

last and most important of days. But to each of us, my Brethren, the day of death is the same as the day of judgment; for "as death leaves us so judgment will find us," and "as the tree falleth, so it must lie," and that for ever. All changes of character, either for better or worse, are confined to our present state. Death fixes upon it the stamp of perpetuity, and refers us to the judgment of the final day, only for the *public* sentence of the Judge upon those materials for evidence which our lives accumulated, and the hour of death completed. The great doctrine of our text, then, is *the subserviency of time to Eternity*—the intimate connexion between the present world and the next. Allow me then in the succeeding observations, to open up to you the nature of the connexion, by shewing,

I. That our condition hereafter, *grows* out of our character here; and

II. That this condition once fixed, is fixed for ever.

First then, we say, that our condition hereafter grows out of our character here:—in other words, that while on earth, we are daily ripening either for Heaven or hell. To speak of each alternative separately:—

1. While we live under the dominion of sin, we are ripening for hell:—an awful truth, little intimate with the thoughts and contemplations of men; yet one of the most elementary which the Bible presents to us. Men believe in general that hell is the final abode of impenitent sinners; that persevering in their iniquities, they cannot escape it; but they little consider how it is so; they little think that in inheriting this bitter portion, they are just reaping the fruit of what they have themselves sown, and take their station in the *only* place for which they are fitted by the characters and tempers which they have

themselves ripened into the consistency of fixed and permanent habits. Yet such is the awful fact. Hell is doubtless a place of punishment prepared for the rebels against the Divine Government; a dungeon of condemned criminals, in which the Most High, as a moral lesson to the rest of his boundless dominions, displays the terrors of his avenging justice, on those who refused to submit to his equitable government, and to touch the golden sceptre of his grace. This is certainly an important truth; yet it is not the *whole* truth. Hell is also, so to speak, the habitation which the wicked have reared for themselves. The fuel which feeds its flames, is the produce of their own perverse industry. Every pang, every groan, which is there extorted from them, and drinks up their spirits, is one of self-infliction—the result of previously formed habits, and as closely connected with them, as the crop of autumn is with the preparatory labours of spring. Nor could they tenant any other abode in the universe of God without a complete violation of that order which pervades its illimitable extent. Of that order, *adaptation* is one of the fundamental laws. Look around you: view the inanimate creation. There every plant has its own appropriate locality;—that, where prevail the soil, the temperature, the measure of light, and air, and moisture, adapted to its nature and habits. Look also at the animal kingdom. Of its numberless races, one swims in the water, another flies through the air; one grazes on the plain, another browses on the mountain top; this collects its scanty subsistence amid the frozen regions of the Pole, while that can maintain life only under the vertical sun of the Equator. Yet each moves on in its own element, and occupies the position on the globe required by its constitu-