

THE
SOUTHERN PREACHER:

A COLLECTION

OF

SERMONS,

FROM THE

MANUSCRIPTS OF SEVERAL EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,

RESIDING IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS, WITH THE CONSENT AND
APPROBATION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AUTHORS.

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW POSTHUMOUS SERMONS,

FROM THE

MANUSCRIPTS OF EMINENT DECEASED MINISTERS,

Who, when living, had resided in the Southern States.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,

WITH THE CONSENT AND APPROBATION OF THOSE IN WHOSE POSSESSION THEY WERE
FOUND.

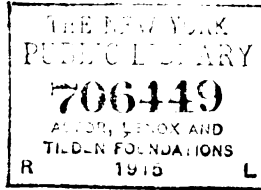
BY THE REV. COLIN M'IVER.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY THE EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

William Fry, Printer.

.....
1824..



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, } DISTRICT OF CAPE-FEAR,
NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT. } *To wit :*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that, on the 7th day of March, in the forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1823, the Rev. Colin M'Iver, of the said District, has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, viz :—

"The Southern Preacher: a collection of Sermons, from the Manuscripts of several eminent Ministers of the Gospel, residing in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of their respective authors. Together with a few Posthumous Sermons from the Manuscripts of eminent deceased Ministers, who, when living, had resided in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of those in whose possession they were found. By the Reverend Colin M'Iver."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act entitled "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled an act, for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, Historical and other prints." Witness Carleton Walker, Clerk of the District of Cape-Fear.

CARLETON WALKER.

CONTENTS.

Preface. ix

SERMON I.

On the Perfection of the Divine Law. By the Reverend Joseph Caldwell, D. D. President of the University of North Carolina. *Matthew*, v. 48.—“Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven, is perfect.” 15

SERMON II.

On the guilt and danger of delaying to keep God's Commandments. By the Reverend Adam Empie, Minister of the Episcopal Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. *Psalms*, cxix. 60.—“I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy Commandments.” 33

SERMON III.

On keeping the Heart. By the Reverend Joseph Caldwell, D. D. President of the University of North Carolina. *Proverbs*, iv. 23.—“Keep thy Heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of Life.” 49

SERMON IV.

On the Atonement. By the same. *2nd Corinthians*, v. 21.—“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” . . . 65

SERMON V.

On the deceitfulness and wickedness of the Heart. By the Reverend William Hooper, A. M. Minister of the Episcopal Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina. *Jeremiah*, xvii. 9.—“The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” . 81

SERMON VI.

On the way of Acceptance, as announced in the Gospel. By the same. *Romans*, viii. 3, 4.—“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” . 93

SERMON VII.

On the Doctrine of a Particular Providence. By the Reverend Arthur Buist, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Psalms*, xcvi. 1.—“The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.” 107

SERMON VIII.

On the Character and Doom of the Wicked. By the Reverend Adam Empie, Minister of the Episcopal Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. *Ezekiel*, xviii. 8.—“O wicked Man, thou shalt surely die.” 125

SERMON IX.

On the vanity of Life, and the folly of the Worldling. By the same. *Job*, vii. 16.—“I would not live alway.” 142

SERMON X.

On the necessity of Preparation for Death. By the Reverend John S. Capers, Minister of a Methodist Church near Georgetown, South Carolina. *Matthew*, xxiv. 44.—“Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” 154

SERMON XI.

On the Blessedness of not being offended in Christ. By the Reverend Eleazar Harris, A. M. Minister of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in York District, S. Carolina. *Matthew*, xi. 6.—“And blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in me.” 173

SERMON XII.

On the reasons which Christians have, for Mourning the sudden removal of Men, who have been distinguished, for the excellence of their Characters, and the usefulness of their Lives. By the Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, D. D. Minister of the First Independent, or Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *2 Samuel*, iii. 32, 33, 34.—“And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.” 194

SERMON XIII.

On Repentance. By the late Reverend Andrew Flinn, D. D. former Minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Luke*, xiii. 5.—“I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” 212

SERMON XIV.

On Regeneration. By the Reverend Benjamin Gilderslieve, a Presbyterian Minister, residing at Mount Zion, Hancock County, Georgia, and editor of a weekly religious paper, entitled “*THE MISSIONARY*.” *John*, i. 13.—“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” 225

SERMON XV.

On true Greatness of Mind, as exemplified in the character of the Bereans. By the late Reverend Oliver Hulberd, former Minister of the Congregational Church in Waynesborough, Georgia. *Acts*, xvii. 11.—“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” 242

SERMON XVI.

On the Redeemer's Benevolence, in the Salvation of lost Sinners. By the same. *Luke*, xix. 10.—“For the Son of Man is come, to seek and to save that which was lost.” 255

VI

SERMON XVII.

- On Early Piety. By the Reverend Nathan S. S. Beman, former Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Mount Zion, Georgia. 1 *Kings*, xviii. 12.—“I thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth.” 263

SERMON XVIII.

- On the proper Agency of Reason, in matters of Religion. By the Reverend Aaron W. Leland, D. D. Minister of the Presbyterian Church on James' Island, South Carolina. *Job*, xxxii. 8.—“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” 281

SERMON XIX.

- On the Boundaries which limit the Inquiries of Reason, in matters of Religion. By the same. *Proverbs*, iii. 5.—“Trust in the Lord, with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding.” 299

SERMON XX.

- On the Resurrection of the Body. By the Reverend Allan M'Dougald, Minister of the United Presbyterian Churches of Bluff, Barbecue, Averasborough, and Tirza, North Carolina. *John*, v. 28, 29.—“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” 318

SERMON XXI.

- On the Consequence of Unbelief. By the Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, D. D. Minister of the First Independent, or Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Mark*, xvi. 16.—“He that believeth not, shall be damned.” 327

SERMON XXII.

- On the Admonition administered to Elijah, for his Despondency. By the same. 1 *Kings*, xix. 9.—“And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there: and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, *What dost thou here, Elijah?*” 342

VII

SERMON XXIII.

On the Curse pronounced against the Serpent ; including the First Promise of a Saviour, made to our first Parents. By the Reverend Francis Cummins, D. D. Minister of a Presbyterian Church in Green County, Georgia. *Genesis*, iii. 15.—“ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it (he) shall bruise thy head ; and thou shalt bruise his heel.” 356

SERMON XXIV.

On Buying, and not Selling the Truth. By the same. *Proverbs*, xviii. 23.—“ Buy the truth, and sell it not.” 377

SERMON XXV.

On the Analogy between the Dispensations of Grace by the Gospel, and a Royal Marriage Feast. By the Reverend Richard Furman, D. D. Minister of the Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Matthew*, xxii. 9.—“ Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the Marriage.” 395

The Editor's Concluding Address. 413

SERMON XXI.

ON THE CONSEQUENCE OF UNBELIEF.

MARK XVI. 16.

“He that believeth not, shall be damned.”

THIS passage is so uncouth in its phraseology, and so awful in its obvious import, that a doubt may arise in many minds, whether the selection of it, as the groundwork of a discourse, is judicious in itself; or calculated to be useful in its influence and effects. Other passages, it may be supposed, might have been easily chosen, more tender and conciliating in their language, yet bearing in their import, the same amount of terror to unbelievers. It is, however, if the Evangelist may be credited, the language of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that lovely, gentle personage, into whose lips grace was poured; who did not strive, nor cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets; who was meek and lowly in heart; and full of grace and truth. And these very circumstances, in the character of Jesus Christ, give an emphasis of terror to his language in this passage, vastly beyond what the words themselves convey, harsh as they may sound in our ears. When harsh expressions, come from the lips of a man of fiery and furious temper, who is ordinarily accustomed to express himself with bluntness, and want of feeling, we regard it, as a matter of course, that he should express himself in such terms; and the very fact, that such observations

come from a man of such a temperament, abstracts considerably from the weight and impressiveness, they would otherwise have.

But when a man of uniformly meek temper, and amiable character, whose general current of language is in unison with his soft and conciliating disposition, seems to step aside occasionally from the evenness of his character, and to express himself with a severity of language that is unusual; if we have confidence in his habitual integrity, the only conclusion we are left to draw is, that he views the subject, on which he utters himself with so much vehemence, as peculiarly important; or the sin he is denouncing, as singularly aggravated.

In the life of Jesus, these remarks are eminently illustrated. A Lamb-like gentleness pervaded his entire character, and shed a mild and lovely lustre over his general intercourse with mankind: but yet, there were occasions, upon which the thunders of Sinai, seemed to issue with tremendous peal from his lips. There were sins, against which, there were sinners, against whom, he uttered woes sufficient to make the flesh shiver on the bones; the blood curdle in the veins; and the hair to stand erect upon the head. Yes, it was not the bold, impetuous, ardent, and sometimes erring, and sinning Peter—but the meek, the amiable, the affectionate, the unerring, and unsinning Jesus, who said, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell;” who said upon another occasion, “Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do;” who dealt out to the Pharisees, his unceremonious and unqualified charges, of gross and rank hypocrisy. It was the same Jesus, who said, as in our text, “He that believeth not, shall be damned.”

All the circumstances of the Saviour’s situation, when he gave utterance to these awful words, are calculated to

clothe them with ten-fold solemnity. Had he uttered them, when he was jeered at by the Roman soldiery, when one smote him after he was blindfolded, and said in derision, "Prophesy who it was that smote thee;" had he uttered them, when Peter timidly disowned him; when Judas avariciously and unfeelingly betrayed him; when Pilate, notwithstanding the checks of his conscience, yielded his honest convictions to the gust of popular passion and tumult,—we might have accounted for their utterance, from the treachery, the ignominy, the ingratitude, and the cruelty of those, with whom, in these novel circumstances, he was dealing. But far different was his situation: he was now risen from the dead: had disarmed death of his dominion; and rescued from the grave, his prey. The period of his sufferings was past; the powers of darkness were vanquished; the keys of death and Hell were in his hands; he had spoiled all the principalities and powers of the infernal world; and made a shew of them openly upon his Cross. He spoke them in an attitude of Majesty, and in the temper of meekness. He was giving instructions to his Apostles, what to do, as the officers of his Church. Putting their Ministerial commission into their hands, he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And then pronounces the decision, which is to fix the destiny of all classes of mankind. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Who is it, that will presume to say, after this, that faith is a matter of little consequence; that men may believe this thing or that; in different schemes, wide apart from each other, in most essential attributes; yet all shall alike be saved; or that good works will save them, with any kind of faith, or with no faith at all? "He that believeth not," says the Son of God, "shall be damned."

T t

From these words, let us consider, *First*—The nature and character of that unbelief, against which, the awful denunciation in the text is pointed ; and *Secondly*—The import of the denunciation.

First—The nature and character of unbelief. This must be gathered from various considerations. The immediate context informs us, that it is the Gospel, the belief of which is demanded of man ; and the unbelief of which, seals his condemnation. But, what is the Gospel ? Here we are completely afloat. The simple meaning of the word, is *good tidings* or *good news*. But this meaning, of itself, does not at all remove the difficulty. For a dozen schemes of salvation are presented at once to the mind of the inquirer ; all of which purport to contain, and to a certain extent, do actually contain, *good tidings*.

“But what,” says the inquirer, “am I to do, if, the moment I ask, what is that Gospel, which I am to believe, on pain of condemnation, I am hailed from a variety of different quarters, with *Lo here!* and *Lo there!*?” The only answer that can be given to such a querist is, You must grope your own way through as well as you can ; and with all the helps you can get. For there is no infallible guide on earth. You need not go to the Pope of Rome, for he is neither commissioned nor qualified, to shed one ray of light on the subject, beyond what may be obtained on the spot, on which you sit or stand. You need not go to Ecclesiastical Dignitaries, to *Archbishops* or *Bishops*, in any other country, nor to those Ministers of Jesus, who take no higher name than the unassuming one of Pastors or Teachers. For they all are in precisely the same predicament, as to infallibility. You may get their opinion, and hear their remarks, and weigh their reasonings, and take all the aid, for it is only aid, that any or all of them can give you ; but you must at last, judge for yourself, what the Gos-

pel is. What, then, must you do? Must you take up, and wade through the folio, the quarto, the octavo, or even the duodecimo volumes, of controversy? Men who have time to devote, and talents to employ, and impartial candour to decide, may not unprofitably turn their attention this way; and some are officially so situated, that it becomes in some respects their duty to do this.

“But,” says the inquirer again, “to me such a course is impossible. I have not the time; for by the sweat of my brow, I must get my bread. I have not the talent; for my understanding is not acute; and my education has been scanty: the only thing I can pretend to lay claim to, is impartiality. If I know my own heart, I do sincerely desire to know, in order that I may do my Heavenly Master’s will.” Then, inquirer, if this is your situation, and this your character, Jesus Christ has given you the very best direction you can possibly get; nay, he has given you several directions; all of which, you may, in your situation, completely comply with. One is, “Search the Scriptures; for in them, ye think, ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.” Christ does not direct you to the Pope of Rome; nor to the decrees of Councils, nor to volumes of controversy. No; but he says, “Search the Scriptures.” You reply, you do. Every day you read more or less in the Bible—perhaps a chapter in the morning—another at noon—and a third at night—and on the Sabbath, you read in them considerably. But, mark the force of the expression, “*Search* the Scriptures;” and strong as it is, the translators have diluted and enfeebled it not a little; and without circumlocution, they could not help it. The original word, too energetic to be expressed by any single word in English, means something like this, *Dig* the Scriptures; like a man who is working in the mines, and examining with all his eyes for precious metal.

Now, this is a different process entirely from a simple perusal of the Holy volume. The one skims the surface ; the other presses, and penetrates, and works, till it gets at the substance. The great Author of the Bible, had he pleased to do so, instead of leaving the Sacred Oracles in that apparently loose and disjointed form in which they now appear, as a whole, could have thrown them into a complete system ; so that we might know exactly and at once, where to look for all the information on any one topic. But he has not chosen to do so ; and therefore we ought to be satisfied with his own plan. But he has directed every man, without discrimination, to search the Scriptures : and every man who can barely read, can do this. Among the best ways of searching the Scriptures, is, when we meet with an important passage, and especially, if it be difficult as well as important, to search for all the parallel or similar passages, interspersed throughout the Sacred Volume.* Let every one who wishes to know what the Gospel is, be thus employed, in comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Another direction, which the Saviour has given to the inquirer after truth, of no less importance than the former,

* Dr. Scott, the author of the most popular commentary now extant, has signally facilitated this labour, by his marginal references. All persons, and particularly those who have but little time to spare, may, by this help, learn the Scriptures in the shortest time, and best way ; and make up their views more satisfactorily, than by any other process. There has been published, the Bible alone, without the notes, and practical observations, but with all the marginal references, in one volume, not much above the ordinary size. No family should be without this book. No parent who wishes his children to know from the Scriptures, what the truth is, should deny himself or his offspring, such a valuable auxiliary. By this improvement, persons may, without having before them, more than one book, employ their time very pleasantly, and profitably, in making the Bible its own interpreter, by thus consulting the references, on important and difficult passages.

is this, "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The plain reason why many of the systems, calling themselves by the common name of *Christian*, are yet as diverse from each other, as any two substances that can be contrasted, is a neglect of this direction. It needs but a glance of the eye to discern, that these systems differ inconceivably, as to the views which they take of man's nature, of his duties, of his sins, of what it is, that properly and essentially constitutes sin: they differ immensely, in the degrees of self-denial, and humiliation, which they imply or urge. But, as every man must have something which he can call his Religion, to give ease to his conscience, or credit to his character, a corrupt heart predisposes him to take up with loose and general views; to be most favourable to that system, which is most favourable to his own sins; and which will leave him nearly as much at ease as ever, in his careless habits, his criminal courses, his worldly mindedness, and his love of pleasure. His heart, under these circumstances, can very soon pervert his understanding; and render him very sincere, in a belief, that leaves him at ease in Zion. The system he embraces, leaves him no further an altered man, than, as his conscience, once partially awake, is hushed to repose. But, in order to know whether that sincerity, which thus buoys a person up, is connected with the inquiry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting;"* or whether God has not sent upon such an individual, "strong delusion, that he should believe a lie, because he loved not the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness," it becomes him,

* Psalm cxxxix, 23. 24.

very seriously to inquire, before he determines to "sleep on and take his rest." The really sincere inquirer after the Gospel, is directed to do the will of God, as far as he knows it; and much of that will, every one who has the Bible in his hands, and inhabits a Gospel land, must necessarily know. If our sentiments and views are yet bewildered, and we are deeply concerned to know, what it is we must do to be saved, we must act up to the light we already have; we must, in our practice, pay a uniform and undeviating regard to the plain and practical commands of God, in relation to him, to our neighbours, and to ourselves. When the habitual and progressive searching of the Scriptures, and obedience to the will of God, wherever we know, or can ascertain it, go together, we cannot be far from the kingdom of Heaven—we cannot be far from knowing, what that Gospel is, which we must believe.

But there is another direction still, which the Bible gives to inquirers after the way to Zion. It is this. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto him." A person may examine the Scriptures themselves, with such a self-sufficient and unsubdued spirit, that from this cause, he may fail, in many momentous particulars, of finding it a light to his feet, and a lamp to his paths. He may still be perplexed and embarrassed beyond measure; and feel as though he needed another revelation, to explain that which he already has. This, it must be confessed, is a trying, and a distressing case. As far as it is a sincere one, the best remedy is, that which has been mentioned. "Let him ask of God. In every thing, by prayer and supplication, let him make his request known unto God." The promise of God is, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way: the secret of the Lord, is with

“ them that fear him ; and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” These are God’s assurances; but, for their fulfilment, the voice of prayer must ascend ; and the heart of anxiety and inquiry must be poured out before him. “ For all these things, God will be inquired of.” We cannot hope to gain a knowledge of the truths of Scripture, a soul-satisfying knowledge, if we wilfully or habitually, neglect this important prescription. For we read that, “ the spirit takes of the things that are Christ’s, and reveals them to the soul.” And how are we to obtain the illuminating influence of this great and good Spirit ? By sincere, humble, and believing prayer. What says our Divine Instructor on this subject ? This is what he says, “ If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more,*” observe, “ *how much more,* will your Father, which is in Heaven, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” Searching the Scriptures, then, doing the will of God, and asking wisdom from above, by prayer, are three important directions, to be observed, by those, who would know what that Gospel is, respecting which, it is said, “ He that believeth not, shall be damned.”

These directions being given, as a general guide to those who would understand what the Gospel is, and to judge, which, among entirely discordant and inconsistent schemes, the doctrine of Christ is, we proceed to answer that inquiry, by pointing out, what we conceive to be a few of the leading particulars, the disbelief of which will occasion the condemnation threatened in the text ; while, to the hearers, is recommended the conduct of the Bereans, whom Paul applauded, because, “ they searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

Here, the first particular we shall mention is, that belief in the doctrine of man’s deep depravity, and entire ruin in himself, is necessary to man’s salvation : therefore,

the disbelief of this truth, must involve the individual in condemnation ; because, while he has an inadequate view of his own necessity, and depravity, he never will make application, for the only remedy, "the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin."

"They that are whole," says Christ, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to Repentance." And when we are required, as sinners, to accept the salvation offered in the Gospel, more is necessary to be believed, in relation to our own condition, than that we are somewhat disordered. The doctrine of the Bible is, that human nature is entirely depraved. This appears to be expressed in the very strongest language : The Scripture representation on this subject is, "O Israel, *thou hast destroyed thyself*;" "all our righteousness, is but as filthy rags;" "there is none that doeth good, no not one." "You hath he quickened," says Paul, "who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." "I know that in me, that is in my flesh,"—my carnal nature, "*dwelleth no good thing*." "The carnal mind is *enmity* against God ; it is *not* subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be*." "So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God." "When we were *without strength*, Christ died for the *ungodly*." "God be merciful to me a *sinner*." "Who can bring a clean thing, out of an unclean ?" All such language as this, implies the total destruction of goodness in the heart of fallen man. And, unless we have this conviction, and belief of our entire departure from God, and of our complete loss of his Holy image, we never can give Jesus Christ and his offers, that cordial and unqualified reception, which he demands, and which is necessary, to render his merits available to our salvation.

Again: Regeneration, or the radical renovation of the heart after the Divine image, is another particular, the

belief of which is necessary to our salvation. "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*," or a new creation. This doctrine, Christ very explicitly inculcated on Nicodemus, in his conversation with him. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This doctrine, indeed, stands in essential connexion with the last mentioned. If it was only a partial disorder which sin introduced into our nature, it might be remedied. In this case, outward reformation might suffice; and inward renovation be unnecessary. But if "the whole head is sick," if "the whole heart is faint," if "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," then, the change which has to pass upon it, must be inward, must be radical, must be entire; and man must be delivered from every expectation of bettering his own condition; and must seek to be renewed in the spirit of his mind; to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and to put on the new man, which is created after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness."

Further: The belief which is necessary to salvation, and the absence of which ensures the condemnation threatened in the text, is a cordial, entire, unreserved trust in the merits and righteousness of Christ alone, for everlasting salvation. In order to this, correct views of the nature and character of Christ must be taken; and a genuine approbation of him, in all his works and offices, be yielded. Every thing must be renounced as a meritorious dependence, but the blood, the death, the atonement, and the righteousness of Christ. "What things were gain to me," says Paul, "those I count loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Among Paul's former gains, must unquestionably be reckoned his exemplary morality, and the

strictness of his religion in his own way. "For after the "straitest sect of his religion, he lived a Pharisee." But all this gain is renounced as loss for Christ. "God forbade that I should glory, save in *the Cross* of our Lord "Jesus Christ." "Other foundation can no man lay, than "that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is no other "name given under Heaven among men, whereby we "can be saved." "No man cometh unto the Father, "but by me." "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the "blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." These, and a variety of similar passages, express the necessity of a voluntary, an entire, an unreserved, and an unqualified reliance on Christ, as the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and the redemption of his people. He, therefore, who does not thus believe in Christ, must be regarded as essentially rejecting him, whatever confidence he may express in him, as a prophet; whatever allegiance he may swear to him, as a king. Almost the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is a development of the Redeemer's priestly character, as being himself, at once the offering and the offerer. "He gave "himself a ransom for many." If these parts of the Redeemer's undertaking, therefore, are either undervalued or overlooked, the question may, with awful propriety, be asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great "salvation?" Escape, in this case, our text assures us, is impracticable. We proposed to consider, in the *Second* place, the import of the condemnation here denounced.

1.—It imports a continuation of the condemnation to which the unbeliever is already subjected; and the continuation of that alienation of heart from God, which is itself a Hell. Unbelievers are already condemned; and the only difference between their present and future condemnation is, that the one is reversible, the other irreversible. "He," says Christ, "that believeth not, is

"condemned already, because he hath not believed in the "name of the only begotten Son of God." But, notwithstanding his present condemnation, there is room for him to be saved; he may repent, believe, and turn; and become one of those to whom the declaration applies, "There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them which "are in Christ Jesus." But, if he die an unbeliever, his doom is sealed; his fate is fixed; his sins are unpardoned. "If ye believe not," says the Redeemer, "that "I am he, ye shall die in your sins." The wrath of God, which is now represented as abiding on the unbeliever, will then, for ever and unchangeably, abide upon him.

2.—But besides this, he will continue in that alienated state of heart from God, in which he is already found. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which "is filthy, let him be filthy still." This, indeed, may, at first, appear to be no penalty to him, who, on earth, was accustomed to take delight in the exercise of these unholy dispositions. Even in this world, however, the unchanged sinner is often wretched, in the midst of his carnal pursuits. They rather amuse, than really satisfy him: they serve to take him off, from those unwelcome and painful reflections, which he would otherwise make upon himself. But the condemned individual, in a future state, will have no alleviation of this character, to soften his anguish, or to beguile the tortures of reflection. Carrying all his unholy dispositions and passions with him into the eternal world, these passions and dispositions, instead of finding other materials on which to work, or other nutriment on which to subsist, will perform their torturing operations on himself: will feed and gratify themselves by making him their victim, in whose bosom they are found. And if, even in this world, the language of Solomon is found to apply, "The spirit of a "man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit,

“who can bear?” How intolerable, in the world to come, must be the anguish of a spirit, which, from the very nature of its case, and of the circumstances in which it is placed, must be more exquisitely wounded, than it possibly could be here, on earth! “Son, Remember,” is the language of Abraham to the rich man, who lifted up his eyes in torment. If, in a future state, the condemned sinner could lose his memory, he would get rid of many of the materials of his anguish. But his memory will there have a vividness, and a retentiveness, which it never possessed here.

In what, of a positive external nature, the final condemnation of Hell will consist, we have not the means of accurately ascertaining. To give us some conception of its horrible nature, it is represented to us, under the most alarming and awful images, which the whole range of nature can supply. It is “a worm that never dies;” it is “a fire that is never quenched;” it is “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;” it is “the blackness of darkness for ever;” it is “everlasting punishment;” it is “outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;” it is “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;” it is “shame and everlasting contempt;” it is—but we forbear: if the expressions, and images, already used, cannot convey an adequate idea of what it is to be damned; cannot excite a becoming concern to escape “the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” implied in this condemnation, it were a useless and a hopeless effort, to extend farther, or to vary more the sad description.

And what does every hearer now resolve to do? Does one reply, “I have already done that which is required. I have believed on the name of the Son of God, and therefore shall not come into condemnation, but am al-

“ready passed from death unto life”? Happy, indeed, is your condition, if this statement be true. But, rest not satisfied with its truth, until you have well examined the evidences that sustain it. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” “Not every one who saith unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven.” Does another reply, “I have no belief in these statements; but regard all these things as a cunningly devised fable”? We have, then, nothing more to say. The day of death and judgment, must and will decide, this controverted point: but O, remember, if you should be mistaken, and yet never discover your mistake till then, you will find “no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

Does still another say, “I believe all this, and I intend, very soon, to pay to this subject, that attention which such belief urges”? O, lay aside intentions, and come to action. Not to-morrow, but to-day. You have not a solitary promise for to-morrow; but you have exceeding many great and precious promises for to-day. “Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation: to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”