

## A CHAPTER IN THE BOOK OF PROVIDENCE.

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AMID all the darkness and confusion of this world, there is one precious volume, to which the Bible furnishes the key, and which, if carefully studied, shows us how to trace out the relation of events apparently casual or discrepant, and clears up most of the enigmas by which we are surrounded. It is the book of divine providence. There is one chapter of that volume which seems to me peculiarly appropriate to the present occasion. Its leading object is to show that when God has an important object to accomplish, he raises up, and prepares by the most appropriate discipline, the individuals or the communities best adapted to the work. If I can succeed in giving you the contents of this chapter, and thus establish and illustrate this most important position, I shall feel as if I had fulfilled the commission with which I have been honored to-day.

In the divine administration of the affairs of this world, it becomes necessary to raise up instruments, sometimes to punish, and sometimes to bless, individuals and communities. Hence we can often see as much of providential design in the history of the wicked scourges of the world, as of its choicest benefactors.

In looking over the page of history for examples illustrative