

## THE DIRECT ROAD.

You are a forgiven child of God, and turn wistfully toward the land of promise, the land of rest from inbred sin. In short, you sigh for full salvation.

Now there are many paths that lead to this blessed experience. There is the way of toil, and a weary way it is. Your guides over this barren, unfruitful waste will be many, but they will always be human. How they will load you down! What yokes of labor they will put upon you! How repulsive fasting will become, and yet how seemingly necessary! How you will at times drag yourself in sleeplessness and chill through your appointed task-work of prayer and Scripture study! With what metallic hardness of voice you will often labor at rebuking and exhorting the erring and careless, more anxious to clear your own skirts of their blood, to gain holiness by your work, than to secure their spiritual good. And yet this path ever leads down, down to the despair point, where, in hopelessness from sad, absolute failure, sooner or later, you may be willing to cease from your own works and grasp by faith the golden end of grace, which can in an instant land you into your hoped-for Canaan.

Well, dear reader, if you are on this road to the rest of faith, we would scarcely ask you to turn aside. Go on. Redouble your diligence. Fast and pray still more. Rise earlier. Sit up later. Spend still more time distributing tracts, talking to sinners about salvation, visiting the sick, reading your Bible. Press on. The sooner you reach the despair point on this road the better, both for you and all concerned. Press on. The prize you are aiming at is worth all and more than all you propose to pay for it.

Then there is the way of affliction. You have at some time or another in your Christian career reached Kadesh-barnea. You heard the Spirit's call to go up and possess the goodly land. You were then well able to go and conquer it. But you were alarmed at the number and size of your foes. Your ministerial reputation stood, a gaunt giant, in the way; your standing in the Church, your social position, your business, your family.

What a host of the aliens! Your heart fainted within you, and so God in His mercy has sent you back into a wilderness state of affliction. How trials and afflictions do abound in your life's history; trials in your finances, in family matters, in church, and in your own body and mind! And the worst of it is you have not the martyr spirit in them, to wit, the consciousness that you are filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church, for you can't get past yourself in these afflictions. You have a dull, general consciousness that they might have been avoided had you been obedient to the Spirit's voice. Well, still endure; the goal before you is chiefly won at the price of a whole life of suffering. Let patience have its perfect work. True it is, that if just now you would go back in penitence to that time when you heard the call to go forward, again you would receive the offer of being conducted right into the land of promise. But the probabilities are that affliction will have to do its complete work before you will be willing to advance—that is, the afflictions of the past will have to appear far more terrible than the giants of the promised land.

But be assured, afflicted one, that there is this direct way for you, just now, into your desired rest of faith. Oh, that we could but persuade you to accept the Holy Spirit as your guide into all truth. How quickly He would put holy daring into your soul, and make you more than conqueror.

But the path of paths, the straight and narrow way which leads by the *shortest* route into the rest of faith, the Canaan of love, is always near every believer. Like the rainbow, it shifts its position as we move, but the door of entrance into it is ever near us, and we may enter at any time. But we must enter by simple faith, not by works of righteousness, nor yet by suffering. These may, in their failure to make us holy, induce us to enter the way of faith, but in themselves are not the way that leads to Canaan. Just now this way, we repeat, is open to all. Peter could say to the Jerusalem sinners that if they then repented they could receive the Holy Ghost, the crowning blessing