

necessity of a change of heart and life, to convince them of *their* need of the one thing needful; the necessity of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.

Besides, vital religion is something more than knowing the truth, it is a divine life as well as a divine knowledge. At this moment you have all evil affections within you, which must be got rid of, these have been for years winding their chains around your hearts, you can no more eradicate an indulged passion, an habitual sin in a moment, a day or a year, than you can cure in a day a disease of the constitution which has struck its roots and poisonous fibres into every organ of life. A man's moral and social character is not formed in a day or a year and shall his preparation for Heaven be the work of a moment. Are not then a few years a very short time indeed, to get rid of what is evil and acquire what is good, a short time wherein to acquire spiritual affections, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. In conclusion, my friends, and especially my young friends, I beg of you to set your hearts on things above, Col. iii. 1. I pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God; I beseech you to lay these things seriously to heart; weigh yourselves in the balances of the Gospel. God regards each one of us either as guilty condemned sinners, or as redeemed, pardoned, justified saints. In one of these two states we all are, and if we were to die this moment, we must be saved eternally or lost eternally. Grace is glory begun; condemnation is sentence passed, damnation is sentence executed; John iii. 18.

You are young, your hearts are light, your spirits buoyant, your hopes are sparkling as your eyes are bright with glowing visions of future happiness, now you show what time has done for you—how years can mature, a few years more will shew you in the glass of experience how they can decay; then perhaps too late you will learn that all is vanity, all that is earthly is changing, fading, dying. The law or condition of all physical and animal life is death; we have all within us the seeds of death; some part of the human frame is ever dying. Every thought of the mind, every exercise of the brain, every action we

perform, causes the death of some unseen cell or organ that performs it, so that in truth we all die daily in order that we may live.

Although this plain but truthful discourse of mine has not much impaired your thinking organs by an over-exercise of the brain, I trust that I have impressed one idea upon your minds, that dust you are and unto dust you shall return; that though young and healthy, you have all within you the seeds of dissolution, which are ripening with greater or less rapidity for the harvest of death and the garner of the grave. Yes death, natural and moral, is in us and around us, and this idolized world is wrapped in her winding sheet of fire. "To her funeral pile this living world is rapidly borne." And what when viewed in the light of eternity is this adored world but a large cemetery, one wide, dark, wintry, charnel house, an abode of death. All indeed within it is not deathlike but all is death; corruption is painted on every flower, and decay is engraven on humanity's fairest aspect. What people call life is just a continuous funeral procession, weeping to-day, wept for to-morrow; to-day closing our own; the king of terrors is ever at our side, his unsated lance is ever on the wing, awaiting the dread fiat to cut the barren fig-tree down. All indeed is not loathsome to the eye, there is much in this fallen world that is beautiful, chaste, ennobling, elevating to the mind in this sin-cursed pit of destruction; there is many a bright organization, many a form that is not death-like, on which for a moment mortality exhibits the features of life and seems to wear an ethereal expression, all is not hideousness and dissolution, *but all is death*. The absence of all spiritual life is death; Rom. viii. 6. But blessed be the Lord if such are the effects and wages of sin, if sin hath reigned unto death, the gift of God is eternal life, and grace reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is not for ministers to exercise too close a scrutiny of individual character, or to pass judgment upon their hearers; no, but it is for them to testify to the strict nature of the law by which God will judge them. The eye of the ministry would exercise, is not so organized as to see nothing but defects; no, but we must not cry