

readily be interpreted as the interference of love, the wisdom of which would be discerned. To the careless saint it would be felt as punishment, and regarded as a warning to bring him to a sense of his actual condition. Nor must we forget how much the needed discipline of the Lord is preventive; and this, too, is learned in self-judgment, in the holiest of all. The "thorn in the flesh" might have been interpreted by the apostle very differently from what the Lord intended, had his soul been unexercised before God about it: "Lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. xii.). He had not been so exalted; but there was the unsuspected danger and tendency to be guarded against; and this the apostle discovered, not by revelation, but by exercise of soul before the Lord. And have we not all had occasion, not only to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God for something positively wrong in our ways, but also to justify His love and wisdom in some special discipline the preventive character of which has been taught to us by Himself in the holiest of all? I feel increasingly the importance of deep searching self-judgment, under the shelter of the blessed oracle: "Transgression forgiven—sin covered—iniquity not imputed." I say not that we are always able to interpret the Lord's dealings with us, but I believe self-judgment as to the springs of evil, leading to confession before God, to be the means of attaining this interpretation. God is always right—a simple but deeply practical truth. We put

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