

A great body of Scripture texts are here introduced in confirmation ; but the children are told, even including those " who from the womb unto the tomb were straightway carried," that they are to have " the easiest room in hell :"—

(181.) " The glorious King, thus answering,
They cease, and plead no longer,
Their consciences must needs confess
His reasons are the stronger."

The pains of hell and the constant renovation of strength to enable the " sinful wight" to bear an eternity of torment, are then dilated upon at such length, and so minutely, and a picture so harrowing to the soul is drawn, as to remind us of the excellent observations on this head of a modern New England divine. " It is not wonderful," he says, " that this means of subjugating the mind should be freely used and dreadfully perverted, when we consider that no talent is required to inspire fear, and that coarse minds and hard hearts are signally gifted for this work of torture." " It is an instrument of tremendous power," he adds, " enabling a Protestant minister, whilst disclaiming papal pretensions, to build up a spiritual despotism, and to beget in those committed to his guidance a passive, servile state of mind, too agitated for deliberate and vigorous thought." *

That the pious minister of Malden, however, had no desire to usurp any undue influence over his panic-stricken hearers, is very probable, and that he was only indulging in the usual strain of the preachers of his time, when he told of the " yelling of the damned, as they were burnt eternally in the company of devils," and went on to describe how—

" God's vengeance feeds the flame
With piles of wood and brimstone flood,
That none can quench the same."

We next learn that the peace and calm blessedness of the saints elect, who are received into heaven, is not permitted to be disturbed by compassion for the damned ; mothers and fathers feeling no pity for their lost children :—

* Channing's Works, London, vol. iii. p. 263.