

are too distant, or vast, to be within our power, while things that are small enough, and near enough to be within our power to some extent, are things which may be brought into operation without our foresight, and which, therefore, answer the purposes of a *special* providence, and enable it to get at the accomplishment of its designs in different ways, as circumstances require.

From what has been said, it appears that the afflictive things belonging to the *present* state, are not unintentional indications of weakness, or of want of sympathy in the Divine author of nature ; but are intentional arrangements of wisdom and power. And, though capable of being used, as they sometimes are, in executing judgments on the wicked, to manifest his providential displeasure ; or to inflict fatherly chastisements on unfaithful children : yet were they expressly designed and appointed to make the faithful ones who love God, perfect through suffering, as Jesus was ; that, in the resulting glory, he might be " the first-born among many brethren."

We know that there is a widely-prevalent opinion that every pain we feel, at least, that every pain that can be traced to our own actions, is a divinely intended punishment. And, by parity of reasoning, that every pleasure that is annexed to our actions, is a divinely intended reward. That the pleasure is a lawful and sufficient inducement to perform one action, and a reward for performing it. That the pain is a lawful and sufficient warning against another action, and a punishment for doing it.

But, as pleasure is attendant on many vicious actions, these, according to this principle, are rewarded with that pleasure. And if a moral government should reward vice with any degree of happiness, it would be unrighteous ; and could not become righteous, merely by making virtue upon the whole, happier than vice, in the present world.

On the other hand, as many virtuous actions are attended with pain, suffering, &c., they, according to the principle noted above, are punished. And if a moral government were to punish virtue with any degree of pain, it would be unrighteous ; and could not become righteous merely by punishing the wicked more severely.

There seems to be something grossly indiscriminating, in giving the name of rewards, to those kinds of pleasures, and the name of punish-