

## IS A BLESSING.

The great design of God with respect to his people is not so much to make this world a state of happiness as a state of preparation for another. Here their characters are forming; here they receive the impress which they will retain for ever; here they are like children who are kept under tutors and governors, and stand in need of discipline, that waywardness may be checked, and passion controlled, and disobedience chastised, and virtues called forth, and the whole character harmoniously and beautifully developed. Here a course of training is in progress, and it is one of the grand designs of God and his providence so to arrange the condition and circumstances in which Christians are placed, that everything shall conspire, not to make them happy merely or chiefly, but to improve their characters. And perhaps there is no one truth more fundamental to the Christian's improvement than this,—“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Were his course of prosperity to flow on without interruption, were all his schemes and plans to be carried out to completion, all his earthly hopes to be realized, who could say that he would keep his eye steadily fixed upon heaven, and tread the world under his feet? or if he were to meet with only slight and rare disappointments, who would not tremble lest his spiritual life would be languid, and the cares and concerns of this world should gain the ascendancy. But when frequently called to endure suffering, his spirit is humble, and his chastened and wounded heart is taught to look away from things temporal to those things which are eternal.

The happy influence of tribulation upon Christian character may be very easily traced.

Here is one whom God has blessed in basket and store: his barns are full; his children are like olive-plants round his table; no trouble comes nigh unto him, and insensibly almost he falls into a habit of self-reliance, and begins to say, “I shall never be moved.” He has no apprehensions

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