

This much even on principles of *reason*. And now for *revelation*. If there is such a thing—if there is any truth in those Holy writings which we all believe to be “given by inspiration of God”—if the Bible is not, from beginning to end, “a cunningly devised fable,” “verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” He is a “fool that says there is not;” and he is a liar who, admitting God’s existence, denies his Providence—a Providence, alike exhaustless in its resources and minute in its surveillance—regulating and over-ruling, for its own purposes, the destinies of empires, yet watching over the “fall of a sparrow,” and “numbering the hairs of our head.” We deny not the operation of *secondary causes*, or their influence upon the condition of individuals, families, and nations; but we maintain that these are but instruments in God’s hands, working under his direction, and evolving his secret and sovereign purposes. The most sedulous attention to the laws of health will not always keep away disease, just as the utter disregard of them, in other cases, does not engender it. “Affliction cometh not from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.” And where, then, is its source? Just where Job sought it—“I would seek unto *God*, and unto God would I commit my cause;” and where David found it—“In very faithfulness *Thou* has afflicted me.” And as with personal, so with national calamity. “Shall there be evil in a city,” asks the prophet Amos, “and the Lord hath not done it?” When the Assyrian power was broken in pieces, whence came the stroke under which it first staggered and then fell? Isaiah tells us, “The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” The same prophet, addressing God, in another place says, “when *thy* judgments are abroad in the earth, the people will learn righteousness,” clearly implying that whether men will learn the lesson or not, God is the teacher whose judgments are abroad in the earth. Let us, my friends, sit docilely, as we profess this day to do, at the feet of this teacher; let us “humble ourselves under the mighty

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