

poser of all events has important ends to accomplish by all that is transpiring, and we may perhaps even now see how good is likely to result in the end, but this does not diminish ought from the painfulness of present events.

In looking at this struggle as a dispensation of Divine Providence, we regard it as affording an instructive example of God's retributive justice for national sin. We need not say what we regard as the great national sin of the United States. Every reader at once responds slavery. We are not of those who would indulge in indiscriminate abuse of the American people for the existence of this woeful evil. We know how it was introduced, and once existing we acknowledge the difficulties connected with its removal. Nor should we demand that they should immediately and without regard to consequences proclaim universal emancipation. Had they as a nation shown any sense of the wrongs of the system—had they been preparing for emancipation and taking any measures toward its accomplishment, at a future though distant date, we should hold that they would have been entitled to the sympathy and encouragement of all intelligent lovers of freedom and humanity. But it is too well known that the course pursued has been the very opposite. For years the whole measures of the South with regard to slavery have been framed with a view to rivet the fetters of its unhappy bondsmen. It is now admitted too, that for years the South guided the policy of the general government, which became thus deeply implicated in the sin. By the iniquitous fugitive slave law, by the war with Mexico in the interest of the slave power, and other measures of the same nature, the whole nation has become involved in the guilt of oppression. That there were many at the North faithful in denouncing the evils of the system and in protesting against the subserviency of their government to it, we are happy to be able to record; but this was far from being the case with the majority of the Northern people. Had the moral influence of the North been brought to bear upon the South for the abolition of slavery, since the agitation of the question commenced, we believe that the emancipation of the coloured race might have been effected ere this without disturbing society, and in a manner that would have secured the welfare of all classes. At all events the general government would have been freed from all complicity with this iniquity. As it was however by the votes of Northern men slavery maintained its influence in their national affairs, and public sentiment at the North was so decidedly against all agitation of the question, that anti-slavery men were not only a small but an unpopular minority. They were mobbed; and in some instances lost their lives by mob violence. And the Churches were not only silent, but reverend divines defended slavery from the Bible. One minister of the highest standing in the Old School Presbyterian Church, declared that if one prayer would secure the liberty of all the slaves in the United States he would not offer it. Strangers will scarcely credit the feeling which prevailed on this subject among the guides of religious sentiment in the United States. We knew an instance in one of the celebrated noon-day prayer meetings in one of the principal cities, where a request for prayer on behalf of a fugitive slave, "that he might be savingly converted to God" was twice in succession thrown out and not allowed to be read.

"Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this." All history as well as the word of God of teaches, that nations may expect their sins to be visited with national retributions. The proper retribution upon individuals is in the life to come. But nations as such have their existence only in the present life, and if they are to have retribution as nations, it must be here below. And the more we