

will," but also with reference to His works, that "in wisdom He hath made them all," and that "the whole earth is full of His goodness."

Nor is it difficult for us, in many cases, to trace the footsteps of the Almighty in the events of Providence, or to acquiesce in the wisdom and goodness by which they are marked. It is not the less true, however, that there are times and circumstances in which God's way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known, and in which it is hard for us to believe that all is for the best. Thus, for example, it was not at all difficult for us to recognize the good providence of God, with reference to our Queen and country, in raising up and qualifying for his distinguished position the deceased Prince, sparing him so long in health and happiness and honour, and so turning his heart to virtue, as that not merely by precept, but by example, he has sought to train up in the paths of virtue the Royal princes and princesses.

In such developments of Providence as these, it is not at all difficult for us to trace the wisdom and goodness of God. But what can we think or say, when, by one fell stroke, the Prince, the Husband, and the Father, is laid low in death? Even in the humblest family of the Empire, where only the interests of a few persons are concerned, it does appear mysterious when the widowed mother and the orphan children are called on to mourn the departure of their best earthly comforter and stay; but far more mysterious is that bereaving dispensation which, at a critical and exigent era, has snatched from the side of our sovereign, a faithful husband, on whom not the interests of one family alone, but the interests of millions were dependent.

It is, then, an extraordinary exercise of faith in the goodness of God's providence which is now demanded of us. Still, let us endeavour to acquiesce. The history of our nation shews us how little reason we have had, in times past, to distrust the providence of God, and now forbids us to despair. It was apparently a dark day for Britain, when the pious King Edward the Sixth was cut off in early life. It was apparently a dark day for Britain, and perilous to the liberties of the world, when William the Third was cut off in the prime of manhood. There are doubtless, also, some present, who well remember how all faces gathered blackness, when the Princess Charlotte, the heiress of the British Throne, and her royal babe were laid together in the dust. Yet from all these dark dispensations Britain has emerged. God himself has made our country His especial care; for when did the British Empire stand higher than it does at the present moment, in everything that constitutes national greatness—in religion, literature, arts and arms? Now, if God has thus brought light out of darkness in times past, why should we distrust His providence in the trying hour which the death of the Prince Consort has brought upon us?

III. In the third place the death of the Prince Consort calls for *the exhibition of deep, respectful, affectionate sympathy with our beloved Queen* in this the hour of her sore trial and bereavement. We are sometimes accustomed to think of Monarchs and Potentates as lying beyond the range of common sympathy. Surrounded by state and splendour, possessed of wealth and power, with thousands to do their bidding and to anticipate their every wish,