

constitute, indeed, the master evils of life. We shudder when we see them coming; and we often writhe in agony when in the furnace. But how many have come out of that furnace purified from base alloy, and ready for the service of God and the world! To do good is henceforth their delight; and they thank God for the severe discipline. When his heavy blows fell upon them, one after another, they felt as if they were the strokes of an incensed Deity. But now they see that they were only the necessary inflictions of infinite love. And they admire the wisdom that could thus educe so much good out of so great evil.

I do not contend that good is always educed from evil in this world, or could be; but only that, in a plurality of cases, if men improve the evils they suffer as they might, such would be the effect. And if this be admitted, it is sufficient to establish the general principle, that one of the direct objects of evil in this world is to produce individual benefit.

But the converse of this proposition cannot be maintained. We cannot, indeed, deny that evil sometimes results from good; but never as the direct object of the latter. The effect is only incidental; that is, not as the main object; and so a few cases of this sort cannot invalidate the proposition which I defend.

I might multiply much more the arguments furnished by nature to prove a predominance of benevolence in the arrangements and operations of the present system of things. But I see no way of escaping the force of those presented, and cannot doubt that all will admit the conclusion. I advance, therefore to a second proposition, and maintain that *the benevolence exhibited in the present system of nature is not unmixed.*

I mean, by this statement, that the divine benevolence exhibited in this world is modified by other perfections. While there is a predominance of benevolence, there are also indications of God's displeasure; or, at least, his dealings seem to be adapted to restrain and amend a wicked race, rather than to make an innocent and holy race happy; so that the condition of the human family is far less happy than unmixed benevolence would confer.

In proof of this assertion, I maintain, first, that evil is incidental to every process and event in nature.

This is pre-eminently true of all those actions which we call