

and the inspirer of joy. But I also know, that in the government of an infinitely perfect Being there can be no such thing as real evil, and therefore I would turn to those which are called evils, to see if they are not designed to teach the same truth, though by a different process, which ought to be learned from the blessings of life. And I again appeal to my hearers whether the fact is not as I have stated it, — that the evils of life, in the very hour of their endurance, are, under the guidance of Christianity, teachers of the truth that God is love.

But there is another class of evils, which seem still more strongly to oppose this truth. Man is allowed, in the providence of God, to sin, to defile himself with iniquity, to resist, and in some measure to defeat, the designs of infinite wisdom and benevolence for his true welfare. Yet the difficulty presented by this case is rather apparent than real. If it were the appointment of God that a course of sin cut off the transgressor entirely from the divine mercy ; if, in other words, there were no such thing as repentance, and the promise of forgiveness to repentance, and a restoration to God's favor, then would this seeming objection be irreconcilable with the truth that God is love. But the representations of the Gospel on this point bring us to the opposite conclusion. They teach us that God ever looks with compassion and pity on those who transgress his laws, and that he is constantly striving by his spirit and providence to bring them back to him in penitence and love. And, indeed, there is no case by which the truth of my text is made more clear and undeniable than in that of the repentant sinner. He is conscious that he has violated the wisest laws ; that he has slighted and despised his Maker and Benefactor, from