

In this way, through a valley of the shadow of death, more or less gloomy, for a longer or shorter time, are they led who, taught by the spirit of grace, are persuaded to look to Jesus, and embrace Him as all they want.

Nor is that all; it is not alone at the transition from death to life that the follower of Jesus is conscious of pain. The Christian course, if it has but one strait gate is not one continued pathway among flowers, after that gate has been passed. It is a narrow way: enemies are met in it: bye-paths lead away from it. Still there is sorrow for sin, with hope in it indeed—and tenderness of spirit, but real sorrow, and shame, and confusion of face. Through much tribulation the kingdom of God is entered; and the travellers Sionward are poor and needy, and prone to fail; sometimes overtaken they yield to temptation; sometimes they slide into unfaithfulness; sometimes secret faults start up and become presumptuous sins. Then comes in one form or other the message from an angry God, and the agony, and the horror it may be that prevents the flow of tears; and after all that, when God's anger is turned away and He comforts, still there is pensive sadness, and the heavy heart gets unburdened in weeping.

In Heaven all that is over. There is no sinner there. Those who once were sinners are washed, transformed into Christlikeness. There is no occasion of sin there, no temptation, no failure; and, therefore, no sorrow for sin. All tears of contrition are wiped away.

WE HAVE SINNED, AND WE SUFFER. All have sinned, and manifold afflictions abound, and spread out in self-multiplying growth, and affect injuriously those who are near, and those who are far away from the person and place whence they started.

There are bodily ailments caused by poverty, accident, disease, and the debility of old age; sickness and death are ever lurking near.

There are mental troubles—grief of soul and anxiety about present circumstances, and the condition and prospects of our families; there is a distress occasioned by the harsh judgments and harsh treatment of fellow-men, and by the want of sympathy in friends, and by grievous losses, and by spiritual apprehensions and alarms.

Some afflictions are heart-rending, and sudden, and appalling. These make an abiding mark, leaving their traces on the after-life, and giving an undertone to the spirit of the stricken one, in which the old ringing melody will never vibrate again. But by far the least portion of the cup of love we must drink is composed of ingredients of this kind. These calamities are not so frequent; when they come, their very magnitude helps us to rise to the bearing of them; they bring to us the sympathy and aid of fellow-creatures, of no little consequence that in alleviating the pain of the disastrous infliction: and they send us more directly and instantly to God for succor.

There are, on the other hand, the more common and unheeded ills of ordinary life, really producing in the aggregate the most of the wretchedness we ever know. And we cannot feel as if encountering great danger, or facing a powerful foe, in fretting with them, one by one, or in shoals unceasingly. We cannot