

neglected. God has been forced to produce in us the effect which self-judgment ought to have produced before Him.

It would, however, be untrue to suppose that all afflictions are chastenings. Though they are sometimes, they are not always sent because of sin. There are things in the soul connected with the natural character, and which need to be corrected in order that we may live more in communion with God and glorify Him in all the details of life. What we do not know how to do with regard to these things God does for us; but there are many children of God who commit faults which their conscience ought to feel, and which they would discover if their souls were in the presence of God.

Jacob had to fight all his life against himself, because God had known his ways; and in order to bless him. God must wrestle with him too, and on this account also He was not pleased to reveal His name to him. It is totally different with Abraham. A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to hinder evil; for in his case the danger did not arise from carelessness, but from the abundance of the revelations which he had.

Where there is a real affection which acknowledges God and all the relations in which He places us with Himself, it is absolutely impossible that a Christian should allow himself to marry a worldly person, without violating all his obligations towards God and towards Christ. If a child of God allies himself to an unbeliever, it is evident that he

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