

pleasing contemplation of those wise arrangements of God by which the remaining hardness or impenitency of his heart is to be removed. They are both desirous that their afflictions should terminate; but the one looks to earthly aid alone for this purpose, and refuses to seek any of a higher kind; the other employs the means also within his reach, but not without beseeching the blessing of heaven to render them effectual; the one complains that the means employed are not adequate to his recovery; the other resigns himself to the will of the Supreme Disposer of health and sickness, saying "Not my will but thine be done." In this instance we cannot fail to perceive that faith is the only sure friend in distress; that it alone will enable us to overcome the diseases and sicknesses of the world.

In regard, again, to the views taken of the reverses in the outward circumstances of our lives, the sentiments of both persons are widely dissimilar. What is the usual effect of disasters of this nature upon minds destitute of religious principle? Experience shows us two of these effects. The first is a sullen apathy, with respect to all honourable pursuits, a disposition to let things move on as they may, with a determination to exert no longer those energies which have brought only disappointment and poverty upon their possessor. This temper leads the person under its influence to harden himself against all the reproofs and remonstrances of friends, and to seek gratification in the indulgence of the lowest and most degrading vices.

The second effect of such disasters on undisciplined minds is more awful, though of less common occurrence. But still it has occurred with sufficient frequency to warrant us in mentioning it as one of the results of the want of christian faith. On the first information of their worldly speculations having failed, and the prospect of dependance being forced upon them, some men have forgotten all the claims which mankind at large, had upon them, all the tender ties by which they were bound to their friends and their families, and in a moment of frenzied disgust towards the world and its concerns, have rushed into the presence of Omnipotent Justice. What greater proof can we have of the insufficiency of all principles inferior to those of religion for steadying and guiding the mind in the hour of those storms and tempests which so often visit us in this world than such a fact as we have mentioned? How, then, it may be asked, does faith in Christ save the mind from the evils here stated? Why, the first lesson which this faith

inculcates, is to place but a very moderate reliance upon the riches of this life?

"Love not the world," says St. John, "nor the things of the world." "Set your affections," says St. Paul, "on the things above not on the things of the earth." "What shall it profit a man," asks our Saviour, "if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Look not," exhorts St. Paul, "at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal." And, says our Lord, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves, treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:" and adds he, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Now, it is plain, that he on whom the faith of the gospel has produced so great a moderation of desire towards the wealth of this world, as these precepts are intended to create and cherish, cannot be in any danger of being overwhelmed in his mind by the severest reverses of fortune. And he possesses none of the spirit of those passages of scripture, who is deficient in one of the most distinguishing graces of Christianity.

Faith supplies us with another most powerful principle for counteracting all despondency on account of vicissitudes of worldly fortune. It teaches us that God, who is the governor of men, in all the affairs which belong to them, designs, by blessing one with riches, and subjecting another to poverty, to try them both. There is no doctrine more clearly revealed in scripture respecting the providence of God than this; and it is a doctrine of the very first importance, that riches are not a sign of the Divine favor, nor poverty of the Divine displeasure; but that both are intended to serve moral purposes in the administration of heaven. The whole of the book of Job was evidently written to illustrate and impress upon the minds of men this consolatory doctrine. The christian, therefore, when his affairs, in spite of all his just and honourable efforts, go wrong, when he finds himself, from a state of affluence, reduced to one of indigence, and from being a master, obliged to become a servant, reflects that such a change in his lot has not been brought about by any capricious agency, but has been effected by that wise and good Being whose eye takes in the whole term of his existence, and who by the hardships of a few years, is preparing to secure for him the happiness of eternity. Amid the heaviest of his calamities, accordingly,