

Our progress on this moral declivity may escape the observation of others— even that of intimates; there is often a kindness in that which makes us blind to the deterioration of loved ones. By the hiding of this fact how much of sadness is saved parental hearts!— Moreover, men are powerless to resist this mighty degrading force. A child might better attempt the mastery of an enraged lion, or to smother with its tiny hand the bursting volcano.

But if from the soul itself we have to view it in its relations to God personally, to his law and eternity, the case of the unregenerate becomes still more alarming.

As to God and the moral law the impenitent soul is under present condemnation,—“whosoever believeth not is condemned already,” and each lives simply by a reprieve; yet not so as to cancel even temporarily the opposition of God. For “God is angry with the wicked every day.” His hand is against the man who loves and practices sin—“The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

Then there is the *future wrath* of God, of which John the Baptist spoke to sinners in his day as a thing certain to meet the persistently impenitent, and warned them to flee from it. And with the development of the doctrine of the last things in the hands of Christ and his Apostles there is certainly no brightening of the sinner's future. The frown of God is still dark and heavy. His opposition still pronounced throughout the New Testament the doom of the lost is awful, always awful. For them is the furnace of fire, the wailing, the gnashing of teeth. For them the wrath to the uttermost and the terrors of the Lord. Hence Whitfield was only under the influence of the completed Bible picture of the sinner's future, when lifting up his hands he entreated with tears the impenitent to “flee from the wrath to come,” always the *wrath to come*.

And yet the love of God, that kingly element in Deity—is not withdrawn from those who are experiencing the “indignation and wrath.” For in hell as on earth and in heaven divine love is as prominent as divine righteousness. This love, however, infinite though it is, cannot make it easier for the lost. The infinite love of God encompassed the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage. It seized omnipotence, and used it to minister to their daily wants in the wilderness.— But in the presence of this great love the sinners were chastised frequently on the journey, and were finally allowed to perish on the borders of the land so long expected, and to gain which they had travelled so far and toiled so long. The son of God too, at least from the moment of his incarnation onward to his death was the object of a love as large as the heart of his

infinite Lover, and yet it did not save him from much suffering in life, nor in death from the cross with its bitter, bitter agony.

The loss of the soul! what language can tell it out in all its dark fulness! There is no language. What human mind can adequately grasp it? Not one. Yet it may be partially understood, and from even a partial realization what might not reasonably be expected! If the perishing souls themselves noticed their growing moral degeneracy. If they only knew that their strength was going; if they only felt themselves as momentarily in dark waters, whose silent drift is toward a chasm deeper than human plummet has sounded. If the lamentable discord between their thoughts and God's, their feelings and God's; their life and God's, was for each matter of personal conviction? If the present and to come opposition of the Almighty to their plans, purposes, aims,—the whole trend of their sinful life was within the limits of present consciousness, truly great results might be justly anticipated.— Men now, whose only purpose in life is to gratify their baser passions, startled as men when pursuing a civilly illegal calling find avenging justice on their track. Men now indifferent to the admonitions and entreaties of heaven listening as though the penalty for failure to catch a word was the forfeit of their own life. What loud cries to God, what fightings without, what struggles within would be suddenly born of the revelation to the individual man of the sinner's present and future?

Thank God we are not without illustrations as to the inner and outer changes in men arising from the knowledge of their moral condition and imminent dangers. For while the many live and die largely ignorant of it all, some do happily become aware of it in time, and there may be present with us at this service, representatives of this number, whose eyes God hath opened,—by it may be “terrible things in righteousness.” Now, if aroused, see that you don't go to sleep again; another sleep may be fatal, as from it there may be no awakening. Go at once to the Lord and say,—“Take away all my iniquity and receive me graciously.”

And how important it is, brethren, for those of us called by God to the office and work of “the ministry of the Word,” to have the most vivid impression possible of the awful condition present and prospective of all unconverted persons about us, as in the absence of this conviction we will come short of that soulive consecration which ensures in the work of saving the lost—the employment of every personal gift of the laborer and other available means to the utmost. Joseph Cook when asked, which are the essential conditions of success in the ministry of to-day, gave as the first