

trine. It is, of that consequence, that it should not be an unsettled question with any rational being; nor would it, if we did not give it the go bye. There is the word of God asserting, "Your sin will find you out."—There are the events of human history testifying in part to the truth of the word, and within us there is the sense of justice the witness of our own spirits, saying, It must be so. Try then to be convinced of, to realize the certainty of coming retribution. Let the fact get fair possession of your minds that the sins which go before, and those which follow after, will all make up to the sinner on the judgment day,—that all our thoughts and deeds of ill are to be disclosed, seen by ourselves, and by others, as attaching to us;—causing shame, remorse, intolerable anguish, and despair.

Convinced of the general truth that we are sinners, and that our sins will find us out; what next ought we to do in the circumstances? Endeavour to forestall sin. Instead of waiting till it apprehends you, as its helpless victims, be beforehand with it. Find it out, and lay hold of it, in this accepted time, when the Saviour from sin is near. Search and try heart and reins, life and conduct.—Pray, "Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." And when you have found out your sin wherever it may lie concealed—under whatever mask it may wear; when you discover its trail upon your path, and see it before you, in the heart where God alone should have been; then grapple with it, and know its dreadful power, and its malignant nature. It is now a bold, and then a skulking thief come to rob you of a jewel of incomparable value—to despoil your soul—to make the treasures of heaven forever inaccessible to you. It is a traitor with honied words of falsehood, lurking within your being, poisoning you against God, cruelly betraying you to destruction, while affecting to give you liberty, pleasure, and all desirable things. It does, what we dislike and resent above all other wrongs: man had rather be called wicked, than pointed out as a fool. Sin befools you,—makes you, intelligent, rational, immortal creatures, care more for this passing

show, for honor coming from men, for the good opinion of triflers whose common sense you question, ay, even for the dress you wear and its style, than for the God who made you, and the Saviour who died to save you. It is a delusion and a snare, the soul-delirium, distorting all objects for you in earth and heaven. It is Death! Find it out. Look it through and through, with His aid who sets our secret sins in the light of His countenance. Learn to know it well. More religious error, and more misconduct arise from inadequate views of sin than from any other single source. A true conviction here is worth worlds to us.

But having found out sin, caught it in our soul's best room, what next? Make a right disposition of it. The man who by the help of God has discovered sin, the abominable thing which the Lord hateth, in his own soul, and who has obtained a true, deep, Spirit wrought conviction of what it is,—is, at that stage, like one travelling in a path through the Indian jungle, and unexpectedly coming upon the lair of some wild animal. The startled beast, as frightened as the traveller, with the instinct of its fierce nature, springs upon the intruder in self-defence, but is caught by its intended victim and held with the energy of despair. Trembling under the intense forth-patting of his strength and his fears combined, the unfortunate man knows not what to do. He has thus far avoided the fangs of his ferocious assailant. He struggles with the brute, but he cannot destroy it, and he dare not let it go. No help comes in answer to his cry. His strength is failing, and he thinks of the horrible end.

So having our sins laid bare—ever before us, turn which way we will, like David's in his agony of guilt and misery, is good for us as a step towards another revelation, terrible if that step cannot be taken. No sadder, more distressing, heart-breaking knowledge can ever be had than a full sight and sense of his sinfulness by the awakened sinner. It is the most fearful of human sorrows. And therefore God in his mercy orders it so, that a complete and abrupt discovery of all the wickedness in a human heart is made in few cases, if in any case at all, but such a view of our sinfulness as we can bear. Made to ~~see~~