

THE STORM AND THE RAINBOW.

A SPECIMEN OF THE PREACHING OF WHITFIELD.

Before he commenced his sermon, long, darkening columns crowded the bright sunny sky of the morning, and swept their dull shadows over the building in fearful augury of the storm.

His text was, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able." "See that emblem of human life," said he pointing to a shadow that was fitting across the floor. "It passed for a moment, and concealed the brightness of heaven from our view; but it is gone. And where will you be, my hearers, when your lives have passed away like that dark cloud? O, my dear friends, I see thousands sitting attentive, with their eyes fixed on the poor, unworthy preacher. In a few days we shall all meet at the judgment seat of Christ. We shall form a part of that vast assembly that will gather before the throne, and every eye will behold the Judge. With a voice, whose call you must abide and answer, he will inquire whether, on earth, you strove to enter in at the straight gate? Whether you were supremely devoted to God? Whether your hearts were absorbed in him? My blood runs cold when I think how many of you will then seek to enter in, and shall not be able. O, what plea can you make before the Judge of the whole earth? Can you say it has been your whole endeavor to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts; that your life has been one long effort to do the will of God? No! you must answer, 'I made myself easy in the world by flattering myself that all would end well; but I have deceived my own soul, and am lost.'

"You, a false and hollow Christian! of what avail will it be that you have done many things—that you have read so much of the sacred word—that you have made long prayers—that you have attended religious duties, and appeared holy in the eyes of men? What will all this be, if, instead of loving Him supremely, you have been supposing you should exalt yourself in heaven by acts really polluted and unholy?"

"And you, rich man, where do you hoard your silver—wherefore count the price you have received for him whom you every day crucify in your love of gain? Why that when you are too poor to buy a drop of cold water, your beloved son may be rolled to hell in a chariot pillowed and cushioned around him!"

His eyes gradually lighted up as he proceeded, till, towards the close, they seemed to sparkle with fire.

"O, sinners!" he exclaimed, "by all your hopes of happiness I beseech you to repent. Let not the wrath of God be awakened. Let not the fires of eternity be kindled against you. See there!" said he, pointing to the lightning, which played on the corner of the pulpit: "'tis a glance from the angry eye of Jehovah. Hark!" continued he, raising his finger in a listening attitude, as the distant thunder grew louder and louder, and broke in one tremendous crash over the building; "it was the voice of the Almighty as he passed by in his anger."

As the sound died away, he covered his face with his hands, and knelt beside his pulpit, apparently lost in inward and intense prayer. The