

The first words of our Saviour in the text, are remarkable. "I am glad." At this time Mary and Martha, dear friends of Jesus, were crushed with grief, and yet, concerning the cause of their sorrow He said, "I am glad." This utterance must have sounded very strange to the disciples, for as yet they only knew Christ after the flesh; at least they had but a dim comprehension of the spiritual truths upon which his action was based. His character was still something of a riddle to their minds. Hence this expression was to them a mystery. We are learners in the school of life—we know the system of truth revealed in God's word—we believe in Christ—we feel ourselves to be under the rule and care of God—we recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, but there is much in the Providence of God that is dark to us. Sin has weakened our spiritual eyesight, and our perceptions are clouded and dim.

The Christian, as he advances in his religious life, feels more and more his own inherent feebleness and ignorance, the imperfection and meagreness of his views, and feels more and more the absolute need of Divine enlightenment and counsel. The disciples could not understand the motives of Christ in allowing, when he might have prevented, the death of his friend, with all its consequences of sorrow to those who were left behind. This case is not a singular one. There are few in whose experience it has not been repeated. "God's ways are not as our ways." Many of His dealings with us are beyond human understanding. There are times when to the unaided human mind, it must seem as if God had withdrawn himself from His creatures, and left them to suffer unheeded and uncared for—that he was deaf to the cry of human agony. Why does God thus hide himself, as it were, and allow His creatures to suffer? If, with the disciples, we have thus questioned within our hearts, we shall find in the text the solution of the problem. In it are unfolded the purposes of God, and the principles of His government of men.

And 1st. Our Lord was glad for the sake of his disciples.

To have saved the life of Lazarus would have been more consistent with the views and wishes of his disciples. It would have been *apparently* more consistent with his regard for his friends. It would have saved them present pain. But his desire for his followers extended beyond their present happiness. His views and his actions had reference to their highest welfare. He had regard to their spiritual improvement—to their eternal well being. There was a lesson in this calamity which they must learn, even at the