

CHAPTER IV.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THE Pilgrim falls into the hands of Giant Despair because he has himself first strayed into Byepath Meadow. Bunyan found an explanation of his last convulsion in an act of unbelief, on which, on looking back, he perceived that he had been guilty. He had been delivered out of his first temptation. He had not been sufficiently on his guard against temptations that might come in the future; nay, he had himself tempted God. His wife had been overtaken by a premature confinement, and was suffering acutely. It was at the time when Bunyan was exercised with questions about the truth of religion altogether. As the poor woman lay crying at his side, he had said, mentally, "Lord, if Thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night, then I shall know that Thou canst discern the more secret thoughts of the heart." In a moment the pain ceased, and she fell into a sleep which lasted till morning. Bunyan, though surprised at the time, forgot what had happened, till it rushed back upon his memory, when he had committed himself by a similar mental assent to selling Christ. He remembered the proof which had been given to him that God could and did discern his thoughts. God had discerned this second thought also, and in punishing him for it had punished him at the same time for

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