

its own subject-matter, most suitable to be the instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, of our moral renovation. If men are to be made holy, in a manner consistent with their rational natures,\* motives having a natural tendency to make them holy must be brought to bear upon them. And the wisdom of a particular mode of dispensing pardon (supposing more modes than one possible) will be measured by the degree in which the manner of conveying the deed of remission is intrinsically fitted to make the pardoned sinner feel how evil and bitter a thing sin is, and to produce in his soul earnest and permanent desires after complete emancipation from its influence. Now, need I remind you in how unexampled and marvellous a way the Gospel falls in with this view? For "the sacrifice of Christ," as one has well put the case, "has associated sin with the blood of a Benefactor, as well as with our own personal sufferings, and has connected obedience with the dying entreaty of a Friend breathing out a tortured life for us, as well as with our own unceasing glory in his blessed society."† Had men been pardoned and reconciled to God without any atonement being made for their offences,—allowing for a moment that this was possible,—how feeble an impression of the loathsomeness of sin and of the purity of the divine nature would have been left upon their minds! Sin would neither, on the one

\* For further illustration of the thought that sanctification is effected through moral instrumentality, in accordance with man's rational nature, see the Sermon in this volume on 2 Cor. iii. 18, entitled "The Mirror."

† Erskine on the "Internal Evidences of Revealed Religion." In that work the point we are endeavouring to bring out is illustrated with great force and beauty. The book altogether is full of important matter, and seems to be open to but one objection of any moment, viz., that the line between justification and sanctification is not always kept very clear. An occasional tendency appears to represent the formation of a holy character as identical with the pardon of sin, instead of making it a blessing connected with and consequent upon pardon.