

pursuit of their object, own no relents, and stop at no limits short of those opposed by the equally violent resistance of those who are assailed, and who in *their* turn pursue their own purposes with the same maddened and infuriated eagerness;—O! what a hell would such a world exhibit, and who would not rather experience a thousand deaths, than be condemned to live a single day amid such complicated and unspeakable horrors! Yet is the Hell of the Bible a source of horrors still greater and more agonising. It is the hell of beings in which every vestige of good principle is extinct, in which every evil principle has attained a gigantic strength, desolating every department of the soul which it masters, spreading strife and desolation among all with whom it comes in contact; yet destined to a perpetual reign of withering triumphs, by that attribute of immortality which refuses to its wretched victims even the sad refuge of annihilation. This is the hell for which every impenitent sinner is ripening; the hell, of which, if he examines himself, he may discover in himself the awful beginnings gradually unfold themselves. Disaffection and alienation from God is the ruling principle of hell. Is it not also the ruling principle of the sinner on earth? Does he not nourish in his bosom that carnal heart which is enmity against God, and does he not daily testify this, by spending the life, the breath, the faculties, which God gave him, in acts of rebellion against His paternal government? Hell is the home of strife, of envy, deceit, malignity, bitter unrelenting persecution, undying hate. And are not these the dispositions which govern the unholy here? The restraints of education, of human laws, of civilized society, and the partial dominion of conscience and good

feeling—the few fragments remaining of our primitive image—do much to check their more violent outbreaking. Yet how much do they influence the under current of life even in the best regulated communities amongst us; and how often do they burst forth in fearful explosions, desolating the peace of families and leaguings kingdoms in hostile array against each other. Let them be restrained, and repressed, and disguised as they will, they are the ruling tenants of every unrenowned heart; their seed is planted, and their roots are firmly fixed there: “We ourselves,” says the apostle, painting man’s natural condition, “We ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and passions, hateful, and hating one another.”

As hell is the region of sin, so also is it of its necessary concomitants, misery, remorse, torment, despair. But are these confined to that region? What mean those fearful struggles between inclination and conscience; those visitations of remorse consequent on criminal excesses; those galling wounds inflicted by the consciousness of ill desert and of the contempt of the good; that dread of futurity—those forebodings of a coming judgment—which so often poison the enjoyments and throw a pall over the path of the most prosperously wicked? These are just anticipations of the future hell which awaits them; partial, yet sure intimations of the connexion between sin and suffering, and of the inherent tendency of sin to work out its own punishment in the misery of which it is productive. And were it not for the diversions which the world affords to drown reflection and silence self-reproach; for the mixed state of things which now exists; for the dispensation of mercy and forbearance under which we live; were it not,