

nothing should harm them, and that they should find his yoke easy and his burden light, and his ways pleasantness and his paths peace; especially when they saw the miraculous power which he employed to heal the sick and to supply the wants of the poor, and the tender affection with which he regarded them, — it would not be surprising if they had indulged some expectations, at least at times, that he would signalize their fidelity by conferring upon them unmingled prosperity, that he would protect them from the disasters which fell upon others, and that no privations or distresses should ever be sustained by those who trusted in him. What a striking proof would this be of the value of religion, — what an irresistible argument to all gainsayers. If the Christian might say to the unbeliever, “You see that I have no enemies, no troubles, no wants, no afflictions, no changes, while you are tossed upon a tempestuous sea, and have many cares and sorrows of which I know nothing,” who could resist such a practical demonstration of the value of religion? But whatever might have been their anticipations, the Divine arrangements authorized no such hopes. The wisdom of God prescribed another method of providence; and our Saviour, instead of saying to his disciples that their cup of joy should always overflow, assured them that such should not be the fact. “In the world *ye shall have tribulation* ;” but along with this announcement, in itself so melancholy and discouraging, He says to them, “Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.” He holds out to them no delusive prospects; he allures them into his service by no imaginary advantages, but gives them distinctly to understand, that so far from being exempt from tribulation, they will certainly experience it; that they may even suffer outward calamity which other men escape; and thus, instead of making a guaranty that they shall not suffer in this life, He makes a guaranty that they shall. Hence, those who would enlist under His banners are directed to count the cost, and to determine whether they are ready to forsake all for him, whether they are willing to

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