

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethern, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.—1 *Thessalonians*, IV; 13, 14.

Of all the lessons which Eastertide teaches, none is of deeper importance to ourselves than this: that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge of our own Resurrection; that, when, on "the third day He rose again from the dead," He rose as "the First-fruits of them that slept."

It is his conviction of this great truth that enables the Christian to look forward, rather with hope than with dread, to the day when he shall be called upon to leave behind him at once the joys and the sorrows, the pleasures and the cares of this earthly life.

And it requires the conviction of this Truth to enable even the Christian to rise superior to that fear of death which God has implanted in us as one of the strongest instincts of our nature. Life is sweet, and to shrink from death is natural. God meant that it should be so. It is He who gives to life all its sweetness, and it is He who has so constituted us, that even when much of that sweetness is withdrawn we still cling to life. He placed us in this world and has Himself fixed for each of us the time we are to spend here. And it is sin both against nature and against God to seek to shorten that time. But since to die is for all of us inevitable, He has in mercy given to us that which shall counteract and even overcome this natural instinct. It is the Christian's Faith—faith in the doctrine of the Resurrection, which thus robs death of its sting. For by this Faith, Death is seen to be the door leading not from light to darkness, but from darkness to light.

In this world there hangs over our spiritual sight a cloud, through which even Faith cannot wholly pierce. We