

made strong, that out of darkness springs forth the light. Why, then, should we shrink [from sorrow as if it were calamity? Why should the house of mourning be to us the house of misery and despair? We know that there is an instinctive love of enjoyment and ease. Laughter seems pleasantest, and joy is most attractive. It would be unnatural and hypocritical to say that we desire affliction; and it is right to avoid sorrow and loss whenever we can do so in the strict performance of our duty. To court misfortune, or foolishly to incur loss, would prevent the instruction which should come from the discipline of life. The feeling that we have done our best to avert calamity is needful to the efficacy of the trial. And so it is written of the Saviour himself, that he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and then added, "If it may not pass from me unless I drink it, thy will, not mine, be done." But, to avoid sorrow by the use of proper and just means, and to pray for our deliverance from it, is a very different thing from that dread of sorrow, that shrinking from it as if it were an absolute evil, which is unchristian distrust in God. However stern affliction may seem in its first coming, it soon wears a reconciling face, and whispers a benediction to the believing heart. We may feel the burden that we bear, and for a time bend under its oppressive weight, but still be daily learning the infinite truth, which changes earth to heaven, that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

Of those who love God. Let these words be observed, for they contain, not only encouragement, but also warning. The discipline of life is not compulsion, but discipline. Only to him who asks shall it be given. Pros-