

spoken of—his character freely canvassed—his company shunned by good men—you may be sure that there is a cause—that this is but the consequence of moral delinquency—that there has been a relaxing of high principle—a disregard to the claims of God—an indifference to his holy eye: and he who governs the world in righteousness means that he should suffer, that he should come under the suspicions of his fellows, and be treated with the cold shoulder and the averted look, and the want of credit and confidence. There are sins and vices which are followed up invariably with God's righteous retribution, so that just as sure as you can see the suffering, you can pronounce upon the sin which has been its cause. But there are sorrows and sufferings that come upon men where you cannot so pronounce—where it would be wrong to say that there has been previous guilt. I refer to all such sufferings as are indicated in the text, and flowing from calamities which we cannot prevent, and over which we have no control. Great suffering has come upon the world in consequence of war, pestilence, famine, fire, and shipwreck. Such calamities take place in every land and in every age, whether we will or no, and involve in misery the innocent and the guilty, the parent and the child. One event happeneth to all—the wise and the foolish apparently without any discrimination. The Christian soldier falls as readily upon the battle-field as the profane wretch that neither fears God nor regards man; the licentious villain that is hastening across the sea to escape the hand of justice is perhaps one of the few that are saved in the wreck, while youth and beauty and innocence perish in the depths below; the devout worshipper is overtaken in his devotions and wrapped in flames; the pious miner is among the number that are choked with the fire-damp, while not a few have

been rescued from destruction that are ingrained both in body and in soul with pollution. You can infer nothing from such calamities as to the moral character of those who suffer. They are lessons for the living rather than judgments upon the dead; for although all suffering is preceded by sin either in the race or in the individual, yet the suffering may not be penal but paternal, and become a vehicle of precious blessings to the world. It is important that we should keep this distinction in view, or we will run into the ancient error of concluding, whenever we see great sorrow or a great misfortune, that there must necessarily have been great antecedent sin. On the contrary, the great suffering which a man has to endure may only be the means of making him more precious in the sight of God, and not only so, but a greater blessing to his fellow-men. The greatest sufferer this world ever saw was its greatest benefactor, because suffering not for himself, but for those that should believe in his great name. And in a lower sphere we see the same principle of vicariousness in the works and ways of God. A thousand disasters and shipwrecks have taken place around our shores, and ten thousand precious lives have been sacrificed thereon; but these shores are the safer now because of those disasters, and the beacon lights of Cape Race and St. Paul's, together with all the other precautions and improvements, are the fruit of all those calamities. The battle-field is strewn with the wounded and the dead, and the sad news are followed with many a widow's wail and many an orphan's tear, but the fruit of that victory is liberty to the slave, and the opening of the prison doors to those that are bound. Ten thousand perish upon the field, but they form a sort of bridge upon which those that come after will be able to pass over in safety. The martyr goes forward to the