

"AFFLICTION THE LOT OF SAINTS BELOW."

While we are mortal we must taste of the waters of *Mara*, drink of the cup of adversity, and swim the tempestuous ocean. It is the perfection of angels that they could never know the *pathos* of mental disquiet, or the pangs of anguish; and it is the happiness of departed saints to obtain joy for mourning, a crown for crosses, and to forget their misery, if not wholly, yet to remember it as waters, once swollen to a dreadful flood, but that now forever flow away.

It is, then, the misery of the sons of men, only while here, to be, as it were, a mark set up for the arrows of tribulation, and to be engaged in constant war and in perpetual broils; but it is the privilege of the Christian soldier to wear the shield of faith with which he shall be able to quench the fiery darts of Satan, and ward off the missiles of destruction that may be hurled at him from any quarter. How, then, may we triumph under all our afflictions?

First. We must consider that they come from *God*, whatever be the instrument: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; Thou hast afflicted me in faithfulness."

Second. We must consider that they are out of love: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Third. We must consider that they are for our good: "Fathers of our flesh chastise us for their pleasure, but He for our profit, that we may be

partakers of his holiness."

Fourth. We must consider that they are noble antidotes against and preservatives from sin: "Ere I was afflicted I strayed, but now I keep thy word."

Fifth. We must consider that they assimilate the saints to their glorious Head, their sympathising and feeling High Priest, who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yea, in the work of redemption, the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings."

Sixth. They teach humanity and sympathy to fellow-creatures in the same circumstances: "Christ suffered being tempted, that he might know how to succor them that are tempted, and be a merciful High Priest to His people."

Seventh. Afflictions make very humble and break the haughty mind, and bring down the lofty thought: "I go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul; my soul is as a weaned child."

Eighth. Afflictions cause the soul to go frequently to a throne of grace, and have, as it were, the acquaintance between God and the soul increased: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord."

Many are the blessings that descend upon us consequent of affliction. Shall we, then, despise the discipline of heaven, from which none are exempted, not even the Son of God? Yea, all the heirs of glory are brought up in the school of the cross—O,