

those who think to be saved by their knowledge, is that of others who fancy that their warm and lively feelings upon the subjects of religion will carry them into heaven. They are very much affected by the reading and the preaching of the Word of God. They listen with interest and emotion to the declarations of God's mercy, and can shed tears of tenderness when the sufferings of the Saviour are set forth before them: and fancying that such feelings are sure signs of a gracious heart, they are ready to conclude that they are the children of the kingdom, and never doubt of their entering into it. Feelings, however, are of no value in religion, except in so far as they flow from right principles and lead to right conduct; and it is quite possible to have a pleasure in hearing or in talking about the will of God, while we have no real pleasure in doing it. Such was the temper of the people of Israel, of whom we find the prophet Ezekiel taking up his complaint, and saying, "Lo! O Lord, thou art to this people as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument; for they hear thy words, but do them not." Such, also, was the character of the persons whom our Saviour describes as hearing the word and receiving it with joy; but having no root in themselves, they dure but a little. In like manner we read that the Jews were willing, for a season, to rejoice in the light of John the Baptist. Even Herod, we are told, heard him gladly. But in all these instances, although the affections were moved, no salutary effect followed: and those persons who think the warmth of their feelings a sufficient security for entering into life, would do well to consider the case of Balaam, who, in all the agony of inspiration, exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." And yet Balaam is supposed to have perished fighting against the very people whom all his feelings and convictions led him so emphatically to pronounce blessed.

Others, however, advance farther than mere feelings and professions, and think that because they go a certain length in the work of religion they shall assuredly enter into life. Hearing that the wrath of God has been revealed against all iniquity, they begin to put away from them the accursed and accursing thing. They cease, in some measure, from the evil of their doings. They wash the outside of the cup, and clear away some of those enormities which disgraced their character and endangered their condition. But although this be a more active and decided step than any of the preceding, it is not yet conclusive; and they who think to enter into life upon the ground of some partial reformation will find themselves deceived. We must utterly renounce the love and the practice of all sin, before we can hope for

salvation: but, instead of doing so, there are many who wish to indulge the hope of heaven and some favorite passion at the same time; like Naaman, who prayed that the Lord would accept of his divided heart and divided service, and pardon him for bowing in the house of the Assyrian idol. For those vices which they abandon, they abandon with reluctance, and with feelings very similar to those of the mariner when he throws his goods overboard in a storm. In short, they leave their sins, just as Lot's wife left Sodom, lest fire from heaven should be rained down upon them; and, like her, they very often turn back when their fears are removed. Even the temporal consequences of a wicked life are sometimes so pernicious and striking as to induce men to reform; and in doing so they do well. They will not be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, having put away from them those things which could never be admitted; but, if, while their love of sin unsubdued, they think to enter into life by a partial reformation, they are grossly deceiving themselves. Ahab humbled himself so much under the threatening of God, that God delivered him from the temporal judgments which had been denounced against him: and in like manner, by forsaking their wickedness, men may escape the evil consequences with which it is here attended; but unless they utterly and entirely renounce iniquity—unless they give up the love as well as the practice, not of one, but of every sin, they must not think of entering into life. The Pharisee thanked God (and he may have done so with perfect truth), that he was neither intemperate nor unjust, nor added to as this publican, who was standing afar off, smiting his breast and exclaiming, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" yet we read that the publican went down to his house justified in the sight of God rather than the other. Herod not merely heard John the Baptist gladly, but did many of the things which he commanded; and yet his end was miserable. It is not enough, therefore, to refrain from a few wicked practices and to conform to a few good ones. Sin must be altogether renounced, and holiness must be esteemed and followed. We must get the shielding faith of the covering righteousness of the gospel; otherwise we shall seek in vain to enter into life.

This brings me to remark, that among those who seek to enter in and shall not be able, are to be reckoned not only those who seek to enter in by a wrong way, but also those who seek to enter in at a wrong time.

In the history of the church, it is recorded that, at one period, it was common for men to defer their baptism till the day of their death, from the impression, that as this sacrament conveyed the grace of regeneration, and as this grace was not afterwards forfeited by the commission of any sin, they were sure of entering into life. When it is rec-