

most of us the flower has already fallen away, and our little stem of life shall never again put forth its blossom. But we know, we feel, that there is another life within us that holds on its steady upward course through all the stages of physical delay; and, feeling that, while our physical energies are daily failing us, our spiritual vigour increases day by day, we rejoice in the earnest that our life, like the word that gave it to us, will endure for ever.

Then with what calmness may we confront our coming change, and death, its once dreadful representative! How clear and blessed the prospect to the regenerate believer! Death to him is already swallowed up, if not in victory, yet in hope; and the very word is sanctified and ennobled. Since that moment when, as the darkness rolled from the cross, the voice of Jesus cried, *Father, into Thine hands I commit My spirit*, the ministry of death has been changed: not utterly abolished, but translated into the ministry of an angel of light. The apostle's words concerning it are few, but always serene. They are governed by that sacred paradox uttered at the only grave before which we have seen the Redeemer stand: "He that believeth in Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die;" and by that other word, uttered when the Lord intercepted the retreating spirit of the child, "Not dead, but sleepeth." To Simon Peter, indeed, it is hardly sleep. He at least knew that he must die, and had his inverted cross for ever suspended before his eyes; yet he speaks of his death but once, and then terms it his *departure*. That word he heard on the holy mount, spoken there of the Lord's *exodus* out of life: it lingered in his ears, and he dared to make it his own. And now the word stands in the Bible twice concerning death,—once for Christ, and once for you and me. Full of his own text, St. Peter speaks of putting off his tabernacle with the same solemn tranquillity as he put off ere-while his fisher's coat, to go to Jesus. Let us arm