

wrath which it merited is earnestly deprecated. To this the awakened conscience of every true convert bears witness. And what are the lashings of that secret tormenter in the breast of the sinner—what are the pangs of remorse—but corroborative proofs? Men would not be so bent on getting rid of themselves, and rushing to scenes of false delight, did they not feel themselves verily guilty and fear the wrath to come.

4. The passages we have already quoted clearly shew that man's responsibility for his belief is a Bible truth. The Bible is full of it. Its peremptory precepts—its earnest remonstrances—its melting appeals—its powerfully persuasive arguments—all proceed on this. God acts upon it in all his dealings with men. Jesus took it for granted during all his public ministry.

Faith is spoken of as a duty, without the performance of which it is impossible to please God: *Unbelief* as a sin peculiarly aggravated. Faith indeed is presented as the one great duty, the one thing needful; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and Unbelief as the one great sin—yea, as containing in itself the very essence of all sin. Thus Jesus, in describing the work of the promised Spirit, tells us in general terms that He would convince the world of sin, and then fastens on this as being the most striking example of sin, and its very epitome—"of sin, because (or, in that) ye *believe not in me*." Unbelief would not thus be singled out and branded with the stigma of Christ, were it not in the highest degree culpable. Were it our misfortune merely, and not also our crime, it would not be made the subject of His withering denunciations. Nor would Faith be made as it is, the hinge on which our salvation or perdition turns. "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, but he that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be *damned*." In what stronger light could man's responsibility for his belief be put?

Let this responsibility be practically recognized by us. Let us do nothing by which a sense of it may be weakened. Our responsibility will be exactly proportioned to our light, and our light will be proportioned to our obedience. That light will shine more and more, even unto the perfect day, if we

"With growing ardour onward move,"

"With growing brightness shine."

But if we allow ourselves after running well, to be hindered that we should not obey the truth, then the very light that is in us will prove darkness, and how great will be that darkness! "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." But let this be remembered, "every evil affection pours its bedimmed vapours around your understanding; every sin you commit blunts your power of moral perception and involves you in danger of error. And if you continue wilfully to sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, the light that God has given you will go out in darkness, and sparks of your own kindling will encompass you and light you on your path to destruction. You shall lose your way, but you will think yourself right; your feet will stumble on the dark mountains, but you will fancy yourself walking in a smooth and level path; thick clouds shall gather over you, but to your eye they will take the form of the Castle and the battlements of Heaven; until at length your wanderings shall bring you to the verge of this world, and the awful plunge awake you to truth and to misery." "*Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

R. F. B.