

subdued and grateful heart is ready to say, "in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." And will any one pretend that the loss he has sustained, or the furnace through which he has been called to pass, are evils which these results do not counterbalance? Whatever others may say, he will think "it is good for me that I have been afflicted." Yes; he has made a profitable exchange, whatever he may have lost. Though to the view of those who merely look at the surface, he may appear in circumstances of desolation; yet if the recesses of his heart were exposed, one might there see a degree of refined and heavenly joy which is rarely, if ever, felt in prosperity, and a process of sanctification commenced, well calculated to mature the soul for the holy joys of heaven. Nay, more than this, in these circumstances he may be far happier than at any other period of his life; his religious emotions are of an intenser kind, and the fact that his sorrows are great, necessarily requires some very substantial and lively joys in order to overpower them. But as his sufferings abound, so his consolation also aboundeth by Christ; and ever and anon as the billows without rise and rage around him, he seems to feel his foothold upon the Rock of Ages more sure. Oh! there is something marvellous in that grace which thus makes pain itself tributary to the believer's happiness, and qualifies him at a time when all his pleasant things are laid waste, and he himself is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, to rejoice with joy unspeakable. It is nothing remarkable that a man should be contented and serene when all things go well with him; but that he should become more and more happy as to human vision he becomes more tried and afflicted, this wonderful but undoubted truth has the weight of a thousand arguments to show that his principles are not of the earth, earthy, and that that man is truly wise who receives such principles into his heart.

But I have not yet alluded to the encouraging words with which our Lord followed the probably unwelcome announcement which we have been considering. To the

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