

unction of a saint, and then got well again, to transgress like an abandoned sinner; for there, too, the exhilaration was due to the nervous character of the malady under which he was suffering. Many, I fear, will doubt these things; but when they have been at as many sick-beds and death-beds as I have been, they may see reason to revise their opinion. At any rate, I am sure of this, that spiritual depression is very often the first indication of bodily disease, and that the medical attendant is fully as necessary in many cases as the spiritual adviser. Now when we can trace our despondency to such a cause, it will cease to be a thorn to us. It will weigh heavily upon us, indeed, but it will no longer seem to us as if the LORD had deserted us, and so the trial will be deprived of its sting. One whom I knew had the Seventy-seventh Psalm read to him while he lay dying, and when he heard the tenth verse, "And I said this is my infirmity," he broke in with these words, "That's my liver. My soul and body so act one upon the other. With the liver wrong, the mind gets clouded, and I feel as though GOD had swept me out of His house as useless; but after He has taken so much trouble to mold the vessel, He will not throw it aside." There you see was depression, but without the sting, and the reason was because the sufferer recognized the spiritual effect of his disease.

But I hasten to remark further that *spiritual despondency is often the result of trial*. Think of PETER's words: "Ye are in heaviness through manifold trials." One affliction will not usually becloud our horizon. But when a whole series of distresses comes on us in succession, the effect is terrible. First, it may be, comes sickness, and we are getting round from that when business difficulties overwhelm us. These are scarcely arranged before bereavement comes; and while we are still in the valley, we are set upon by APOLYTON in the shape of some scan-

dalous accuser who seeks to rob us our good name. Thus we are for years it may be, passing through an experience like that of the sailor who is seeking round a stormy cape, and is continually baffled by some cause or other, so that for weeks, as each morning breaks, there is still the same weariful headland before him, and he has to begin anew. On those who have passed through such a series of afflictions, and who can say the words of the old prophet, "He has barked my fig-tree and made it clean bare," can tell how much there is in such a history to weigh the spirit down. Nay, the same effect may be produced by the mere monotony of our labours without any special affliction. To have the same things to do day after day for years; to fill in one's constant round of duties with gin-horse regularity; to feel as the years revolve, that one is degenerating more and more into a machine; who among us has not experienced a depression which is caused by such a history? How many of us can enter into the feelings which FABER thus pathetically describes:

"Love adds anxiety to toil,
And sameness doubles cares;
While one unbroken chain of work,
The flagging temper wears."

O ye mothers and housekeepers, you know what is meant by the assent that sameness doubles cares; and it is when such a burden is lying most heavily upon the heart that the words of our text come to us with their soothing influence, as sometimes the music of a psalm chanted by a wandering street singer steals into a troubled dream, and awakes us to comfort and security.

But to mention no more, *spiritual despondency may be caused by mental perplexity*. We are living in an age when the spirit of inquiry and bold independent criticism is abroad. The sacred things of our faith are assailed. The old beliefs are once more on the trial, and when a youth reaches the age when he must exchange a tradition