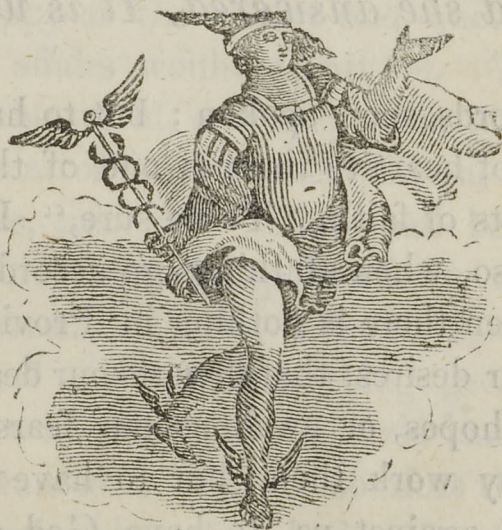


A  
**TOKEN FOR  
MOURNERS.**

WITH A SELECTION OF  
**SCRIPTURE PROMISES,**  
RELATIVE TO  
**THE TROUBLES of LIFE.**

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace;  
Behind a frowning Providence  
He hides a smiling face.



GLASGOW;  
PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

A  
T O K E N  
FOR  
M O U R N E R S.  
&c.

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2. KINGS, iv. 26.

*And she answered, It is well.*

SHORT words, soon spoken ; but to have a suitability of heart to them is one of the highest attainments of faith. To be sure, " It is well ;" we think so, when all things go according to our wish ; when there is nothing in Providence that crosses our desires, that thwarts our designs, that sinks our hopes, or awakens our fears ; Submission is easy work then ; but to have all things seemingly against us, to have God smiting in the tenderest part, unravelling all our schemes, contradicting our desires, and standing aloof from

our very prayers ; how do our souls behave then ? This is the true touchstone of our sincerity and submission ; “ Here,” as it is said, Rev. xiii. 10. “ is the patience and faith of the saints ”; this shews what they are made of, what they are within ; but instances there are many in the book of God, wherein we find this sweet frame prevailing, as Abraham, Job, David, and the Shulamite in my text, than whose story we meet with few things in Providence more affecting. If you look back a little, you may see what were her circumstances, and those of her family. She was a “ great woman,” says verse 8, and that she was a “ good woman,” the whole context shews, Her husband and she wanted but one thing to make them as happy as the vanity and uncertainty of all human affairs would admit of. They had enough of the world, and they seem to have had the enjoyment of it ; for when Elisha, to requite her kindness, asks ; “ What shall be done for thee ? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king ? &c. she answers, “ No, I dwell among mine own people,” “ I seek nothing greater than what I have :” only (as Gehazie learned from her) they wanted a child to comfort them now, and to inherit what they had **when they were gone.** God in a miraculous way, gives this request. This child grows up, **and was no doubt**

the delight of its parents. Just at the time of life when children are most engaging, before they are capable of doing any great thing to grieve their parents, God lays his hand suddenly upon him and takes him away. The dearest comforts are but short lived, and the dearer they are when living, the deeper they cut when they are removed. Many of you can judge what the loss of a son, an only son, must be, and when there is no hope of a Seth instead of Abel. But, behold, "he taketh away, and who shall hinder him?" Well: What does the mother do now? One would think all her hope is cut off, and all her comfort dried up: No, it is far otherwise. The same power that gave him could also raise him; in faith of this, she lays him upon the prophet's bed, and makes all the haste to him she could. She concealing what had happened (as it is probable) from her husband, he objects to her going to the prophet, ver. 23. "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new-moon nor Sabbath." And she said, "It shall be well." Faith sets aside every obstacle: "It shall be well: the end will be peace;" "God is with me, and he will make all things work together for good." Commentators, in general, make very light of this, and her answer to Elisha's message in my text. Some suppose she has a reserve in her breast, when

Gehazi asks after her family, that this "well" only refers to her husband and herself. Others think it is but a transition to something farther, which she was in haste to say ; as if she had said, "All is well do not hinder me, I have urgent business with your master Elisha, and cannot stay to talk farther with you upon any matters." This is the sense which most annotators incline to, which, I confess, I the more wonder at, because all agree, that the apostle's words in part refer to this story, Heb. xi. 35. "Women received their dead raised to life again." How they received them is there specified ; namely, by or "through faith ;" Faith, not as some carry it, in the prophet, but in the persons who had their dead restored to them ; or else there would have been no need to make mention of any by name. Now wherein this woman's faith appeared, my text and context make manifest. Here was a dependance upon God's promise, an abiding by that, God had promised her a son ; a son, not to lose him but to have comfort in him ; and, as if she had said, "As for God, his work is perfect, he does not use to raise his people's expectations for nothing ; to give and immediately take away again, My son is dead, but God, all sufficient liveth ; why should I mourn as though I had no hope ? As for God's power and faithfulness there is no

abatement in them." Therefore, she makes no preparation for his burial tells her husband nothing of his death, but seeks to God by the prophet, and expects help from him, See how she expresses herself: "Is it well with thee?" (and says Gehazzi,) "Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? and she answered, It is well". Here is the greatest submission in the greatest distress: Her son, her only son, the son of all her love, the son of her old age, he is taken away with a stroke, and yet all is well. There is nothing amiss in the dispensation; had she been to choose it, it is well; she has nothing to object. Here are submission and faith both discovered in their sweet exercise; submission to what God hath done; faith in what he is able to do, and in what she believed he would do: "By faith women received their dead raised to life again; so that the words, thus explained, afford us this plain and useful observation.

**OBSERV.** Faith in God's promise and power will bring a man to submit to the sorest and most trying dispensations of his Providence; or thus,

Faith where it is in exercise, will teach a Christian to say of all God does, "It is well."

In discoursing on this proposition, I will endeavour to show what submission is, or how and

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in what sense we are to understand the expression in my text, "It is well."

This "well" dost not suppose there is nothing in providential dispensations, which to flesh and sense appears evil. Submission quiets under an affliction, but it does not take away our sense and feeling of the affliction. The apostle speaks what is every believer's experience, Heb. xii. 11. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Whatever be spoken of the good of it, it presents itself unto us with a very different face; it is matter of present grief and sorrow to them that are chastised; nor are we blamed for our feeling and sense of it. Our blessed Lord himself wept at the grave of his dear friend, John xi. 35. And at the approach of his last sufferings, "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Matt. xxvi. 38. "yet he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; he opened not his mouth": there was patience and quiet submission under all his sorrows, while nature had some vent; for groans are sometimes an easement to our grief. Thus it is said of the good woman, "that her soul was bitter within her," ver. 27. Elisha saw her agony in her looks, though he knew not the cause of it; and yet "All is well." When Job lost his substance and his children, and was smitten in his body with sore

boils ; when Heman, and when the church in the Lamentations were deprived of the consolations from God, when the Comforter, who would relieve their souls, was far from them ; when David also was cursed by Shimei, and turned out of doors by his own son ; can you think that in all these there was no feeling ? Had there been none, there could have been no profit by any of the dispensations. Unless we realize our trials indeed, what are we the better for them ? This would be to despise the chastening of the Lord, to be above correction. to be smitten and not grieve, is one of God's sorest judgments, and always argues a soul ripe for ruin : this " well " does not suppose us insensible of the evil of afflicting.

Though we believe all that befalls us is well, this does not forbid our inquiring into the reasons of God's providential dispensations, and a searching out the cause for which they come upon us. Every rod hath a voice in it, and the " man of understanding will hear it," and " see the name of God in it, " Micah vi. 9. what God intends by it, what is his ends and design in it ; for he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, Lam. iii. 33. There is a " need he " in every dispensation that befalls us : 1 Pet. i. 6. " Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season " (if need be) " ye are in heaviness through



manifold temptations." God acts with judgment in proportion to our needs ; there is a conveniency and fitness, nay, there is an absolute necessity in the case ; it must be that we are in heaviness and that through manifold temptations. One single trial oftentimes will not do, to empty us of self, to wean us from the world, to shew us the vanity of the creature, the sinfulness of sin, &c. : it must be repeated or others joined with it, so fast are our affections glued to the things of time and sense. Now, what this need is in us, what this intention and end is in God, the Christian will and ought to be searching out, and inquiring daily into. This was Job's frame, (and ye have heard, as says the, apostle, of the patience of Job.) Job xxxiv. 31. 32. " Surely it is meet to be said unto God I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which a see not, teach thou me ; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Sin lies deep, it must be searched after in the deep and secret corners of the heart ; there is so much self-love and self-flattery hid there, that a man cannot judge aright of himself, or of God without divine teachings. " It is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement." Sirs, it is one thing to be chastised, and another thing to bear chastisement ; to behave aright under it ; to be patient, submissive,

thankful; to have a frame of heart suited to the dispensation, whatever it is. This is to bear chastisement: and wherever this is, the language of the soul will be, "That which I see not teach thou me; I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

When an affliction is sanctified, it always begets godly fear and jealousy. A man is then most afraid of his own heart, lest that should deceive him; lest he should come out of the furnace unpurged, unrefined; lest the end of God's visitation upon him should be unattained. And this is well consistent with our believing all that God does is well done. Once more,

A soul may say in a becoming frame, and in the exercise of suitable affections, "It is well," and yet long, and pray, and wait from the trial. Submission to the will of God, under awful dispensations, is not inconsistent with earnest prayer for a gracious and speedy issue to these very dispensations. "It is well," says this good-woman in my text; and yet how does she plead for the life of the child, ver. 28. "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did not I say do not deceive me? As if she had said, "I asked it not, I could scarce believe it when it was promised me; God raised my expectations himself, he encouraged my hopes, and surely he will not go back from his own word." It was a wonderful act of faith; but the promises

of God can never lie long unfulfilled : when he has prepared the heart to pray, his own ear is open to hear. He has not called himself " I am that I am," for nothing. Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, no more does the daughter of Abraham here : it is blessed pleading, " Did not I say, do not deceive me ?" " May I trust ? May I venture ? He has given me the faithful word of God to rely on ; here my faith resteth." And a son came in due season. Now she looks to God, the author of the mercy, and applies to the prophet, who was the revealer of it. He sends Gehazi with his staff, but this will not content her, except Elisha goes himself : she knows that he was great with God ; she will therefore have his prayers and presence " As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," ver. 30. All this argues the strong desires of her heart after the return of the child's life, though still she says, " All is well " While, we bear chastenings, we may pray, and pray hard that God would take them off. " If it be possible," ( says innocent aggrieved nature in the man Christ, ) " let this cup pass from me," Matthew xxvi. 26. Opening our mouth against God is our sin, but it is our duty to open our mouths and our hearts to him. In the former sense, says David, " I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou

didst it," Psal. xxxix. 9. : and yet, with the same breath, he adds, " Remove thy stroke away from me : I am consumed by the blow of thine hand," ver. 10. Was a child under the direction of a parent to intimate no desire of his forbearance, should we not rather account him stubborn than submissive? In like manner, not to ask of God release from troubles, is as offensive as to mourn at them. It is the token of a proud heart and a relentless spirit. God expects other things at our hands ; even of the wicked he says, " In their affliction they will seek me early ;" much more shall his own people, who have known his name, and put their trust in him ; who have known the advantage of prayer, and been so often set at liberty by it from all their fears. If these are silent, they cannot be sensible nor submissive. Only in all their prayers, when they are most earnest and vehement, " If it be consistent with the will of God," and there will be no limiting him as to time or way.

These things are neither of them inconsistent with the soul's saying, under the most awful rebukes, " All is well."

Now, what is included in this " well" in my text, or what is this submission to the will of God? It takes in, as I apprehend, these three things :

1. A justifying God in all he does "It is well;" God cannot do amiss; he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, to the praise of his glory. And after all that is come upon us," says the Church, Ezra ix. 13. "thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve; thou hast taken vengeance according to the desert of our sins, When sin appears to be what it is in itself, exceeding sinful, affliction will appear light, and not till then. Wherefore, says the church, Lam. iii. 39, "wherefore, does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? So long as we are out of hell, God punishes less than our iniquities deserve.

Whatever be our trial, it comes from God: he is the author, whoever be the instrument, therefore, "it is well," He cannot do iniquity: David had not one word to say, by way of complaint, when he saw God's hand in the affliction: yea, let him curse, for "the Lord hath bid Shimei curse David," 2 Sam. xvi. 12. We may puzzle and distress ourselves about instruments and second causes, but no quiet no rest can we have, till we are led to the first. "He performeth the thing appointed for me;" that settles the soul, but nothing else will do it. "Be still and know that I am God," Psal. xlvi. 10. If thy children are taken, thy substance fails, thy body is

sore vexed, thy comforts, and even the presence of thy God leaves thee; yet be still, that is, do not say a word against the dispensation, do not fret, do not censure and condemn Providence. I am God, thy God in all; and a covenant God cannot do amiss. God will be glorified and exalted, that's enough for us. This, "It is well," implies in it, not in some things, but in all.

2. This submission implies in it, our approving of all God does; not only it is not amiss, but it is right; it is the best way, the only sure way to bring about our good. Therefore holy Job blesses God in all, chap. i. 21. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." He had the same great and good thought of God as ever he had; God was his God still, and the God of his mercy. He should have an expected, a desired end; that he believed still, still, because God's thoughts were the same they ever were; that is thoughts of peace and not of evil. And this is the frame in which we find the poor saints, that were scattered up and down throughout the whole world almost, I Pet. i. 6. "who are kept by the power of God through salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoice," &c. They were far from one another to

avoid persecution, it was in their way: but none of these things moved them. There was joy in their expected rest in happiness at last, though there was great pain and heaviness in the way to it: the way was rough, but right; therefore they approved of it, they acquiesced in it; nay, herein “they greatly rejoiced.” Thus the saints of old took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and were tortured, not accepting deliverance, because they knew in themselves, “that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance,” Heb. x. 34. O that blessed knowledge! it comforts, refreshes, it fills the soul, and lifts a man above himself.

Every path which God takes is right then and the believer chooses to walk in it: His God, his Father, has marked it out, and nothing goes so against the grain, but that “all is well,” which his Father does: His will is brought to be one with God’s; the soul approves of all God does.

3. This submission implies in it our cleaving to God in all. To be pleased with God as a friend, when he seems to be coming forth against, us as an enemy; to lean upon a promise, when all the ways leading to the performance are shut up; to rejoice in God when we have nothing left beside to rejoice in, and faith is hard put to it to

call God ours. Thus, to cleave to God when we do not find comfort from him, this is believing indeed; to love the hand that smites, this is true grace and great grace. A noble act of faith was that, Job xiii. 15. "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;" So "Abraham staggered not at the promises through unbelief," Rom. iv. 20. He brought God's promises and faithfulness close together, and considered none of the difficulties nay absurdities, which came between them: It was not—"Is this reasonable? What probability is there in that? How can these things be?" &c. but being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; he clave to him, abode by his promise in a way of faith and firm dependence.

This is the true nature of submission, and is contained in that expression in my text, "It is well." A word of use.—

USE 1. Wonder not at your trials, be they never so strange: "All is well; some secret end is to be answered which you see not; God is in all; the hand and love of a Father is there. They are to purge from sin, to wean from the world, to bring you from the foot of God, to shew you that your rest is not here, that it lies beyond the



grave. What though they make you smart, they do you the more good : this argues your sensibleness under the rod ; that is not a rod which does not cause smart ; the sharpest physic does most service, because it reaches the inward, hidden cause, not one of our many trials which we could well spare.

USE 2. Do not think any trial sanctified, till you have a suitable frame to the trial, whatever it be. Are you humbled ? Are you prayerful ? Are you submissive ? Have you looked inward, and confessed your sin, saying. Take away all iniquity ? If the affliction has not brought you to this, it hath done you no good. For all you may have borne, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

USE 3. Do not think of other means, whereby God's end in visiting you might have been as well answered ; that is, in fact, to quarrel with God in what he has done, or is doing. Have a care of your thoughts ; unsubmission slips in at that door before one is aware. " It is well, " is the only soul quickening and God-glorifying frame. God that has appointed the end, has settled, and he will order the means : Rest there, and " all is well, "

## HINTS TO THE AFFLICTED.

WHAT fatal mischiefs would follow, if there was no variety in our experience! There are so many remains of depraved nature in the hearts of the saints, that if the warm sun of prosperity did always shine upon the Lord's garden, the weeds would quickly multiply, the choicest flowers wither, and an army of caterpillars devour the pleasant fruits. To prevent these, God will not suffer his people to enjoy uninterrupted prosperity, but wisely appoints seasons of affliction and trouble.

On the other hand, were we to groan under perpetual adversity, our souls perhaps would suffer equal prejudice. Our heavenly father will not always chide; he remembers that we are but dust, and that our flesh is not like brass or iron. Were we never in the fire, our dross would not be consumed, and were we always to be in the fire, our silver and gold would be wasted.

Hereby God takes a proper method for the exercise and improvement of the graces of his children. Without such a mixed condition, there could be no room for many of them, and not room enough for any of them to appear in their glory and beauty. Were it always a day of prosperity where would be the proof of their faith, hope and patience?— the evil day brings thee to rest. To

possess our souls in patience, in the day of trouble to believe the good will and fatherly love of God even when he smites, is a point of no small difficulty.— But, were we never to enjoy a season of prosperity, where would be the evidence of our humility, heavenly mindedness, and contempt of a present world? Variety adds a beauty and lustre to providence. In the day of prosperity therefore, we ought to rejoice with trembling, and in the day of adversity, to consider and faint not; for “God hath set one against the other, to the end that no man might find any thing after him,” Eccl. vii 14.

WHILE in this valley of tears, it is not wonderful that believers should be often called to weep. To mingle their tears with those of their brethren—or in the words of the apostle, to “weep with those that weep,—is a part of the holy fellowship they are called to by the gospel.

At present, the way of providence in general is dark and mysterious. There is a depth in it, for which we have no line. There are many seals on it, not fit as yet to be opened. But when the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne, shall open the seals, and shew the meaning of all the dark passages in that mysterious book, and every one is

made to view that part of it that related to the way in which they were brought through manifold tribulations to the kingdom, when they will all strike up on the highest key, and sing "HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL!"

Believers ought to comfort one another with these words. It is heartsome for travellers on the road in a dark night, and going to the same place, to speak to each other in the language of the country to which they are going, and to say, "What of the night! what of the night!" And to encourage one another, by often reiterating that animating reply, "The morning cometh."

The shadows of the evening are daily growing longer with all the travellers to the heavenly Sion. But at evening time it shall be light. The bright shining of the sun of Righteousness will make even the passage through the dark valley of the shadow of death lightsome and pleasant. Faith can see eternal day at the farther end of it. Jesus went through the Jordan of death when it overflowed all its banks, and was brimful of the curse. But his death drank up the curse, and left nothing but a blessing to all his redeemed: and his sweet and cheering voice is still to be heard in the passage—"Fear not! I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death!"

“ IF THEIR UNCIRCUMCISED HEARTS,” said the Lord respecting ancient Israel, “ be humbled, and they ACCEPT of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob,” &c. Lev. xxvi. 41.—of the punishment of their iniquity ! that is, bear it willingly contentedly. It is a happy state of mind when our trials are ACCEPTED ones: when God’s chastening hand is even esteemed a kindness.—Lord ! may the believer say, I will not puzzle myself with hows, and whys, and yets. THOU hast done it ; I rest there. It seemed good in thy sight that is a sufficient reason. Let God choose my portion ; I am sure it will be best in the end.—Even when He acts as a Sovereign, he forgets not his relation as a father.

### SCRIPTURE PROMISES.

Psalm 68—6. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation.

Jeremiah 49—11. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in me.

Job 5.—17. Happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Verse 18. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up ; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Psalm 119—67. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. Verse 71. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. 75. I know, O Lord, thy judgements are right, and thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

2. Corinthians 4—16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Verse 17. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Hebrews 21.—6. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Verse 7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 10. They verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

Deut. 8—5. As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

Job 36.—8. And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction. Verse 9.

Then he sheweth them their work and their transgressions, that they have exceeded. 10. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

Psalm 94.—12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord and teachest him out of thy law. Verse 13. That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

Romans 5.—3. We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.

Job 19.—26. Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Verse 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins shall be consumed within me.

Isaiah 26.—19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs: and the earth shall cast out the dead.

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 dew is as the dew of herbs: and the earth shall  
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