





transgressor is sure to be visited with stripes; the reward of his iniquities will be given him, and none can deliver. Such is the effect of chastening on *that soul* that feels the importance of complying with what God requires of him. He bows in humble submission to the mandates of heaven. He *sees, he feels, he knows*, that his 'heavenly Father chastens every son whom he receiveth.' He also knows that chastisements are directed by a merciful hand, and that for the present they are not joyous but grievous; and he has an assurance that they will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to such as are exercised thereby.

God, as we have before remarked, chasteneth every son whom he receiveth. He truly dealeth with his own as a parent; and those who are without chastisement and without rebuke from him, may well conclude "that they are bastards and not sons," that he has withdrawn his Spirit, and given them over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. They are left to believe lies that they may be damned, because they love not the truth, and have pleasure in unrighteousness.

Why, it may be asked, should God deal thus with his creatures? Are they not all his? Did he not create all? and does he not sustain all? Truly. And he deals with all as rational, accountable beings to him. If he had peopled the whole world with idiots, he certainly would not condemn them for a non-compliance with a law given for the government of wise, intelligent men. Why? because they could not understand it; therefore, since he is a just God and requires much only where much is given, it is easy to see that it *could* not be obligatory upon them. God has made millions of the human family and placed them upon the planet on which we dwell, and they are not favored with the light of revelation as we are. They know nothing of the written revealed will of God, his laws, or his gospel. Under these circumstances, will a just God condemn them? We are sensible that our answer must come in direct contact with the opinion of a great mass of the professing Christian world, but we unequivocally say no: we say so for two reasons.

And, first, because we believe it to be a plain dictate of common sense to say it; and, second, because the scrip-

tures warrant us in such a conclusion. The apostle Paul, who is supposed to have written the epistle of which the words at the head of this article forms a part, when addressing his Roman brethren, says, "how shall they believe without they hear? and how shall they hear without a preacher," &c. The plain, legitimate inference from which is, that if they did not hear and understand they would not be bound to obey. The God of heaven will never condemn men who have not known his will, for not complying with what he requires of those to whom he has revealed himself, and those among whom his will has been promulgated. We are aware that in making this assertion, we come in contact with the creed of such of our professing Christian brethren as believe that God sends all to hell who do not believe the scriptures—the Old and New Testament—when they have never seen, read or heard them. We think we are warranted in this belief from what the Saviour said to the unbelieving Jews: John 15: 22, "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." Where the word of God is not known, where it is not understood, mankind cannot be expected to comply with it. This imposes an obligation on those who have received and obeyed the truth, to proclaim it to others, and urge the necessity of a compliance with it. But it cannot attach blame, or render that part of the human family liable to punishment, who have never been favored with the light of revelation.

But to return again to the subject from which we have inadvertently digressed. ✕ Chastisements are designed by our heavenly Father to bring us to him, to show our dependence on him, to excite humility in us, and thereby yield those peaceable fruits of righteousness which are so desirable to the saints of God. Therefore they seem to be necessary to bring the saint to God, our heavenly Father. Before I was afflicted I went astray (says the Psalmist) but now have I kept thy word. If they (the saints) go astray, they will be afflicted, they will be chastised; nevertheless "The Lord does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He has given us a law for our government, and affixed a penalty if we depart from it. He is



no respecter of persons, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the bondman, the freeman, are alike to him. Such only as "fear him and work righteousness are accepted with him." No one can claim exemption from punishment or chastisement, who is a wilful transgressor; he can only plead in the name of Jesus for pardon, he can deprecate the evils consequent upon a course of transgression, and humbly implore forgiveness for all his sins. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1st John 1: 9.

We presume no one feels to controvert the ideas advanced by the sacred penman, from which we have made these few desultory remarks. We did not select it because it was a point of doctrine or principle about which we supposed the saints had any doubt.—But we are aware after all, there are some nice distinctions respecting it. There are consequential evils, and there are penal evils. The saints who are truly such, are surrounded with a crooked and perverse generation, who are continually persecuting, vexing or grieving them. These are among the evils or chastisements which we are doomed to endure, which are consequent upon our situation here, and will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to such as are exercised thereby.

We might here enlarge upon our subject, and say much on humility or self-denial; we might plead for it, and urge reasons and arguments drawn from scripture in support of it, but we need not. Of penal evils we have only to say, they are the just retribution of heaven for our crimes, and when we suffer for them, what thank have we, even if we bear them patiently? God has given us intelligence, he has required of us obedience, and justly made us accountable, "and if we sin wilfully after we have come to the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." We are to deprecate such chastisements as shall come on the ungodly, who know their Master's will and do it not. We are to deplore the evils that flow from transgression, and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. The

blessings even, of a temporal nature, with which we are surrounded, and of which we are permitted to participate, ought to excite humility in us, and gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow. How ungrateful then are we to rebel against the government of Heaven! or practically say, mine own hand has gotten me all these things; when we are taught, that "every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh down from above, from the father of light, in whom is neither variableness nor shadow of turning"? Ed.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments: as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever more."—Ps. 133.

The Psalmist was no doubt well acquainted with all the vicissitudes of human life;—with peace and with war, with prosperity and with adversity. The high encomium which he passes upon the union of brethren, and the figure which he brings to illustrate his ideas and portray his feelings, are of themselves evidence of his experience in the mutability of sublunary things, and the thrice happy situation of such a society as enjoys that union of which he speaks so highly. Man learns somewhat of the motives of his fellow man by the experience of others, but he is never so sensibly affected by what he is taught to believe, as by what he is brought to feel. We are far, very far, from inculcating the idea that we should embark in a war, that we may be able to appreciate the blessings of peace; or that we ought to do evil that good may come. But we do say that good and evil, virtue and vice, are so contrasted, or commingled, that, although we are not willing to subscribe to the doctrine, that they both flow from the same fountain, still that order of things is permitted by the great Ruler of the universe, which allows both to exist. We do not say that vice and crime are allowable by the laws of God, but we do know that good & evil, vice and crime exist, or are suffered to be; and that too among rational, intelligent, accountable beings, who have repeatedly read the law of God, and understood all its obligatory moral precepts.