorical works in our own or any other language. Shuckford’s *Sacred and Profane History of the World connected* is likewiſe a work of merit, and may be read with advantage as throwing light upon many paſſages **of** the Old Teſtament : but this author is not intitled to the ſame confidence with Prideaux, as his learning was not ſo great, and his partialities ſeem to have been greater.

In thus making himſelf maſter of the hiſtory of the Old **and** New Teſtaments, the ſtudent will unavoidably acquire ſome general notion of the various doctrines which they contain. Theſe it will now be his busineſs to ſtudy more particularly, to aſcertain the preciſe meaning of each, and **to di**ſtinguiſh such as relate to the whole human race, from thoſe in which Abraham and his poſterity were alone intereſted. He muſt therefore travel over the ſacred volume **a** ſecond time ; and ſtill we would adviſe him to travel with­out a guide. From Walton’s *Polyglote bible,* and the large collection called *Critici ſacri,* he may indeed derive much assiſtance in his endeavours to aſcertain the ſenſe of a difficult text ; but we think he will do well to make little use of commentators and expoſitors, and ſtill leſs of ſyſtem-builders, till he has formed some opinions of his own reſpecting the leading doctrines of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian religions.

“ Impreſſed (ſays an able writer) with an awful ſenſe of **the** importance of the ſacred volume, the philoſophical di­**vine** will ſhake off the bias of prejudices however formed, **of** opinions however ſanctioned, and of paſſions however conſtitutional, and bring to the ſtudy of it the advantage of a pure and impartial mind. Inſtead of waſting all his labour upon a number of minute and lets ſignificant parti­culars, and of refining away plain and obvious ſenſe by the ſubtleties of a narrow and corroſive mind, his first object will be to inſtitute a theological inquiry into the general deſign of the written word ; and from principles fully con­tained and fairly underſtood, to illuſtrate the true *nature* and *genius of the religious diſpenſation* in all its parts. He will mark the difference between the firſt and ſecond covenants, and obſerve the connection that ſubsiſts between them. He will trace the temporary economy of the *Old Testament,* and weigh the nature and intent of the *partial covenant* with the Jews ; obſerving with aſtoniſhment how it was made introductory of better things to come : and he will follow it through the *law* and the *prophets* in its wonderful evolu­tions, till he ſee this vaſt and preparatory machine of provi­dence crowned and completed in the eternal goſpel. This *New Testament,* the laſt and beſt part of the religious diſpensation, he will purſue through the ſacred pages of that gospel with redoubled attention ; contemplating the divine foundation on which it claims to be built, the supernatural *means* by which it was executed, and the immortal end which it has in view. @@\*”

In the courſe of this inquiry into the import of the ſa­cred volume, the ſtudent will pay particular attention to the circumſtances of the age and country in which its va­rious writers reſpectively lived, and to the nature of the different styles, *analogical* and *parabolical,* in which it is writ­ten. He will likewiſe keep in mind that God, whom it claims for its author, is the parent of truth, and that all his actions and dispenſations muſt be confident with one an­other. He will therefore compare the different passages of the Old and New Teſtaments which relate to the same doctrine, or to the ſame event, reaſonably concluding that the bible muſt be the beſt interpreter of itſelf ; and though the opinions which he thus forms may often be er­roneous, they will ſeldom be dangerous errors, and may eaſily be corrected by mature reflection, or by conſulting approved authors who have treated before him of the va­rious points which have been the ſubject of his ſtudies. Of this mode of proceeding one good consequence will be, that, having from the ſacred ſcriptures formed a ſyſtem of the­ology for himſelf, he will afterwards ſtudy the ſyſtems of other men without any violent prejudices for or againſt them ; he will be ſo much attached to his own opinions as not to relinquish them in obedience to mere human authority, at the same time that he will be ready to give them up when convinced that they are not well founded ; and if he have read the ſcriptures to any good purpoſe, he will have ac­quired ſuch a love of truth as to embrace her wherever ſhe may be found, whether among Papiſts or Proteſtants, in. the ſchool of Arminius or in that of Calvin.

As we have ſuppoſed that every man, after having formed a theological ſyſtem of his own, will conſult the ſyſtems of others, it may perhaps be expected that we ſhould here recommend thoſe which, in our opinion, are moſt worthy of his attention. To do this, however, would, we appre­hend, be a very ungracious interference with the rights of private judgment. It would be to arrogate to ourſelves a kind of authority to which, when assumed by others, we have cautioned our readers not to ſubmit. But left we ſhould be ſuspected of wiſhing to bias the mind of the young ſtudent toward the ſhort ſyſtem which we are obliged to give, we ſhall juſt obſerve, that by the divines of what is called the *Arminian ſchool,* Epiſcopius’s *Theologiae Institutiones* @@(c), Limborch’s *Theologia Christiana,* and Locke’s *Rea-*

@@@[m]\* Tatham Chart and Scale of Truth.

@@@(c) There is, however, one chapter of this work which the majority oſ Arminians loudly condemn. Epiſcopius acknow-