

the one rock to dash on the other. Indeed, despair is tormenting, while presumption is easy. Nevertheless, though none of them is good, yet a person presuming is ordinarily in greater hazard than one despairing; for the presumptuous sees not his case as the other does: the one is well pleased with his damnable condition, the other is weary of his, and wishes to have it changed; so that many more perish by the one than by the other.

To conclude: Remember, on the one hand, God is a holy jealous God, who cannot away with sin, or a state of sin, but the fire of his jealousy burns against it. On the other hand, remember that the blood of Christ takes away all guilt, his Spirit overcomes the most hopeless case, and his mercy reaches wide for every condition. Fear him, ye that hope in him; hope in his mercy, ye that fear him; for "the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Amen.

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JESUS VICTORIOUS OVER DEATH.\*

SERMON IX.

ISAIAH XXV. 8,

*He will swallow up death in victory.*

SUCH as are desirous duly to manage this solemn communion occasion, will have in their view the other world. We are all on a journey towards it, and, if suitably exercised, will improve this occasion to lay down our measures for eternity. Betwixt us and that other world, lies the great gulf of death; through it are two passages; one deep and devouring, where the sinner passes alone; there the waters flow with all that force and strength which they acquired by the breach of the covenant of works. By this passage, sinners are thrown out into the land of utter darkness and misery. The text shews us the other passage, which is shallow and safe, where the sinner passes on at the Mediator's back, the waters being dried up by the soles of his feet, whose passeth this way, enters into Immanuel's land, the land of life; for "he will swallow up death in victory."

In these words, we have a prophecy of the happy success of a battle fought by the Mediator on account of elect sinners. The suc-

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cess is most certain; therefore it is in the Hebrew, "He hath swallowed up," &c.—Here consider,

1. The combatants; the two mightiest that ever encountered. Upon the one hand is death, with his devouring mouth, a champion who never yet could find his match among the children of men, till the great HE, in the text, entered the lists against him, even Jesus Christ, who being man, was capable of feeling the force of death; but being the Lord of hosts also, ver. 6, could not but be conqueror at length. So death and the Mediator are the combatants.—There is,

2. The encounter of the combatants, implied in these words, "He will swallow up death in victory." Death attempting to prey upon that elect world which was given to Christ by the Father, he, as Mediator, to pluck that prey out of death's devouring mouth, encounters the terrible enemy while he is making havock of poor sinners; and, having taken upon him the guilt of his elect, which gave death a power over them, death advances against him, and attacks him, and he abides the contest. No sooner was he born, than Death, mounted on his pale horse, advanced against him, and striking at him, filled Bethlehem with the blood of babes and the shrieks of parents. Though it could not then reach him the deadly blow, it pursued him still, shot out its poisonous arrows against him all along, till they came to a close engagement on the cross, where it wrestled him down even into the grave, the proper place of its dominion. So the Mediator got the first fall.

3. But behold the issue of the battle. Death, who in all other battles wins whatever party loses, loses the day here; the victory is on the side of the slain Mediator. The slain Saviour again revives, gets up upon death, stands conqueror over it, even in its own territories, breaks the bars of the grave, takes away the sting it fought with against him, and puts it and all its forces to the rout; so that it can never show its face against him any more, Rom. vi. 9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him."

4. The Mediator's pursuit of the victory, till it be complete for these that are his, as well as for himself: "He will swallow up death in victory." The vanquished enemy has yet many strongholds in his hand, and he keeps many of the redeemed ones at under; some of them as prisoners, that they cannot stir; others of them though they can stir, yet can go nowhere, but they must drag the bands of death after them. But the Mediator will pursue the victory till he swallow up death, totally abolish it out of his kingdom, that there shall no more of it be seen there for ever, as a thing that is swal-

lowed up is seen no more at all; our Lord is cutting it down daily, and the last of it shall go over at the last day, 1 Cor. xv. 54, "So when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.—These words contain in them this

Doct. That our Lord Jesus, having fought death, and obtained the victory, will pursue the victory, till death be utterly abolished out of his kingdom.—Three things are here to be attended to.

I. The battle.

II. The victory.

III. The pursuit.—After which,

IV. I shall subjoin some practical improvement.

I. We shall consider the battle betwixt death and the Lord of life.—And,

1. Under what character has the Lord of life fought this battle? He fought it,

(1.) As the head and representative of the elect world, as their Mediator, who took burden on himself for all that the Father had given him; for otherwise he had nothing to do with death; nor had it any concern with him: John v. 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Adam, the head of all mankind, had betrayed us all into the snare of death, we were not able to break it, or to make our escape thence; but Christ undertook it for the elect, as their Head, and so sought death in their room and stead: 1 Tim. ii. 6, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5. He bare what we should have borne, stood the shock which would have ruined us; he was wounded and bruised in this battle, but all for us. Ver. 8, "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." And hence we are reckoned in law to have died in him: Rom. vi. 10, 11, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

(2.) As their Redeemer and Deliverer: Hos. xiii. 14, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction." By sin we fell a prey to devouring death, the broken law concluded us under the power of it. The prey could not be taken from this mighty one, without both price and power; so Christ

engaged with death, and by his death ransomed death's prisoners: Heb. ii. 15, "That through death he might destroy death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." He spoiled it of its power, that they might get free. The kingdom he had received of his Father could not be recovered, nor the captives set free, without stroke of sword, his overcoming death, that held them fast; therefore he fought the battle.

(3.) As a captain or general at the head of his people: Heb. ii. 10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." God has designed that the elect shall fight their way to heaven, and therefore has given them Christ as a leader and commander: Isa. lv. 4, "Behold I have given him for a leader and commander to the people." They must march through the Red Sea of death to the upper Canaan; but Christ goes before, drying up the waters. There are cords of death on the most lively believer, yet he must set himself to break them; but Christ has made them like a thread of flax, when it toucheth the fire. They must encounter the king of terrors; but the King of glory, marching in the front, has received all the deadly sting—I shall consider,

2. The attack made upon him by death. Death, finding the Mediator standing in sinners' stead, advances against him with all its forces, with which it was furnished by the breach of the first covenant; and, when managing this contest,

(1.) Death brings up its strength against him, that is, the law, 1 Cor. xv. 56, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," which, finding him a sinner by imputation, cut him down, Gal. iv. 4, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." The law cries for justice against sin, and justice takes the Mediator by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest; then he "restored what he took not away," Psalm lxxix. 4. The law brings up against him a black band of curses, and pours into his soul: Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It soon began to shoot its arrows against him. When he was born, he must be born in a stable, laid in a manger, for there was no room for him in the inn; persecution is raised against him in his infancy; he must be all along a man of sorrows, poor, not having where to lay his head; he is hungry, thirsty, weary, &c. At length the battle grows hotter, the heavens are black above his head; and in the garden, and on the cross, showers of arrows dipt in the curse fly at him. He sweats bloody



drops, falling down to the ground,—cries out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

(2.) Meanwhile he that has the power of death (Heb. ii. 14.) advances against him, Satan sets upon him in the wilderness with most grievous temptations, Matt. iv. Being beat back, he returns, and renews the assault: Luke iv. 13, “And when the devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season.” At length the hour and power of darkness comes, and then the bands of hell exert their utmost vigour against him, storms from hell blow hard upon him, the fountains of the great deep are opened on him: John xiv. 30, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Col. ii. 15, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

(3.) The congregation of men dead in trespasses and sins stir up themselves against him: Isa. liii. 3, “He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” Judas betrays him, the Jews gape on him like a lion, crying, Crucify him; Pilate condemns him; he is scourged, crowned with thorns, smitten on the crowned head, his body racked till it was all out of joint, nailed to the cross, hangs there mocked, and pierced with a spear.

(4.) Death comes with its sting upon him, and pierces him to the heart, and casts him down dead: 1 Cor. xv. 56, “The sting of death is sin;” this gives it the power of hurting any. The guilt of all the sins of the elect lay upon him, which could not but make the sting of death inexpressibly sharp and piercing. Thus a thousand deaths in one met together on him, for the Lord made the iniquities of us all to meet on him; and all the arrows that should have pierced all the elect for ever, have entered into his bowels; and, having fallen under death, he was carried prisoner to the grave.

II. Let us consider the victory Christ obtained. He tells us he has fought and overcome: Rev. iii. 21, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Yea, he has triumphed over his enemies in his glorious ascension into heaven. Consider,

I. How this victory over death was obtained. It was obtained,

(1.) By his death. This was the decisive stroke: Heb. ii. 14, “That through death he might destroy death, and him that had the power of death.” It was such a victory as Samson’s last victory over the Philistines, when he pulled down the house, and

died himself with the Philistines in the fall of it; and therefore he cried upon the cross, "It is finished." Death has done its utmost and can do no more; by his death he satisfied the law in all it had to demand of him as the elect's Surety; he paid the debt, and removed the guilt. Sin being removed, and the law satisfied, death has no more that strength or sting wherewith to set upon him at first; and so it fell with him.

(2.) By his resurrection. Thereby he got up above death, which had lost its power, and could hold him no longer, Acts ii. 24, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He stood a conqueror in the grave, death's own quarters; he broke asunder its iron bars, and brought away its keys; behold they hang at his girdle, Rev. i. 18, "And have the keys of hell and of death." So death's dominion over those that are his, got an irrecoverable stroke, and he that had the power of death as to the elect, namely, as an executioner, viz. the devil, was also destroyed.—I next inquire,

2. What sort of a victory it is Jesus hath obtained over death?—It is,

(1.) A dear-bought victory, it cost the glorious Conqueror his precious life; he suffered the bruising of his heel, before the serpent's head could be got bruised. He suffered in his body, and also in his soul, to such a degree, that the holy human nature could not have borne up under it, had it not been supported by his divine nature.

(2.) A complete victory in respect of himself, though not yet complete in respect of his members: Rom. vi. 9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him." Now he is beyond the reach of death and all his enemies, sitting at the Lord's right hand until he make his enemies his footstool, Psalm cx. 1.

(3.) A glorious victory, saints and angels singing the triumphant song. Hear the acclamations of joy and wonder with which he was met at his return from the battle, Isa. lxiii. 1, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." What a glorious victory was it which he obtained over the king of terrors, who subdues the most potent armies, overcomes the conquerors of the earth; but behold the great spoiler spoiled, the conqueror conquered by the King of glory.

(4.) An everlasting victory. Now death's power is irrecoverably broke; the serpent is wounded in the head, which is a deadly

wound, it shall never be able to rally its broken forces against him any more; it went out into the world full, but the King of saints has met it, and spoiled it, so that it in some sort is now empty.

As a practical improvement of what has been said, I would on this occasion earnestly call upon you,

1. As mortals, dying men and women, to come over this day to the conqueror's side. Our Lord has obtained the victory over death, come ye and surrender yourselves to him, break your covenant with death and hell, enter into his covenant, and honestly enlist yourselves under his victorious banners, abide no longer among his enemies.—To prevail with you, I would lay before you the following motives.

(1.) If ye are out of Christ, ye live in death's territories; yea, ye are dead; while ye live, death hath dominion over you, Eph. v. 14, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Ye are spiritually dead, the threatenings of the law, as the bands of death, gird you about; the divers lusts ye serve are as the chains of death unto you. O! awake, ere ye be cast out of this world, and buried out of his sight.

(2.) The conqueror is ready to receive you, and give you the privileges of the subjects of his kingdom, Zech. ix. 11, 12, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water; turn ye to the stronghold ye prisoners of hope, even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Christ is coming this day in the word to your graves, and saying to you, as to Lazarus, Come forth, bestir yourselves, O prisoners of hope! and come away, when the Redeemer and deliverer, who has overcome death, is calling you! Abide not under the dominion of the foiled enemy, but come away to the victorious Lord of life.

(3.) Behold how he loved the children of men, John xiv. 13, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Why did he fight this battle with death, but to rescue sinners to himself, as a prey out of the mouth of the devouring lion? Shall not his dying love win you, his dying groans awake you, out of your sleep in sin? Does not every wound he received call you to cast away your sins which lay so heavy on him? will ye love death, and slight the Redeemer, Prov. viii. 26, "All they that hate me love death."

(4.) How will you grapple with death, if ye come not out of your sins to Jesus Christ? Man, remember thou must die; the day is coming these eyes will be closed, the breath that is now going out and in will go, to return no more till the last pulse beat. How

wilt thou be able to grapple with the king of terrors alone? Death cast down the man Christ; if it did so to the green tree, what will become of thee, a withered, dead branch? Thou shalt find death lively as to thee, armed with its sting against thee, since thou art not in Christ, his victory belongs not to thee, but the first death will turn thee over into the hands of the second death; and so thou shalt be eternally dying, but never die.

(5.) Come to Christ and thou shalt have the benefit of his victory over death: John viii. 51, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death," never feel the sting of death, its nature shall be quite altered to thee. O! are ye not thinking what way ye shall get through that ford on that Red Sea, which ye know not how soon ye may come to? Come to Christ, lay hold on the conqueror by faith, in the way of his covenant; the sealed covenant will be your pass for safe conduct to the other side; it has carried all through that took their passage with it hitherto, and so will it you.—I exhort you,

2. To prepare yourselves for celebrating the triumph of this victory. The saints above are celebrating it at the upper table, ye are called to celebrate it at the lower table: "This do ye in remembrance of me." Let not Satan get advantage of such as look for the benefit of this victory, to slight the memorial of it, lest they vex the Spirit of God, and pour contempt on Christ's institution, and give their souls such a throw as they will not easily recover, while their fig-leaf covers of excuses will avail them nothing. Let none, however, venture rashly on such an ordinance. Take heed to your state, see that ye be not the King's enemies, but his friends, by your coming honestly into his covenant, and putting a divorce into the hands of all your idols. In the midst of the triumphal throng, he will notice the man that wants the wedding-garment: Matth. xxii. 11, "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment." Sinners dead in trespasses and sins are not fit to celebrate the memorial of Christ's victory over death. Off with the grave clothes of your lusts, then, that you may be fit guests for the Lord of life on such an occasion.—Take heed to your frame; a dead frame is not fit for such an occasion. Alas! for the deadness on the spirits of professors at this day. O! labour to get a lively frame of spirit, wherewith to celebrate the memorial of Christ's victory; get faith, love, repentance, desires, thankfulness, &c., in exercise; and for this end, I recommend to you this night, to meditate on, and take a believing view of this battle.—Consider,

1. It was a set battle; not an accidental rencounter, but deter-



mined from eternity: Gal. iv. 4, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Zechariah in his time proclaims the war: Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword! against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Nay, it was proclaimed in paradise: Gen. iii. 15, "And I will put enmity between the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The ceremonial law, by which so much blood was shed, plainly predicted that a bloody day was coming.—It was,

2. A hot battle. Heavy were the strokes given here: Psalm xxii. 14, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." It was a bloody battle, Isa. ix. 5, "For every battle of the warriors is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning, and fuel of fire." A dreadful noise was here, the law, men and devils, crying against the Son of God, death roaring for its prey, and the Mediator himself crying with strong cries and tears. What garments rolled in blood were here on every side!—rolled in the most precious blood of the Son of God: Isa. lxiii. 2, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" A bloody spouse have we been to him.—It was,

3. A solitary battle on Christ's part. His enemies were many, but he was alone: Psalm xxii. 12, "Many bulls have compassed me."—Isa. lxiii. 3, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." All were against him, none were with him to take a share; so thick did the arrows of death fly, that neither man nor angel durst set out their head, or venture into the battle on his side.—It was,

4. A longsome battle. He fought all along, from the cradle to the grave, from his birth to his burial: Isa. liii. 3, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" though it came to a height at the latter end.

*Lastly*, There were no quarters for him in this battle: Rom. viii. 32, "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death." He was made to drink a cup of pure unmixed wrath. He met with no sparing, that so, the arrows of death being all spent on him, his people might get free.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.\*

## SERMON X.

ISAIAH xxv. 8,

*He will swallow up death in victory.*

YE have been celebrating the triumph of Christ's victory over death, and professing yourselves the subjects of the conqueror, yea, the members of his body. If you approve yourselves true to your profession, here is the best news you can possibly hear in this world, news which may animate you to fighting the good fight: "He will swallow up death in victory."

I have yesterday handled two heads in the method. A third point now to be spoken to is, Christ's pursuit of the victory. Our Lord Jesus will pursue the victory he has obtained over death, till it be utterly abolished out of his kingdom.—Here,

I. I shall premise some things for the better understanding of this point.

II. Show how he pursues the victory.

I. I shall premise some things for the better understanding of this point.—And,

1. I premise that sin entering into the world, death obtained an universal dominion over mankind: Rom. v. 12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" it reigned as a king, ver. 19, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses;" it became universal monarch, swaying its sceptre over all nations, kingdoms, and empires, from the one end of the earth unto the other. Every man receiving life in this world, not excepting those that are born to crowns and kingdoms, are born subjects to death. It is the most terrible king, even the king of terrors; an absolute one, against whom there is no rising up. This universal dominion it got by law, upon sin's entering: Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." 1 Cor. xv. 56, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

2. The kingdom of death consists of two very different territories or countries; one is the upper country, namely, the sinful world; the other the lower country, in the other world, that land of utter darkness, where the light is as darkness. In the former, the government of death is comparatively mild, but in the latter inexpress-

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sibly horrible. Here death's subjects have some gleams of light, joy, hope, though mixed with many sorrows; but there they will never see light more, nor enjoy the least ease from their pangs, which is the second death, Matth. xxii. 13, "Cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

3. Death's power over sinners by the law, reaches to the transporting of them out of this world into its dominion in the other world; it has power to carry them to the pit, and shut the bars thereof for ever upon them. Hence we find the rich man dying, and buried, and then in hell lifting up his eyes, Luke xvi. 23; an impassable gulf is fixed between that miserable company and the saints above, ver. 26; so that by death's power, had it not been hemmed in, all mankind had landed there.

4. That all mankind might not perish, the Father gave a kingdom to his Son, which he was to conquer out of the kingdom of death in this upper world: in which kingdom life might reign for evermore through Jesus Christ: John vi. 37, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." This our Lord undertook willingly, resolving to spare no expense, even of his own blood, to recover it.

5. Our Lord Jesus coming on this expedition, findeth all mankind fettered with the bands of death; death has seized them all without exception, fastened on their souls and bodies, keeping them as prisoners, till they should be transported into the pit from whence there is no redemption; and his own that were given to him of the Father, he finds wrapt up in the common ruin; so he, putting on a zeal for his Father's glory and the salvation of the elect, encountered death in their room, and, after a bloody battle, gained the victory. But after all this the chains of death still continue on his people, and they lie under them till the conqueror, who by his death has purchased their liberty, come and loose them, in pursuit of this victory.

I am now to consider,

II. How he pursues the victory, "swallowing up death in victory."

1. He looses the bands of that spiritual death under which he finds them, morally dead, lifeless, senseless, and motionless to any spiritual good. He puts a principle of spiritual life in them, quickening them by his Spirit, Eph. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." With authority he asks the grim vanquished tyrant, as he did others in the case of Lazarus, O death! where have ye laid him? He comes to the grave, saying,

My word and my Spirit roll away the stone; and with a powerful voice he cries, Dead soul, come forth. Then feeble death loses its grips, and the dead comes forth to walk before God in the light of the living; and then he is a new creature; old things are done away.

2. He looses the band of legal death off the sinner; he is by nature a condemned man, dead in law, and death holds him fast with the cords of unpardoned guilt. But now the soul, uniting to Christ by faith, and so being clothed with his perfect righteousness, having his satisfaction applied to him, the cords of the guilt of eternal wrath give way, can hold no longer, and so death is beat from its grip of him, Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Now may the soul say, It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? The mighty Lord has burst the bars of iron asunder, death's snare is broken, and we are escaped.

3. He destroys the body of death in the believer. Still the grave-clothes hang about the believer, even strong corruptions and divers lusts, the remains of that death from which they were raised in regeneration. There is a body of death cleaves to them, complete in all its members, therefore called the old man, which is the remaining corrupt nature, with the lusts thereof. This makes them groan, and long for delivery, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This also is swallowed up in the pursuit of this victory, by degrees. For,

(1.) It is crucified, gets a deadly wound, and its destruction ensured in the conversion of the soul to God; Rom. vi. 6, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." The nails are driven through it, and every member thereof: Gal. v. 24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. It is nailed to the cross, and shall never come down till it breathe out its last. Its reigning power is broken, and can no more command with that full sway it did while the soul was under the dominion of death: Rom. vi. 14, "For sin shall not have the dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

(2.) It is weakened and mortified more and more, in the gradual advances of sanctification: Rom. viii. 14, "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Every new supply of grace weakens corruption more and more. The grace of Christ in the heart is a spring that will never be quite stopt, and therefore will work out corruption by degrees, as the spring does the mud; John iv. 14, "But the water that I shall give



him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." They will be like the houses of Saul and David, while the former waxeth weaker, the latter stronger.

(3.) At the death of the body, the body of death is utterly destroyed: Heb. xii. 23, "And to the spirits of just men made perfect." There is not the least remains of it to be seen any more then; then there shall not be the least darkness in the mind, corruption in the will, nor disorder of the affections. When they are taken up into the mount, they are stript of their rags, and clothed with change of raiment, for then Christ says, "Loose him, and let him go."

4. He dries up all the sorrows of death, wipes away all tears. David was sometimes encompassed with them, but he is now got beyond them all. Death entering the world at the back of sin, has made an universal flood of misery, that covers the face of the whole earth; even the redeemed ones walking to Zion, cannot miss to dip their foot in it, and that often very deep; they are liable to afflictions on their bodies and souls, and all that is theirs; they are distressed with desertions and hidings of God's face; they often go mourning without the sun. And what are all these but the arrows of the foiled enemy, wherewith he annoys the Mediator's company in this lower world; but Christ will also spoil this part of death's game in his kingdom; he has taken the poison and strength out of these arrows already, that they cannot give a deadly wound; and in a little these Egyptians whom they see to-day, they shall see no more for ever: Rev. xxi. 4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

5. He brings all his people safe through the valley of the shadow of death: Psalm xxiii. 4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." Death advances at length to the saint as a king of terrors, to loose the soul from the body. They are ready to be affrighted at the sight, but the waters are dried up where they are to pass. It stands before them like a serpent, but the sting of it is gone, they can get no harm of it, "O death! where is thy sting?" may the dying saint say; they tread then upon the serpent, while they pass over to the other side; it casts down the body into the grave, but their more precious part it cannot touch. It is like the storm to Paul; the body, the ship of the soul, is dashed to pieces; but the soul, the passenger, gets safe to land. This is a noble victory got through Jesus Christ.

6. Now, death has nothing of Christ's but the bodies of the saints, not a foot of ground in his kingdom but the grave; and these he will also wrest out of his hand at the resurrection. So, then, at the last day, by the sound of the trumpet, death shall be summoned, in the conqueror's name, to give up its dead; and immediately it shall fling open its doors, and yield all up to him: Rev. xx. 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them." "Then this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Death will held fast by them that are his own, even when they are come out of the grave; but then nothing that ever belonged to it shall any more be about those that are Christ's.

7. In consequence of the absolute victory over death, it shall be shut up, and confined for the ages of eternity to the lower regions, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: Rev. xx. 14, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death." As the waters of the deluge, that overspread the whole face of the earth some time, were, by the voice of God, chased away into, and confined in the deeps; so death, in its whole extent, as comprehending all miseries, greater or lesser, that some time ranged through the earth at liberty, shall be gathered together, and thrown into the place of the damned, there to prey for ever upon its proper objects, the enemies of Christ, the great conqueror.—I am,

IV. To make some practical improvement. This doctrine is of manifold use. I shall drop a few words from it to the profane, and to professors.—I shall address,

1st, Profane folk, who are quite careless about their state and conversation, on whose face death is painted, in the eyes of God and all serious persons. Consider,

1. Ye have neither part nor lot in this victory of Christ's over death, but are yet lying a prey to the devourer. What else means that loathsome conversation of yours? Psalm xiv. 1—3,—“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable works,” &c. What else means it, but that ye are yet rotting in the grave of your lusts? Do not your profane speeches declare your throat to be an open sepulchre; the full liberty your lusts get without control, says ye are not sick of sin, but dead in it; your want of the sense of religion, your not discerning the voice of God in his word, and having no relish for the sweetness of it, all these say ye are dead.

2. Awake, and come forth to Christ, in a holy life, else your lot

shall be for ever among the congregation of the dead : Gal. v. 21, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Christ has set up a kingdom among us, but ye say, Let us break his bands, and cast his cords from us. Remember, if ye continue in this condition, Christ will cast you out of his kingdom, for if death shall be abolished out of his kingdom, be sure such dead souls shall never inherit among the saints, but receive their portion where death bears eternal sway.

*2dly*, Professors, amongst whom I must reckon communicants. To such,

1. By way of caution, I would say to you,

(1.) Beware of hypocrisy, having a name to live, and yet dead : Rev. iii. 1, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." O! how many are there like some dead beasts, whereof there is nothing good but the skin! Except the form of godliness, and their religious duties they go the round of, there remains nothing but a rotten heart quite estranged from the life of God, and a life full of dead works. Beware of this, for, with the abominable, the hypocrite will also be swept away.

(2.) Beware of apostacy, Christ will pursue his victory, and therefore whoso draweth back, his soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. x. 38; they that draw back leave Christ's camp, and join his enemies, and they will be involved in their ruin with a double destruction, as runaways.

2. By way of application to your case on the back of this communion, I would ask you,

(1.) Have you got nothing at this feast from the conqueror to set you a step forward to the victory, the spiritual victory? Blame whom or what thou wilt for it, a dead state, or at least a dead frame is the true cause; and therefore repent. If thou be mourning and humbled under it, it is a sign of some life; pursue under Christ's banner and thou shalt obtain the victory.

(2.) Have ye sped, and got some victory over the body of death? be not secure, and sit not down on that ye have attained, for death is not yet swallowed up; therefore pursue.—I shall only add,

3. By way of exhortation to duty from this point.

(1.) Be lively Christians, as those that are alive from the dead through Jesus Christ; keep grace in exercise, let not the holy fire go out; watch against deadness creeping in on your souls, yield not to it, for that were to yield to death, that must be swallowed up.

(2.) Join issue with the Conqueror, in pursuing the victory in your own souls. There is a noble Captain on your head; under his conduct, then, fight the good fight; let mortification be your

daily work ; while one lust remains, ye must never give over ; make no truce with them, or any of theirs, but resolve to pursue these fruits of death, till death be swallowed up in victory.

(3.) Join issue with the Conqueror, in pursuing the victory in the world, especially in the places where ye live. Do your utmost, by word and example, to awaken a dead world ; take care of the young generation ; and as ye love their souls, remove the stumbling-block of your divisions out of their sight, which threatens the ruin of religion in this parish : when the members of the body are all going asunder, falling off from one another, it is an evidence death is working in that body ; and it has made much sad work in the land and country-side already.

(4.) Believe this truth with application, in all your endeavours after holiness. That is the true method of sanctification, using the mean appointed of God, and believing the promised success. If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established.

(5.) Be weaned from the world, and long for the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory ; Phil. i. 23, " Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Were we eager in the battle, we would readily long for the day of complete victory.

Let all be stirred up, and exhorted from this,

1. To get and make sure their interest in this victory purchased by Christ in this battle. Come to Christ, and make sure your interest in him ; alas ! what will it avail you that Christ has purchased this victory for you ? It would be promising-like in this case, if ye be raised up from spiritual death, or if ye be wrestling against the remains of it.

(1.) O love the Lord, come see the field of battle, where the Lord lay, and love him, John xiv. 13. Whom will ye love, if not him that died for us ?

(2.) Hate sin, and seek the destruction and extirpation of it ; set yourselves against the body of death. Ye have here—what may excite you to it, for it was your sin that gave death its power, and furnished it with weapons against Christ—You may encourage yourselves in the contest, for victory is certain, for death is already vanquished in some sort : Rom. vi. 6, " Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ." Christ himself is engaged in the pursuit of the victory with you, and for you.

3. Patiently bear your troubles, weaknesses, and distresses, that hang about you, for these workings of death will be quickly over.

4. Join not yourselves with the congregation of the dead. Beware, (1.) Of dead company, making them your beloved companions, for " a companion of fools shall be destroyed." (2.) Renounce dead



works, as an impiety towards God, and unrighteousness towards men. (3.) Beware of a dead case and frame, that is, to be cold, stiff, motionless, of the colour of clay, as men that are in a withered, lifeless, spiritual condition.

*Lastly*, Let heaven and eternal life be the main thing ye have in view, and are in quest of, saying, There is my rest, and there must I be.

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THE SUITABLE IMPROVEMENT OF SAINTS' FORMER EXPERIENCES.\*

SERMON XI.

2 KINGS ii. 14,

*And he took the mantle of Elijah, that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*

AMONG all the elders who have through faith obtained a good report, there is none more remarkable than Elijah the Tishbite. He was a person altogether extraordinary. In his exercise and experience he was singularly distinguished. His translation was a striking loss to the church of God; it was, however, not irreparable; his exercises were, in some measure, patterns to the people of God in after ages; his experiences were powerful encouragements to a following of him who through faith and patience inherited the promises; and, what was of still greater importance, Elijah's God still lived, and, as being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, was to be the object of hope and confidence to his people in all generations. In all their straits he was to be looked to, and inquired after, for his presence with them, and his blessing upon them. Thus, we see, was Elisha exercised in the verse before us; for when overwhelmed, and in perplexity, "He took the mantle of Elijah, which fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

This verse shows us,

1. What Elisha did. (1.) He took Elijah's mantle, that fell from him; God so ordered, that it fell in Elisha's sight for his comfort, that he might have it as a token of the spirit of Elijah resting on him. He willingly takes it up: he did not say, What avails the mantle now, when it is not above Elijah's shoulders? No; that

\* Delivered August 16, 1713.