

tions. But not unfrequently we are unable to discern the object of the Most High in his dealings; and at the very best our insight into divine providence is limited. "No man," as the text expresses it, "can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." Now, this being so, I say that our conviction of the necessary and essential excellence of the ways of God does not rest upon the amount of our insight into them, but partly upon our knowledge of God's wisdom and benignity, and partly upon the express testimony of his own Word.

In the complicated dispositions of a field of battle, a movement which the commander makes might seem, to a person to whom a view of the whole ground was not afforded, or who had not sufficient military skill to judge of its propriety, a very unfortunate step; yet that may be the movement which gains the battle and decides the destinies of nations. The result may prove it to have been a most beautiful evolution. So in divine providence. To Jacob it seemed a very unfortunate thing that Benjamin was compelled to be taken down into Egypt. "All these things," the distressed patriarch exclaimed, "are against me." But had one of the angels, whom he beheld in his dream at Bethel, ascending and descending upon the ladder that connected heaven and earth, been commissioned again to appear, and to explain to him the still undeveloped scheme which God was working out, he would have been convinced (as he did become before his death) that the view he was taking was a most shortsighted one, and that all the things which he deplored were, in reality, favourable to him. In general, suppose the most dark and inscrutable dispensation to befall a Christian; he is warranted, and not only is he warranted, but it is his duty, to reason thus regarding it: "In order to be able to judge of such an event, I would require to be placed in a position of higher observation than I now occupy, and to be gifted