

storms of life: "All things work together for good to them that love God." But to the lover of self and sin, it will only be a rock on which he will make shipwreck. Here is one pillow among many which we might select for the head of the afflicted: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." But for the materialist or earthly-minded, it will be like a pillar of ice or a bag of thorns. Here is a well spring of water for weak believers:—"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." But it is simply Satan's sleeping dose for indolent and back-sliding sinners. Here is an anodyne for the pains of persecution:—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you." But it is only irritating varnish for self-made martyrs and mischief-makers. Here is a door through which the humble may enter into the enjoyment of heaven:—"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." But the proud will find it only the entrance to an empty room. Here is a fire-proof safe for Christians in danger:—"When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." But is only a curiosity to him who is not in the fires of trial. Here is a staff for the dying:—"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." The living do not require to lean upon it. Here is a loadstone with which to magnetize the hearts of any company of spiritual worshippers:—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It will not act on the crust of formality or the rubbish of hypocrisy. Here is a flower with which to perfume the sick chamber of the Christian:—"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The sinner is either insensible to its fragrance or irritated by its presence. There are many—innumerable—others which we might enumerate, but these must suffice. The promises are keys with which

to unlock the treasures of grace. It is not by rattling the keys in our hands, but by applying the right one to the lock that we gain admission. They are the glasses by which we look at the events of life. We must adjust them to our eyes and the object at which we look.

The answer to the promise should be patiently waited for. Even when the answer comes, it may disappoint our expectation, but we should be satisfied. Submission is the first duty of the Christian. We should not dictate to our physician. We may rest assured that, since he has undertaken the case, he will apply the remedies in his own time and in his own way. It is a comfort to commit ourselves wholly into his hands. When we take the Pilot on board, we must give him full control of the ship. He may not take us away from the rocks, but he will steer us past them. He may not calm the storm, but he will bring us through it. God will fulfil his promise in the best way, though not according to our expectation. The child in its ignorance may ask a stone with which it may only choke or starve. So we in our sinfevered condition may ask what would be injurious, but our Father, instead of granting the request, will give us a curative or bitter medicine. The self-willed child may desire a serpent, which the parent will in love withhold. We are fascinated by some things whose sting we do not perceive. We ask peace. In our condition it might be to us the sleep of death. God pierces the heart and excites the conscience. He makes sensitiveness the sign of life. We ask for success in doing God's work. To grant this request might generate the most deadly poison of spiritual pride. God sends failure in order to humble us. We ask for the removal of a burden; but this might only indulge indolence. God presses the burden down all the more heavily in order to develop our energies. We ask for light, but God increases the darkness, that we cling the more closely to Himself. God's way is the best way. His time is the best time. Disappointment is good discipline. Medicine is often better for sick men than bread. Chastisement is better for straying