

fancy, and was brought up as God's child along his early years. Who will say that he may not yet be led back to God? The daily burden may then daily be laid in the Divine hands. The heart's anguish may express itself not in despairing cries, but in believing prayers, inspired by the promises, and kindled into fervency by blessed hope. Then peace will come, not painless peace, but peace which lies on Christ's bosom in the darkness, and loves and trusts, and asks no questions, but waits with hopes expectancy.

There is no doubt that we miss comfort oft-times in sorrow by misunderstanding what comfort is. It comes to us indeed, and we do not recognize it, because it is not what we have been looking for; and so we go un-comforted, with the blessed angel hovering over us all the time. God's comfort is not relief from pain, but strength to endure. It is quietness and confidence amid strife and storm. It is peace in the heart of trial.

The other letter referred to is from another father over whom wave after wave of sorrow has passed. Within a brief space of time two children were taken away. The one was a son, who had entered his professional career and had large hope and promise for the future—a young man of rare abilities and many noble qualities. The other was a daughter, who had reached womanhood, and was a happy and beloved wife, surrounded by friends and refinements, and all that makes life desirable. Both of these God took. The father, a man of most tender affections, and yet of implicit faith in God, uttered no murmur when called to stand at the graves of his beloved ones; and yet his heart cries out for interpretation.

He writes: "In your volume, 'Practical Religion,' I find these words: 'Sometimes our best beloved are taken away from us, and our hearts are left bleeding as a vine bleeds when a green branch is cut from it.'

Here it is that Christian faith comes in, putting such interpretation and explanation upon the painful things that we may be ready to accept them with confidence, even with rejoicing. A strong abiding confidence that all the trials, sorrows and losses of our lives are parts of our Father's husbandry, ought to silence every question, quiet every fear, and give peace and restful assurance to our hearts in all their pain. We cannot know the reason for the painful strokes, but we know that He who holds the pruning-knife is our Father. That ought always to be enough to know."

Having quoted these words, he continues: "Now I do not question the Father's husbandry. I would also 'silence every question' concerning His wisdom and His love:

I would not doubt them for a moment. When I found that my only son, my pride and staff, must die, I prayed with such strong crying and tears as only they can know who are in like circumstances, yet feeling that I could give back to God what He had lent me, without a murmur. By His help, I believe even the slightest murmur has been repressed concerning the painful things, and that in some measure I have been ready to accept them with confidence, even with rejoicing. But my faith has not come in, as you suggest, to put 'such interpretation and explanation' upon them as perhaps I ought. Why has God thus dealt with me? Why was a double stroke necessary? Is His dealing with me purely disciplinary? What are the lessons He would teach me? How am I to test myself as to whether His purpose in afflicting me has been accomplished? Or am I not anxiously to inquire concerning the specific lessons, but let Him show in due time what He designed? Such questions multiply without answer."

Has not this writer in his own last suggestion stated what should be done by those who are perplexed with questions as to the interpretation of sorrow? They should not anxiously inquire concerning the specific lessons, but let God show in due time what He designed. No doubt every sorrow has a mission. It comes to us as God's messenger with a message. If we will welcome it reverently and be still, while it gives its message, no doubt we shall always receive some benediction.

Yet we must look at this whole matter wisely. We must not suppose that the primary reason for the taking away of our loved ones is to teach us some lesson. They are called away because their work on earth is done, and higher service in other spheres awaits them. To them death is gain, promotion, translation. The event itself, in its primary significance, is a joyous and blessed one. Only incidentally is it sorrowful. We need to keep this fact in mind in our questioning. We exaggerate our own importance and talk sometimes as if God took away our friends just to chasten us, forgetting that He did it for their sake. No doubt it is the will of God that we should profit by the pain and loss we experience in the removal of our friends from us; but this is only secondary and incidental in His design.

Of lessons to be learned in sorrow the first is always submission. We are told even of our Lord, that He "learned obedience in the things that He suffered." This is life's great, all-inclusive lesson. When we have learned this fully, perfectly, the work of sanctification is complete in us. Then another