

"EVIL IN A CITY."

HOSEA iii. 6. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?"

It has been said by high authority that there is no *positive* Evil in the world. Whether the orthodox moralist is prepared to endorse this maxim may be a question, but it is certain that the orthodox Theologian believes it, so far as the doctrine which it involves applies to the people of God—for inspiration assures him, that "all things work together for *good* to them that love God," &c. Hence it is obvious that what at one time may seem an apparent evil, may at another appear to be a real good—and what one man may regard a real evil, another may regard a real good.

Afflictive dispensations are by some deemed a great calamity, yet we hear one say of them "blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and causest to learn thy statutes." "Tho' no chastisement for the present (that is while it is being borne) seemeth joyous but grievous, nevertheless *afterwards* it yieldeth the unspeakable fruits of righteousness." Afflictions are therefore a blessing—a real good to the man of God—a real good to the sinner whom they bring to Christ, yet like the amputating knife in the hand of the surgeon—they may create pain—and the sinner may wince while the Divine Surgeon is "cutting off the right hand" or "plucking out the right eye."