

then he thinks, of course, every Christian is perfect! Soon he decides, Isn't this marvelous. Instead of being with those wicked people, now I'm ~~wxx~~ with Christians; they'll never lie, they'll never cheat; they'll never be selfish, they'll never do anything that's bad; they're all just wonderful, like I am now! He doesn't know, perhaps that he isn't. They notice it pretty soon. I think. But after a while he finds there is still sin ~~there~~ there. There is still sin in him. There is still sin in them. There is sin in everyone in this world.

But God wants us to get away from the sin. He wants us to use the power of His resurrection. But this power was shown through the sufferings of Christ. It may be God's will to do that way with us.

I read a most distressing book recently. About a man who came from a ~~x~~ marvellous Christian background. In this book he makes fun of and ridicules his background all the way through the book. He criticizes Christian attitudes and ends up finally with a few words of praise for Christ and makes it look as if he still has some faith. I'm inclined to think it is a nostalgia for the wording of his youth, rather than the real faith. But I would judge, but that's the impression I get from the book. He has about 3 pages where e he talks about people believing in a heavenly father who does everything good. Then he tells about some great man who has a terrible disease and he lies there and suffers. He says, A loving Father, a cosmic gini! Then he describes another one -- some one with great aspirations and outlook on life and misery and suffering come to him and he says, Talk about a heavenly Father, a loving Father -- a cosmic gini! He has about three types like this. He does not anywhere express that there is any other interpretation. I just wonder with all the Christian education he had with Christian background whether any of it really penetrated his understanding. He was longing so for things he wasn't supposed to have that he couldn't think through the opportunities he did have.

But to the Christian -- the Christian knows that in the world there is suffering, there is misery and it is here because there is sin in the world and it is here because there is sin in each one of us. But the Christian does not say, May God immediately transport me to the sky on flowery beds of easy, and take me out of it all. He knows that God leaves him here for a purpose. And God wants him to experience the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. And God wants to in some way him to be God's instrument in advancing the great work Christ did when He gave himself on the cross, and to the unbeliever he may be much reason to say, Life is just a lot of accidents, a lot of ~~xxx~~ circumstances; some are lucky and some aren't. But the Christian knows that God controls all things and if he truly belongs to Christ nothing can come into his life except it is for a purpose.

If he has good success and things go well he can praise God for giving him these great blessings. But if through no fault of his own, in spite of the best he can do, the best he tries things go wrong, he can know that God has a purpose in it and he can rejoice if God enables him to have something of a fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. If we can to some extent be crucified with Christ, not only in that most important sense that we are crucified away from that which is wrong in our lives as Christ's crucifixion is