

on the good, and sends His rain on the just and unjust," but, while these ordinary gifts of His providence are thus scattered with a liberal and bounteous hand upon all, it is to His own servants, to the people of Christ, to the sheep of His dear Son's flock, that He dispenses, in richest abundance, all the blessings both of His providence and His grace. To all such He addresses the language which he addressed to His chosen people of old, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye."* "Whoso hearkeneth unto me," says the Lord, "shall dwell safely,"—that, my friends, is just what we all want,—"shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."†

Let me draw your attention to another circumstance well worthy of our notice in this account of Paul's shipwreck. God not only promised him that his own life should be spared, in this great peril, but, said the angel, "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Mark that expression "hath given thee," clearly implying that it was for Paul's sake that God was pleased to spare their lives,—very likely in answer to Paul's prayers, for we know "that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" with God; and thus, there can be no doubt, it often happens that the wicked derive important benefits from being associated or connected with Christians. God often confers important benefits on the world at large, in the course of His general purpose to benefit His own people. The wicked

* Zech. ii. 8.

† Prov. i. 33.