

this death?" What expressions of sorrow and remorse does the approach of death often extort from the guilty man, in a review of his abused and wasted life! How earnestly does he wish that he might but have his time again—a single further opportunity of knowing and doing the will of God! Deep anguish agitates his soul. The midnight hour has come. The voice of the bridegroom standing at the door, is heard. But he is entirely without a readiness to meet him; and trembles at the prospect of beholding his offended God, face to face. Lamentations, without consolation, make up the whole experience of his soul. Every view of that which is passed, and of that which is to come, fills him with distress. Perhaps his excessive pride may, in a degree, conceal the wants and miseries of his soul. He may attempt to maintain the appearance of an entire indifference, which shall be above any acknowledgment of the deep emotions of his awakened spirit. He may profess full dependence in his own integrity, and go forward to the judgment-seat, avowing his own innocence, and refusing acknowledgments of guilt. Perhaps he may be allowed ignorant to slide into an everlasting world, while deluding friends around combine to conceal the awful fact. Earthly trifles may be presented to his view, to divert him from a possible thought of the eternity which is before him. The glad tidings of the gospel may be shut out, because they will make him anxious and gloomy. Men and devils thus often conspire to destroy a soul that Christ has purchased and would gladly save. But even here, the revelation of the vengeance of God upon his guilt is but for a little postponed. Soon he will awake to discover the real wretchedness of his condition; and in eternal rage and anguish, utter forth his senseless imprecations upon his own folly in being thus deluded, and the enormity of the guilt that is combined to deceive him. But even these temporary delusions are exceptions in the history of man. The sinner's death is generally a violent tearing of him from the world beloved—an awful avulsion! He clings to every hope of life, like a drowning man. He cannot bear to die. Hell is stirred up to meet him at his coming. Go, grasp a man, and drag him to the mouth of a heated furnace, and attempt with force to press him into the flames! Take him to the giddy height of a precipice, and try to throw him headlong down! with what desperate violence does he shrink back from a certain ruin! Thus is the sinner driven away in his wickedness; a resistless force constrains him. He dare not go on—he cannot stop. His sins are all pressed upon him. He is unpardoned, pressed down with an intolerable