

warned of it; it is a part of the moral discipline which God is exercising over them, and which is necessary to promote their fitness for that state of holiness and joy upon which they shall shortly enter. If any are exempt from trouble and distress, we should suppose that they would be men of the world; those who will experience nothing but distress and anguish after death. They who are to be wretched for ever when they leave this world are those to whom happiness here is most important; but if any of us are to taste of the joys of heaven, and to sit down in the kingdom of God, surely we can afford to forego the pleasures in which others indulge now, and shall cheerfully do so, if we consider how much we need the discipline of trial and chastisement to prepare us for everlasting life. I know that it may appear at first view as if the world had some ground for exultation when they see believers sorrowing and tossed upon tempestuous seas, and as if religion did not fulfil all the hopes you had formed respecting it; but upon second view you discover that all these trials are distinctly foretold, that this is a world of discipline, not of retribution, and that rewards are not distributed until we have reached that better land where all tears are wiped from every eye.

3. I infer from this subject that when professed believers enjoy unmingled prosperity, there is cause for alarm.

Few if any can continue long in such a state, without becoming attached to the world and experiencing a decline of religious affections. It is almost a universal truth, "Because they have no changes, they fear not God;" and it is a sad commentary upon Christian character that few if any have such firm principles and such warm affections that they can bear a long prosperity. The goodness of God when manifested in this way, instead of leading men to him, leads them into forgetfulness and carnal luxuriousness of life.

You who are prospered in whatever you do, and especially if you tremble at the thought of adversity, ought to entertain wholesome fears lest your prosperity should prove