

be the pillow on which to rest thine aching head—it is because He loves me.

Does bereavement wring thy heart and desolate thy home? He opens the tomb because He loves thee. As it is the suffering child of the family that claims a mother's deepest affections and most tender solicitude, so thou, afflicted believer, hast in thy affliction, embarked on thy side, the tenderest love and solicitude of a chastening Father. He loved thee into this sickness; He will love thee through it. Love is the reason of it all. There is not one drop of wrath in the cup which thou art called upon to drink. "As many as I love," saith the ascended Lord, "I rebuke and chasten."

Afflicted one, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, but hear His rod, and listen to what He has to say to you in it. Be this thy resolve, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Pray that the fire may burn out your dross, and that through this trial you may become a holy golden vessel for the Master's use in time and in eternity.

4. Let us learn, also, *the design or end of affliction*, or the uses which it is intended to serve. As affliction proceeds neither from blind necessity nor from casual accident, but from a wise and loving God, nothing can be more certain than that it is designed for some great and useful purpose. Now, the design of affliction is expressly revealed to us in the passage before us. God here condescends to explain the reasons of His dealings with us. He tells us (verse 10) that He chastens not for His pleasure, but for our profit. And then this profit is more fully explained in the following clause: "That we might be partakers of his holiness." And in verse 11, we are told that chastening, although in itself not joyous, but grievous, yet produces "the peaceable fruits of righteousness in those who are exercised thereby."

From this we learn that the general end of affliction is the moral and spiritual improvement of believers; in