

death we listen to the word which speaks after this manner:—"It is far better to depart and be with Jesus," "He hath escaped the miseries of this sinful world." "afterwards, this chastening will yield to thee, exercised thereby, the peaceable fruits of righteousness." We listen thereto and acquiesce in its wisdom, whilst our longing hearts would burst forth with the passionate cry: "Give me back my loved one." And all that can be said in the one case and the other is: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient."

1st. To teach them spiritual discernment.

It was expedient for the Disciples that Jesus should go away, even as it is expedient for us that oftentimes those we love should go away.

We are so apt to lean upon an arm of flesh, and be content with the things of sight, when we ought to be grasping the arm of the Almighty and reaching after the unseen things of Eternity. We are so apt to remain always children in these spiritual matters, instead of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the days of His flesh the Disciples were ever craving after a carnal Jesus. If trials came upon them, their feeling was, "if thou hadst been here, Lord," like the sisters. If rest and peace were theirs, they would fain build an earthly tabernacle, as on the mount, and to the last their hopes and thoughts were directed to a temporal kingdom, in which, on the right hand and on the left, they should enjoy carnal pre-eminence. This was wrong; it kept them children still, and they were to be taught better, and led to higher and greater things by the removal of that visible Jesus, and by the exercise of a faith that would see Him always near, and give them for the low and weak state of a corporal presence, the more mature and nobler position of a spiritual presence within, making them content henceforth to know Christ no more after the flesh.

2nd. How expedient it was to strengthen their faith we may learn from many incidents of their daily life whilst Jesus was on earth. You know how quickly they were foiled, when in the absence of Jesus they tried to cast out the evil spirit from the possessed boy, and with astonishment they asked,—“Why could not we cast him out?”—their faith failed them when their Lord was not by their side, and the wicked spirit set at naught the trembling heart that could not trust, because He by whom it worked was not visible.

You know again how basely they forsook Him and fled, when His power seemed gone, and His person was in the grasp of His enemies. Their attachment could not stand the test of adversity; the courage which they fancied could never be affected was gone as soon as the encouraging voice of their Master was lost. But when, through His bodily absence and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they had learned His