

them to seek His grace. It is all over now. They are at this moment as they made their choice on that day.

Like to them are the Christless now.—Among them there are diversities of rank, and age, and character; but all, the noble and the lowly, the old and the young, the wise and the foolish—all need salvation. As were even the ransomed of the Lord, “by nature the children of wrath;” so unbelievers of ever description are unsaved; and, continuing far from Christ, refusing to heed the voice that speaks from heaven, rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, they remain “the children of wrath.” They stand in jeopardy every hour.

Poor sinners! Even though some may laugh, or scoff, or rage when you speak; even though some, slumbering in fancied security, and roused up now and again, wonder what you mean. They are poor sinners! Lost sheep, not found, because they will not hear the Good Shepherd's voice. Unhappy souls, not at rest, seeking enjoyment in vain amusements, in hollow pomps, in earth-dross, or in course sensuality, trying to gratify a heaven-born spirit with husks fit for swine to eat, coming for drink to broken cisterns, or to putrid waters, while the river of life flows by untasted. They are sufferers. Satan's is a hard service. Like the unexorable and senseless cruelty of the despot whose taskmasters demanded more brick while they withheld the materials from the groaning bondmen, so is sin inexorable and cruel in its exactions. It has no love for the little child, no pity for weakness, no sorrow for the afflicted, no mercy for the unfortunate, no reverence for grey hairs, no respect for the dying hour. Its every attribute is as unhuman as it is ungodly. And though men, perverted by it and turned aside by the deceived heart, may love it, it is a degrading tyranny, assailing its victim with incessant, unfortunate, increasing demands, till the infatuated slave led step by step into the mystery of iniquity, no longer tries to resist, no longer can deceive himself, but says, “I will seek it again, though it bite like an adder.”

Poor sinners! worn and weary, hopeless, doomed. And they hate the God who pities and spares them. Who warns and

threatens to deter them from the bitter end. Who bids them take the Remedy He has provided for all woes.—No true guide directs them, for they vex His Holy Spirit. No solace have they in the hour of calamity, for God is not their Refuge, but their Dread. No better prospect brightens before them, for their's is a downward darkening path. They are “like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh.” Death will come and find them in terror or stupor. Judgment will come, and they must give account of themselves to God. They “rise to shame and everlasting contempt.”—Why? They neglect the great salvation, and shall not escape. They are senseless of the Cross of Christ, for whom the strong man wept. The “stone, tried and precious” shall fall upon them, and grind them to powder. And, because “this is the portion of wicked men from God, and the heritage appointed unto them by God,” therefore the Christian is impelled by every feeling of our common humanity, and by every motion of grace to cry to fellow-sinners, stop, brethren. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Flee from the wrath to come. Lay hold on eternal life; and to cry to God on their behalf, “Turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just”—save them for Thy mercies' sake. So did Paul pray for his hearers in that audience-chamber at Cæsarea; and like to his is the prayer of every gracious soul, “I would to God, that . . . all . . . were both almost and altogether such as I am.”

II. Let us consider next the position and prospects of those who are *almost persuaded to be Christians*. To the case of one in this condition the Apostle referred, and evidently with some degree of pleasure.—Plainly he gave his hearers to understand that nothing short of their becoming “altogether” Christians would satisfy him, or benefit them; but as “almost persuaded” is a great stride in the right direction, to that extent, and in that sense, it was very gratifying—“I would to God that . . . all . . . were almost”—that is good, but not enough—I would that they were “altogether”—that is best. That is the end, the attainment of which alone gives value to the approximation.

The day of small things is never to