

count of sin. Thus it is said, "Judgments are prepared for scorers."—Again, "God will execute judgments upon No." It is in the last of these meanings that the term is used in our text. It denotes those punishments which God inflicts upon sinners for their transgressions.

Sin, my brethren, is the cause of all the calamities that come upon us.—Were there perfect innocence, there would be no suffering. Many, indeed, consider sin as a matter of trifling consequence, and that the ministers of God's word make too much ado about it. But, ah! such persons are fatally mistaken. What was it that kindled up the fires of hell? What was it that cast down the apostate angels from their original purity and felicity? What was it that brought a deluge upon the antedeluvian world? What was it that brought the fire of heaven upon the cities of the Plain? What was it that involved the Jews in such severe and protracted calamities? What is it that has made our world a vale of tears? What was it that pierced the innocent Son of God with so many sorrows? Was it not sin? Surely then it is a tremendous evil. It is the cause of all the judgments that come upon us.

Sometimes the connection, between the penal infliction and the particular sin, is abundantly plain. We are in no danger of mistaking. When we see the constitution of the drunkard, broken down by that liquid poison which he daily swallows, we cannot doubt that his misery is the result of his fatal vice. When we see the flesh of the debauchee wasted, and rottenness seizing upon his bones, we cannot hesitate in pronouncing his malady the reward of his crime. When we see the spendthrift, by his reckless extravagance, reduced to poverty and destitution, we behold, in his misery, the natural fruit of his vicious habits. But, there are cases, in which we do not perceive the connection between the sin and the punishment. It would be rash to conclude that, because certain persons have more than an ordinary share of calamity, they are peculiarly guilty. Our Lord has warned us against such uncharitable decisions. When some informed him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, no doubt concluding that their guilt was more than ordinary, our Lord said, "Think ye, that these were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things, I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or these eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye what they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Because Job had a more than ordinary share of trouble, his friends concluded that he was a hypocrite, for which they were reprov'd by God. In the present world vice often escapes punishment, while innocence is doomed to suffering. To account for such facts even good men have often been puzzled. They have been ready to enquire, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" But individuals will exist in a future state. Then, whatever seeming blots there may, in the meantime be, in the dispensations of God in regard to them, his perfect righteousness will be completely apparent. When the Lord Jesus Christ appears in flaming fire, he will render tribulation to them that trouble his people, and to them that are troubled rest. But nations, as such, exist only in this world. They must therefore be punished here, and consequently the calamities which come upon them are judgments for their sins.

Judgments are of two kinds—temporal and spiritual. Temporal judgments relate to our outward estate. They are either more public—as when the sword devours, or famine desolates, or pestilence sweeps over a country, wher