

To increase in faith is to advance towards the accomplishment of the great purpose of our life. Upon this depend eternal issues. In this pursuit are bound up all our hopes of happiness; therefore the increase of our faith is the most precious thing in the esteem of our Lord. In His dealings with us it is His aim to keep this in our remembrance. We are slow to learn—we are prone to forget the aim of our creation—apt to lose sight of our true pursuits, and to identify ourselves with earth until we become earthly altogether. We live by *sight*, not by *faith*; therefore it is in compassion that God lays His hand upon us; His chastisements are marks of love; the sorrows He sends us are blessings; His judgments are mercies; He deals with us as with sons. We cling to earth until we are in danger of forgetting heaven, and it is necessary to our eternal safety that we should learn how vain and unsatisfying are earthly things. If we will not learn it otherwise, we must learn it through disappointment, loss, sorrow. Many a man has been first awakened to the uncertainty of earthly things by the overthrow of some cherished hope or ambition; many a man has got his first glimpse of heaven through the grave of some loved one. And if we have strayed or are in danger of straying from the path of holiness, is anything too hard, if only we may be brought back again? No, let us weep, for we cannot help it when losses come upon us; but if they awaken us to our need of God, if they bring us to a truer and more abiding consciousness of eternity, if they bring us into nearer communion with Christ, then we have cause to rejoice even in our pain, and our rejoicing will be eternal. Christ taught his disciples through the sorrow of Mary and Martha. He speaks to us in the afflictions of others. They are admonitions to us—they call us to a recognition of our own frailty and His omnipotence. We know not what a day or an hour may bring forth—we know not what sorrows lie before us; let us heed the voice of God—remember that this is not our rest, and seek by greater earnestness in our religious life, to do and to bear whatever may be God's will towards us.

Life is the time of probation and discipline; here we are at school—our true life is hereafter. God would draw our thoughts towards that higher and better life. He would have us live in a consciousness of eternal realities. Anything that renders us more susceptible of the influences of the Holy Spirit—anything that impels us towards Christ, that stirs us up to a truer and more practical recognition of our obligations and destiny, is a blessing. Any pain, any sorrow is worth enduring that shall arouse us from indifference