

But it may be replied that, as a matter of fact, Christ has not delivered His followers from all suffering. Providential suffering has two aspects, as it relates to the believing and the unbelieving; to the former it is fatherly chastisement; to the latter it is a foretaste of the eternal future, to awaken the conscience and lead up to faith. By doting parents, let suffering never be associated with wrong-doing in the mind of a child, and a conscienceless monster is the product.* By exhibitions of severity, God creates a conscience, and prepares men for salvation. His exhibitions in past ages, and threatened exhibitions in future ones, if wisely used, may do it, and save much present suffering.

One thing, however, can be said in favour of Roman Catholics, and it is a great thing, which cannot be said of most Protestant Churches—that their preachers have never supposed God to have been converted; in other words, that He has repented former severities as unjust, or that He is not now what He has always been where men are unchanged. The Catholic Church has never failed boldly to proclaim what the eternal destiny is of those who live without God and without hope, notwithstanding mistakes she may make about the Way of Life. The consequence is, that Roman Catholics have taken a more lively interest in their religion than Protestants generally have taken in theirs. Had Protestants been as faithful to Bible teaching on the future of the impenitent and unbelieving, and refused to waste

* Cain is one example, and there is a later one.