

they upon whom the Lord Jesus, when again revealed from heaven, shall take vengeance, in flaming fire, and punish with everlasting destruction, shall be those who knew not God, and obeyed not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Behold, then, the dreadful consummation of evil to which ignorance leads. Shrouding the mind from perceiving things in their true and just colours—from seeing what is really the state of sinful man before God—from forming simple and luminous ideas of the character of God, and the principles of His law—and from feeling deep convictions of guilt, helplessness, and need of a divine and almighty Saviour,—it causes those who continue under its baneful influence to move along the current of their earthly existence in a great measure useless as to the purposes for which they received a rational and immortal being, living only for the body and its poor transitory pleasures; and in the end, they are hurried away into a shoreless abyss of woe, whose tossings and sufferings they must endure throughout endless ages.

Now, whatever may be the palliatives in the condemnation of those whose hapless lot it was to inhabit altogether unenlightened lands, who had no inspired written law from God, nothing but the remains of the original moral law on their hearts; it will not be possible for the inhabitants of Protestant Christian countries to plead before the bar of judgment, that their ignorance was their misfortune rather than their crime. It was certainly great advantage conferred on them that they were taught to read, and were thus capacitated for gaining knowledge; that the inspired Word of God was in their hands, in their own language, and that they might have had access to many other useful books, if they chose; that it was in their power to enjoy the public instructions of the Sabbath, and to occupy its sacred hours of rest in self-improvement; that, while they may have had to employ most of their time during the week in labour or business, it was quite possible for them, in general, to appropriate an hour or two every day to reading and thinking. It is plain, then, that ignorance in those who were so situated was completely inexcusable, because wilful; and this brings on them an aggravated criminality, and exposes them to a far heavier punishment than others less favourably placed.

Having thus exhibited the evils of ignorance, as lessening and debasing the enjoyments of the present life—as decidedly adverse to the attainment of personal religion; and as conducting to an eternal misery, great in proportion to privileges which were abused—we shall conclude with addressing a few counsels to several classes of our readers:

1. We would say some things to those who have advanced considerably in life, without acquiring much, perhaps but very little knowledge. This is a very great pity; but still it admits of a remedy, to some extent. To those who feel conscious that their knowledge is scanty, we say kindly, redeem the time henceforth, by striving to make compensation for past negligence. Give yourselves now unto reading, and especially to searching the Scriptures. Form plans for occupying some of your leisure in exercises of mental improvement, and steadily adhere to them. Resist the solicitations of laziness. Fly from the company of idlers, whose only object is to kill both their own time and yours. Shun places of resort for trifling, if not for worse employment. Never be seen where the song and ribaldry of drunkards are heard. Endeavour especially to turn your Sabbaths to good account, by seeking to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus may you wonderfully make up for the past. The attempt is well worth being made, earnestly and perseveringly; and will yield far more of pleasure and profit than to counterbalance all the efforts put forth. And remember that your diligent improvement of what may remain of life to you, is the only way in which you can properly meet God in reckoning, without being condemned as slothful from first to last.

2. We would entreat parents to do all they can to enrich their children with good knowledge. By prudent and pleasing methods endeavour to impart to