

such a crucible?" Ah, it is Satan that desired and God who permitted it.

Things often occur which we cannot understand ; such things are intended to show us what the flesh is.

When God is about to use a Christian in His work, He takes the one who has gone the furthest in the path of trial. Thus here it is said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you." The danger is presented to all ; but He adds, speaking to Peter. "I have prayed for thee;" for thee in particular ; for Jesus distinguishes him from all the rest, because he had taken a more prominent position than the others, and was thus more exposed, though they were all sifted by the death of Jesus. The Lord then says to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Notwithstanding all this, Peter is full of self-confidence. "I am ready to go with thee, both unto prison and to death." But Jesus replies, "the cock shall not crow this day, before thou hast denied that thou knowest me."

The flesh acting in Peter had only power to carry him up to the time of trial, and there failed ; for Peter denied the Lord Jesus, even in His very presence. He might have seen his Saviour, if his heart had not been turned away from Him. Jesus was looking at him, and yet he denied Him to the maid, saying, "I know Him not." He had been warned ; but the Lord would not allow him to be kept by divine power at that moment, because he