

Who would choose to go down to death thus ?

And this leads to the remark, that to die in our sins is to die in all the misery, and be involved in all the consequences of our sins. We may experience little annoyance from our sins now, but at death, and in the next world, they will appear in all their magnitude. Every sin will be the germ of endless misery : the least sin will bear its bitter fruit ; and *hell will be the unmitigated remembrance of sin*, to which there will be no end, as there will be no alleviation.

The consequences of dying in one's sins are too awful to contemplate. For ever to be cast out from the presence of God—to endure his wrath—to be an outcast from the regions of happiness, of glory—to be shut up in the regions of woe : *to be excluded from the society of all holy and happy beings, and be the companion of the outcast and the condemned* : to be doomed to endless, unavailing regret : to spend an eternity in the bitterness of remorse ! Is that a prospect we would willingly contemplate for ourselves ? And yet, such is the prospect before all who shall die in their sins. Their portion will be the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. And the aggravation of their misery will be that they rejected Christ : they would not believe in him : they would not come to him that they might have life. They put away from them the offered salvation. They chose death rather than life. God called, and they refused : he stretched out his hand, and they regarded not ; but set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof ; therefore will he also laugh at their calamity and mock when their fear cometh ; when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon them. Their misery will be aggravated by the regret that they did not attend to God's word when it might have availed them ; that they did not listen to its instructions ; that they were unawed by its warnings ; undeterred by its threatenings ; uninfluenced by its promises or its entreaties ; and that they were equally indifferent to the blessings of the gospel, and the penalties of the law. It will be aggravated by the consideration that heaven is lost, with all its joys, with all its blessed occupations, with all its honors and glories, with its inconceivable and endless raptures—that the Saviour has gone there—the Saviour

whom they rejected—that he has taken with him all his followers—that he has carried them with him into glory—and thither they cannot come ! Oh ! what an aggravation will that be of their misery ! “ Whither I go,” says Christ, “ ye cannot come ” “ Ye cannot come.” It is impossible now. The line is drawn—Your destiny is fixed. “ Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” Heaven once lost is unattainable. No subsequent efforts will reach it. “ Whither I go ye cannot come.” Whither Christ has gone. To heaven—to the joys which are at God's right hand—to the pleasures which are there for evermore—to the happiness of the sinless state—to the bliss of the angelic company—to the raptures of the heavenly employments—to the praises of the uncreated sanctuary. Thither ye cannot come : ye have not the title : ye have not the meekness : ye have not the character. Heaven is not to be attained by a thought : it is not to be reached by a prayer : nor is it to be sealed by a life spent in works of self-righteousness. A death-bed repentance, such as that generally is, will not secure it. Oh ! no, nothing but true faith in Christ ; nothing but that faith which sanctifieth ; nothing but the new creation of the soul, of which faith is the principal work. All that *may* be accomplished or take effect on a death-bed ; the Spirit of God may work even then : He is not limited to times or to means ; and then we are to present the gospel as freely and as fully as at any other time. We are not to administer any extreme unction ; but we are to invite the sinner to believe in Christ the Anointed : we are to present Christ ; and we are warranted to lay hold of the promises of the gospel then as well as at any other period. But repentance delayed is always more difficult ; and faith at such a season is a more hopeless exercise. Our salvation is a work. It is often through laborious and painful processes that it is accomplished ; not but that if the sinner would believe at once, he would be saved at once ; but it is often through painful struggles, and protracted efforts, that the sinner at last comes to the exercise of that faith which, introducing the soul into a state of justification, it has peace with God. It has been through such struggles that many of the most eminent believers have at length attained to peace. A death-bed is the