

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW



*The Valley of
the Shadow
of Death.*

Now at the end of this valley was another, called, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and *Christian* must needs go through it, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it. Now this valley is a very solitary place. The prophet *Jeremiah* thus describes it:¹ A wilderness, a land of deserts, and of pits; a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, a land that no man (but a Christian) passeth through, and where no man dwelt.

Jer. 2. 6.

2. Now here *Christian* was worse put to it than in his fight with *Apollyon*; as by the sequel you shall see.

3. I saw then in my dream, that when *Christian* was got to the borders of the *Shadow of Death*, there met him two men, children of them that brought up an evil report of the

*The children
of the spies
go back.*
Numb. 13.

¹ The Valley of the Shadow of Death is descriptive of a state of trials and afflictions inward and outward, though chiefly the former. Through this valley all believers must pass, and must lay their account with enduring a great sight of afflictions in the wilderness of this world. But the presence of our divine leader will gild the gloomy horrors that surround us, or at least will strengthen and support us, when to our own apprehensions are nigh gone.

good land, making haste to go back; to whom *Christian* spake as follows:

4. **Chr.** Whither are you going?

5. **Men.** They said, Back! Back! And we would have you to do so too, if either life or peace is prized by you.

6. **Chr.** Why! What's the matter? said *Christian*.

7. **Men.** Matter! said they; We were going that way as you are going, and went as far as we durst; and indeed we were almost past coming back; for had we gone a little farther, we had not been here to bring the news to thee.

8. **Chr.** But what have you met with? said *Christian*.

9. **Men.** Why we were almost in *the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, but that by good hap we looked before us, and saw the danger before we came to it.

Psal. 44. 19.
Psal. 107.
10.

10. **Chr.** But what have you seen? said *Christian*.

11. **Men.** Seen! Why the valley itself, which is as dark as pitch: we

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also saw there the hobgoblins, satyrs, and dragons of the pit: we heard also in that valley a continual howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who there sat bound in affliction and irons; and over that valley hangs the discouraging clouds of confusion: death also doth always spread his wings over it. In a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order.

Job. 3. 5.
Ch. 10. 22.

12. **Chr.** Then said *Christian*, I perceive not yet, by what you have said, but that this is my way to the desired haven.

Jer. 2. 5.

13. **Men.** Be it thy way, we will not choose it for ours.

14. So they parted, and *Christian* went on his way, but still with his sword drawn in his hand, for fear lest he should be assaulted.

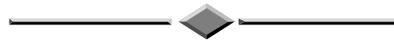
15. I saw then in my dream, so far as this valley reached, there was on the right hand a very deep ditch; that ditch is it, into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and have both there miserably perished. Again, behold, on the left hand, there was a very dangerous quag, into which, if even a good man falls, he finds no bottom for his foot to stand on:² into that quag King David

Psal. 69. 14.

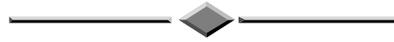
² Narrow is the way that leadeth to life. On the one hand the ditch of presumption, into which innumerable multitudes fall; on the other hand is the dangerous quagmire of despair, which swallows up many more. Some of God's dear children are suffered to fall into this quagmire. What need have

once did fall, and had, no doubt, therein been smothered, had not he that is able plucked him out.

16. The pathway was here also exceeding narrow, and therefore good *Christian* was the more put to it; for when he sought, in the dark, to shun the ditch on the one hand, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other: also when he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch. Thus he went on, and I heard him here sigh bitterly; for besides the dangers mentioned above, the pathway was here so dark, that of-times, when he lift up his foot to set forward, he knew not where, or upon what, he should set it next.



*Poor man! where art thou now?
Thy day is night:
Good man, be not cast down,
thou yet art right.
Thy way to heav'n lies
by the gates of hell:
Cheer up, hold out,
with thee it shall go well.*



17. About the midst of this valley, I perceived the mouth of hell to be, and it stood also hard by the wayside. Now, thought *Christian*, what shall I do? And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises, (things that cared not for *Christian's* sword, as

we of looking well to our paths, yea, rather, what need of praying, *Lord, order thou my goings that my footsteps slip not.*

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did Apollyon before) that he was forced to put up his sword, and betake himself to another weapon, called *All Prayer*, so he cried, in my hearing, *O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul*. Thus he went on a great while, yet still the flames would be reaching towards him; also he heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro, so that sometimes he thought he should be torn in pieces, or trodden down like mire in the streets. This frightful sight was seen, and these dreadful noises were heard by him for several miles together; and coming to a place, where he thought he heard a company of fiends coming forward to meet him, he stopped, and began to muse what he had best to do. Sometimes he had half a thought to go back; then again he thought he might be half way through the valley. He remembered also, how he had already vanquished many a danger; and that the danger of going back might be much more than for to go forward. So he resolved to go on; yet the fiends seemed to come nearer and nearer. But when they were come even almost at him, he cried out with a most vehement voice, *I will walk in the strength of the Lord God*. So they gave back, and came no farther.

18. One thing I would not let slip. I took notice that now poor *Christian* was so confounded, that he did not know his own voice;³ and

³ This is a very common case with many of God's dear children; the fiery darts of Satan come flying thick and fast about

thus I perceived it. Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put *Christian* more to it than any thing that he met with before, even to think that he should now blaspheme Him that he loved so much before. Yet, if he could have helped it, he would not have done it; but he had not the discretion either to stop his ears, or to know from whence those blasphemies came.

19. When *Christian* had traveled in this disconsolate condition some considerable time, he thought he heard the voice of a man, as going before him, saying, *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me*.

20. Then was he glad; and that for these reasons:

21. **First**, Because he gathered from thence, that some who feared God were in this valley as well as himself.⁴

them. Evil and blasphemous thoughts, which cannot be named, are suggested to them, which often greatly perplex and terrify them, as they are not able at that time to distinguish the blasphemous suggestions of the enemy, from their own thoughts.

⁴ It is some relief to a person in great temptation, if he can be persuaded that any

Eph. 6. 18.
Psal. 116.4.

*Christian put
to a stand,
but for a
while.*

*Christian made
to believe that
he spake blas-
phemies when
'twas Satan
that suggested
them into his
mind.*

Psal. 23. 4.

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Job 9. 10.

22. **Secondly**, For that he perceived God was with them, though in that dark and dismal state: And why not, thought he, with me? though by reason of the impediment that attends this place, I cannot perceive it.

23. **Thirdly**, For that he hoped (could he overtake them) to have company by-and-by.

Amos 5. 8.

24. So he went on, and called to him that was before; but he knew not what to answer, for that he also thought himself to be alone. And by and by the day broke: Then said *Christian*, He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning.

Christian glad at break of day.

25. Now morning being come, he looked back, not out of desire to return, but to see, by the light of the day, what hazards he had gone through in the dark. So he saw more perfectly the ditch that was on the one hand, and the quag that was on the other; also how narrow the quay was which led betwixt them both. Also now he saw the hobgoblins, and satyrs, and dragons of the pit, but all afar off; for after break of day they came not nigh, yet they were discovered to him, according to that which is written, *He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and*

Job 12. 22.

others are, or have been, in the like case; but such a one often thinks this is impossible; every heart knows its own bitterness. Yet *Jonah's* case is recorded for relief against this thought: lower than he no one can be reduced, for he was in the very belly of hell, yet he was delivered.

bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

26. Now was *Christian* much affected with his deliverance from all the dangers of his solitary way;⁵ which dangers, though he feared them more before, yet he saw them more clearly now, because the light of the day made them conspicuous to him. And about this time the sun was rising, and this was another mercy to *Christian*;⁶ for you must note, that though the first part of the *Valley of the Shadow of Death* was dangerous, yet this second part, which he was yet to go, was, if possible, far more dangerous; for, from the place where he now stood, even to the end of the valley, the way was all along set so full of snares, traps, gins, and nets here, and so full of pits, pitfalls, deep holes, and shelvings down there, that had it now been dark, as it was when he came the first part of the way, had he had

The second part of this valley very dangerous.

⁵ Nothing so much affects the mind of a believer, or serves to stir up within him a grateful sense of the kindness of the Lord, as a frequent recollection of the many deliverance's which God hath wrought for him. The Psalmist comforted himself in his God, by considering what God had done formerly for him. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me, but I will remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizan.* Psalm 42. 6.

⁶ The season of deliverance from great temptations is not emptied from many snares. There is need of watchfulness and prayer, lest spiritual pride and security should by degrees prevail, and rob us of the good fruits of our sufferings.

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Job 29. 3.

a thousand souls, they had in reason been cast away; but, as I said, just now the sun was rising. Then said he, *His candle shineth on my head, and by his light I go through darkness.*

27. In this light therefore he came to the end of the valley. Now I saw in my dream, that at the end of this valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave, where two giants, *Pope* and *Pagan*, dwelt in old time; by whose power and tyranny the men, whose bones, blood, ashes, &c. lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place *Christian* went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learned since, that *Pagan* has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails, because he cannot come at them.

28. So I saw that *Christian* went on his way; yet, at the sight of the *old man*, that sat in the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think, especially because he spake to him, though he could not go after him; saying, *You never mend, till more of you be burned.* But he held his

peace, and set a good face on't, and so went by, and caught no hurt.

29. Then sang *Christian*:
O world of wonders!
(I can say no less)
That I should be preserved
in that distress
That I have met with here!
O blessed be
That hand that from it
hath delivered me!
Dangers in darkness, devils,
hell, and sin,
Did compass me,
while I this vale was in:
Yea snares, and pits, and traps,
and nets did lie
My path about,
that worthless, silly I
Might have been caught,
entangled, and cast down:
But since I live,
let JESUS wear the crown. †

NOTES:
