

be God in this ruined world, of the Lord, by His great grace: and if besides the joy of being for ever with Him there is one, it is that of being able to serve Him down here, the little while that we have for so doing, for it is only here that we can suffer with Him.

Then the question arises as to what He calls us—for you, dear brother, if God has really called you to the ministry of the word, or if it is only that your practical faith wavers at the difficulties of the path. You must remember that God tests faith; He never fails us, but He makes us feel our entire dependence on Him. I see this in Paul: he was often hungry; he learnt to glory in infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him. But the result was that he was instructed to be in abundance, and to want, to be full and to be hungry—"I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." Without were conflicts, within were fears—and he gained the knowledge of God as the One who comforts those who are cast down. Then it was worth while being cast down. But he was able to say, not "who causeth us to triumph," but "who leadeth us about in triumph"—having missed the open door at Troas, being in great conflict with regard to Corinth, but able to say, in order to be a sweet savour of Christ wherever he was.

The question of his call to the ministry was certain. If grace had not sustained him here, he could have returned like John Mark: woe be to him, as he said, if he preached not, and he did so without