

mind. Then a beloved son, and for a time he was favorably impressed; but only for a time. Then his crops failed and his cattle died; still his grasp on the world was not unloosed. Then God touched his person, and brought on him a lingering, fatal disease; the world, however, occupied still too much of his thoughts. His house finally took fire, and as he was carried out of the burning building he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I am cured at last!" He died happily shortly afterwards.

Just because the Lord loves us He does not leave us to ourselves, but He hedges up our way with thorns, so that we may not wholly wander from Him. To restrain and govern a child, to correct him when he errs, shows that there is a parental solicitude for him, and that he is not disowned or treated as an outcast. Thus the apostle reasons in verses 7 and 8 (revised version), "It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Sickness is not punishment in order to uphold law, but chastisement to reclaim the offender.

"Trials," says McCheyne, "are God's love-tokens." It is not always that the afflicted believer sees this. Sometimes the trial is so severe, and the spiritual vision so beclouded, that he exclaims, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." (Isa. xlix. 14.) "What!" saith he, "doth God love me while He is thus making His arrows to pierce me through and through, causing the sun of my earthly joys to set in clouds?" Yes, O afflicted! tossed with tempest, He chastens thee because He loves thee. This trial comes from His own tender, loving hand—His own tender, loving heart.

Art thou laid on a sick-bed? Are sorrowful days and wearisome nights appointed unto thee? Let this