

you repeat such miserable commonplaces as, that affliction is the lot of humanity,—it is common,—and that excessive grief can do no good, and, therefore, should not be indulged,—and that it is a noble thing to bear up and endure with fortitude? Or will you urge upon the sufferer the unreasonableness of fretting against the natural laws, by whose operation his affliction has been occasioned, seeing that no one can reflect for a moment, without being convinced that it is much better for these laws to be as they are, though necessarily productive at times of severest anguish to individuals, than that they should be otherwise? All this, if this is all that can be said (and what can infidelity say more?), is the mockery rather than the balm of grief. "What man is there of you who if his son ask bread will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent?"

But on the contrary, how richly consoling, how adequate for every season of distress, are the views which the Word of God supplies to those by whom it is believed! Let a Christian only realise the truth of our text,—that all the events of life are sent from God, and wisely ordered so as to accomplish, in a way which we may not be able at present to discern, the best and highest ends,—let him only rise to the sublime persuasion that all things do, in point of fact, always work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose,—and then he stands upon an eminence, where I do not say that he will feel no grief, but where, amidst the varied sorrows which it may be his lot to endure, beams of celestial comfort will never fail to shine in upon his soul.

"Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm:
The rolling clouds around its breast are spread;
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."