

seasons when, with more than ordinary frequency, death knocks at our doors, and the mourners go about the streets, and the earth opens her bosom to receive our precious dead.

They tell us that an hour before the dawn is that at which the human spirit oftentimes leaves its clay tenement; and so too the month which ushers in the spring is regarded as the most fatal in the year. It is the MONTH OF SORROW, preceding the months of summer life and growth, and autumn fruitfulness and joy. The call to depart comes with appalling frequency to old and young. The pale invalid who has weathered the weary months of winter is summoned away just when he looked for a fresh lease of life amid the lovely scenes of spring and summer. The stroke often falls when least looked for; tender ties are dissolved; hearts are broken, are crushed with grief; fond hopes are blighted; darling plans are disarranged; life itself becomes a painful blank. Just as we picture out the glad some coming of the summer—the green fields—the hymning birds—all the brightness and joyance of new life, the dark shadow creeps across our path, the deadly stroke is delivered, we are bereaved.

Let us look then at a few lessons fit to instruct and sustain if not to cheer those who mourn over the dead—those to whom the present is a month of sorrow.

Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord! They lose indeed the glories of our earthly spring, but a sweeter spring has burst upon their enraptured gaze, and its smile shall never be darkened by wintry storm. The blossoms and the flowers of June give place to the fadeless flowers of Paradise; and the songs of earth are forgotten for the anthems of angels. Bliss which no eye hath seen, and which no heart can conceive is enjoyed by them whom we last beheld perhaps through flooding tears. Our hearts may still ache with the void caused by their absence; we cannot help our grief; and He who wept with MARTHA and MARY will not disapprove of our tears. Yet we would not, we could not for all the joy to ourselves, wish them back again on this side of the swelling river! No, no. Though we are

in the desert, let us rejoice that *they* have reached the happy fields of the promised land, and let us bless God for their deliverance.

Sorrow is one form of the cross which your Saviour wishes you to bear for his glory and your own good; and in the words of Rutherford,—“I wish you much joy and comfort of it; for I have nothing to say of Christ's cross but much good; I hope that my ill word shall never meet Christ or his his sweet and easy cross. I know that he seeketh of us an outcast (quarrel) with this house of clay, this mother prison, this earth that we love full well; and verily when Christ snuffeth my candle, and causeth my light to shine upward it is one of my greatest wonders that dirt and clay hath so much court with a soul not made of clay. How fast, how fast doth our ship sail! And how fair a wind hath time to blow us off these coasts and this land of perishing things! and, alas! our ship saileth one way, and fleeth many miles in one hour, to hasten us upon eternity; and our love and hearts are sailing close back-over, and swimming towards ease, lawless pleasure, vain honour, perishing riches, and to build a fool's nest I know not where, and to lay our eggs within the scemark, and fasten our bits of broken anchors upon the worst ground in the world, this fleeting and perishing life.”—“The least intimation of Christ's love is sweet, and the hope of marriage with the Bridegroom holdeth me in joyful on-waiting that when Christ's summer birds shall sing upon the branches of the tree of life, I shall be tuned, by God's help, to help them to sing the home-coming of our Well-beloved and his bride to their house together. When I think of this I think that winters and summers, and days and years, and time, do me a pleasure that they shorten this untwisted and weak thread of my life, and that they put sin and miseries by-hand, and that they shall carry me to my Bridegroom in a clap.” Thus, let sickness, sorrow, bereavement, and all the troubles that come upon us, be to us messengers from the “Bridegroom”, and let us remember that the faithful departed are all with Him, and under his peculiar care. As he lives, they live also.