

THE  
Christian's Triumph over Death,  
**A FUNERAL SERMON**  
ON  
THE DEATH  
OF  
**MRS. JUDITH HAMMOND.**



TO THE

*REV. MR. HAMMOND:*



**M**Y offering this discourse to the eye of the world, together with your own, shews how great power our ancient friendship hath given you, over me ; whereof I have the less unpleasant sense, believing you will understand it so ; who, in great part, know how difficult my circumstances made it to me, to comply with your desire herein. Your opinion of the fitness of publishing so uncomposed a thing, discovers how far you were subject also to the same power ; whose judgment I am little apt to distrust, where it meets not with this bias

It will be a joy to me, if it help to mitigate your sorrow, which is in great part justified by the greatness of your loss, in being separated, after so long conversation, from so excellent a consort, that lived in this world so much above it.

I reckon it an evidence of the real greatness of her spirit, that she thought that so little a thing, wherein others place greatness ; and that in almost forty years acquaintance with you both, I should never hear of her nearness to a noble family, till, occasionally, since her death. It seems the blood that filled her veins, did not swell her mind. And her heavenly birth and relation to the house and family of God, made her forget her earthly kindred, and parents' house.

Sir, though, whom God hath joined together, no man might put asunder ; yet when he that made the union, makes the separation, there is no saying to him : What dost thou ? we must awhile tug with the difficulties of our state, and work ; wherein the hope of helping some (as God shall graciously help us) to gain this victory over death, and of being, at length through his grace, victors ourselves, will be a constant relief and support to you, and

Your very respectful brother,  
and fellow-servant in the labours of the Gospel.

J. H.



## A SERMON.

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I Cor. xv, 54, the latter part.

—*Death is swallowed up in victory.*

**T**HE foregoing words signify this saying to have been, before written elsewhere. So when 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, &c. And we find it before written, (Isa. xxv. 8.) in express words, and (Hos. xiii, 14.) in such as are equivalent. What their dependance or meaning is, in either of those places cannot be discussed, within our present, narrow limits. Only it is sufficiently manifest that sundry passages in the holy Scripture are said to be brought to pass, over and over; once and again; as that of Rachel's weeping for her children: and of God's bringing his Son out of Egypt: with divers others. This great saying may have had some partial and gradual accomplishment, within the current of time, when in reference to a people more specially related to God, and in some more notable delinquency and defection from him, he may have given a just, but limited commission to death, to make great ravage and destructions among them; so that it hath even rode in triumph, made a huge carnage, strowed their country with carcasses, turned their rich land, more enriched with human blood, into an Aceldama, and thereupon, but into a place of sepulture, and of graves; and yet, when it hath gone as far as his designed limits, and executed all his pleasure, he may have stopped it in

its career, and said: Hither thou shalt come and no further, now, cease and give over (as Hos. xiii. 14.) and so may have ransomed the residue from the power of the grave, and been the destruction of their destroyers, plaguing them who were their plagues. This in the next intention hereof, may respect the people of the Jews, who being returned from their (now foreseen) captivity, might in the prophetic style be spoken of as a people, risen from the dead, and newly sprung up out of the grave; but might have a further reference to the yet future state of the Christian church, as Isa. xxv. 6, 7, 8. seems to carry it; when so great a death as hath long been upon it, as well as the rest of the world, it may be hoped shall be swallowed up in a very glorious victory! But this saying is introduced here, as having its final and ultimate completion, in conjunction with what is mentioned besides, in this context, namely, when in the close and shutting up of time, the trumpet shall sound, as we are told elsewhere, it shall at the coming of our Lord, and the dead (those that died in him, first,\*) be raised, the living changed, so as to bear the heavenly Adam's image, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality; then shall be brought to pass this saying (whatever precludes thereto, as was written, there may have been before) Death is swallowed up in victory.

And according to this its fullest sense, is this saying to be the subject of our present consideration. The expression is highly rhetorical, but there is a most rational, solid sense intended under it; for which no words can be too big, or of too great a sound. Our business must be to explain, and apply this saying. And,

I. For explication of its rational import, we shall shew,—the import, and—the reasonableness of it.

1. It imports, in general, God's determination to put a perpetual end to death, to make it cease *in perpetuum*, as a noted expositor expresses it, † shewing that the parallel Hebrew phrase is usually rendered for ever, 2 Sam. ii. 26. Jer. iii. 5. and in divers other places. But that we may give a more distinct account of its meaning, several things are to be noted;

(1.) That death, as it is here spoken of, supposes a certain limited subject. Its being mentioned in this chapter, and elsewhere, as if it were itself a *suppositum* and an intelligent designing one, is an elegant and a usual figure. The holy Scriptures, and common speech abound with this sort of *prosopopœia*; and it hath its special usefulness, when (as in the present case) what we are more to remark, and consider with greater inten-

\* 1 Thes. iv. 16. † Grot. in loc.

tion of mind, is so represented, that is, when to things of minute, or of no entity, but of great concernment (such mere privations as death, or sin) a sort of personality is ascribed, attended with terrible aspects and appearances; it tends more effectually to rouse our minds, and engage our attention, whether we are to consider, and magnify our danger by them, or our deliverance, and to behold them as attempting upon us, or as overcome. But speaking strictly, we must take things as in themselves they are. Death therefore must be considered, in reference to some subject or other. Abstractly considered, it is but a notion. As it actually hath taken place, it must be the death of this, or that person. And as it is finally to be overcome, and have an end, it must have a limited subject, and not be understood of all, absolutely and universally; for then there would be no such thing as eternal death, which hath no end. And how the subject, here supposed, is to be limited; the series of discourse, through the chapter, shews they are such as are Christ's, (ver. 23.) and to whom he is peculiarly the first-fruits, (ibid:) such as shall bear his heavenly image, (ver. 49.) and, as elsewhere, whose vile bodies shall be made like his glorious one, (Phil. iii. 21.) such as shall have spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies like his, and with him inherit the kingdom of God, and through him obtain this victory, ver. 50.—57.

(2.) This limitation of death to be overcome, to such a subject only, connotes the extent of it to the whole of that subject, as that is composed of an inner and an outer man, 2 Cor. iv. 16. It were frigid, and comfortless to suppose, if it were supposable, that this glorious conquest of death should extend no further than the giving us a fair specious outside; and that our mind and spirit should not partake, or be nothing the better for it. It is plain the apostle's scope through this chapter is more to assert the future subsistence of the soul, than the recomposure of the body, as his arguments shew; though what was necessary to be said concerning the future state of that also, is not neglected. But what he is now saying, in this part of the chapter, concerns not what is common to men, but what is peculiar to good and holy men. And therefore, as it respects their nobler part, must intend more than its mere subsistence in another state, which is common to good and bad, and signify the perfection of the holy divine life, which shall be at last entirely victorious, and swallow up death, in its utmost extent, and specially as it was opposite to that life. Death I mean, as it was so heavily incumbent upon the minds and spirits of good men themselves, and was their most intolerable burden; extorting from them such groans as that, Rom.

vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ! Nor indeed is this death sensible or grievous, or ever felt, but where the opposite life hath some place. Total death knows no grievances, makes no complaints. They that lie buried in the earth, are in their own element, where no such thing weighs upon them ; a terrene carnal mind is no burden to such souls, as are quite dead in trespasses and sins. I hope I need not tell you that though the souls of men are universally immortal in the natural sense, they are not so in the moral. Morality comprehends the means and end, virtue and felicity ; or in terms more agreeable to our Christian ethics, or that are oftener heard by them that live under the gospel, holiness and blessedness. These are signified by spiritual life, or life in the spiritually moral sense : and so are sin and misery, by the opposite death. And no man hath reason to think it strange, that life and death are estimated, by such measures ; or that a temper of spirit, habitually and fixedly good or evil, should be signified by being alive, or dead, if we consider how perfect an equivalency there is between them in the moral sense, and being naturally alive or dead. For wherein do we usually state the notion of natural life, but in a self-moving power ? Now let any ordinary understanding be appealed to in the case, and who would not say it were as good, not to be able to move at all, as to move in so perpetual disorder, as never to attain any end, such motion should serve for. The ends of a reasonable creature's motions must be duty to its Maker, and felicity to itself. If all its motions be such as import constant hostility towards God, infelicity and torment to itself ; this is to be dead, not simply and naturally, it is true, but respectively, and not in some by, and less considerable respect, but in respect of the principal and most important purposes of life. So that in full equivalency, such a one is as dead, to all valuable intents and purposes whatsoever. Therefore such are only said to be alive in a true and the most proper sense, that are alive to God through Jesus Christ, (Rom. vi. 11.) or that do yield themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, (ver. 13.) it being the proper business of their life to serve God, and enjoy him. Others that only live in sinful pleasure, are dead while they live, 1 Tim. v. 6. Nor hath such a notion of life and death been altogether strange, even among heathens, when we find it said by one of no mean note : That a wicked man is dead, as a soul may be said to die ;\* and to it, it is a death, when it is (too deeply †) plunged, immersed into the body so as to be sunk down into matter, and replete with

\* Ως αν Ψυχη θανει.

† Βεβαπισμεν. Plotin. Enn. 1.

it. (Besides much more that might be produced from others of like import.) And how agreeable is this passage to that, Rom. viii. 6. To be carnally minded is death.

Upon the whole, I cannot indeed conceive, that since death is often taken, and that most reasonably, in so great a latitude, as to admit of comprehending this sense; and since, in these latter verses, the apostle is speaking of a final deliverance from it, as the special privilege of such as are in union with Christ, not of what is common to all men, but that victory over death in this respect, as it imports aversion from God, or indisposition towards him, must be within his meaning, and that he was far from confining it to bodily death only, or from intending, in reference to the soul, and mere natural immortality of that alone: but that death, in its utmost latitude, was now, in reference to this sort of men whom his present discourse intends, to be entirely swallowed up in victory, or in a perfect plenitude of victorious life, as 2 Cor. v. 4. So much, which was more requisite to be insisted on, being clear, we shall less need to enlarge upon what follows. As that,

(3.) This victory supposes a war: or that life and death were before in a continual struggle. So we find the case is, even this lower world is full of vitality. Yet death hath spread itself through it, and cast over it a dark and dismal shadow every where, according as sin, which introduced it, is diffused and spread. Death is therefore mentioned as an enemy, ver. 26. And so we understand it, natural death as an enemy to nature; spiritual, to grace. In the body, numerous maladies, and round about it, multitudes of adverse rencounters are striving to infer death. In and about the mind and spirit, worse diseases, and temptations have the like tendency. Temptations, I say, the mention whereof was not to be omitted, as pointing at the tempter, the wicked one, who first brought sin and death into this world of ours. And who is (though the concealed) the first and most proper seat of the enmity, which gives death the denomination of an enemy; which is so called indefinitely, the last enemy, that we might not understand it to be our enemy only but more an enemy against God than us, from whom the spiteful apostate aimed and gloried to pluck away, and bury in death and ruin, the whole race of human creatures. In the mean time nature in all, and grace in the regenerate are counterstriving. In the former, the self-preserving principle is more sensibly vigorous, but less successful; but they who are born of God, are better assisted by their divine Keeper, in subordination to whom they are enabled effectually to keep themselves, that the wicked one (mortally) touches them not, (1 John v. 18.)

but, as must be supposed, not without continual watching and striving as in war is usual.

(4.) Where such a war and striving, end not in victory, on the one side, they end in victory on the other. This is consequent upon what hath been said, of the limited subject here spoken of. Death is not universally overcome, with some it is left to be conceived therefore as a conqueror. We see how it is with the two hemispheres of our globe, when in the one, the light is chasing the darkness of the foregoing night, and we behold the morning gradually spreading itself upon the mountains, and it shines brighter and brighter unto perfect day; so in the other a feebler light doth more and more retire and yield till at length it be quite swallowed up in the victorious darkness of a black and horrid midnight. It is much after the same rate here with this difference, that vicissitudes and alternations cease; and whether darkness and the shadow of death, or the light of life be finally victorious, they are so, as hath been said, for ever. With the one sort, that is, with the righteous, a vital light arises in the midst of darkness: a type of their spiritual, and a prelude to their eternal state. They have a quickening light within, under all clouds of present ignominy and trouble, and an eternal day awaits them. Now death worketh in them, and surrounds them on every side, for awhile, and gains a temporary victory, over their bodily life; which while it is doing, and their outward man is perishing, their inward man is renewed day by day. But at length even that vanquished life revives, and that more noble life, which is hid with Christ in God, (Col. iii. 3.) and of which he says: That whosoever lives, and believes in him, shall never die, (John. xi. 26.) becomes perfect, for it is pure life; as that is said to be pure, which is *plenum sui, et minimum habet alieni*, full of itself, without mixture of any thing alien from it; having quite swallowed up whatsoever was opposite, or disagreeable. So doth life, in the several kinds and degrees of it, flourish with them, in a permanent, perpetual and most consistent state. And as regal power is often founded in just conquest, they do even reign in life, by Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 17.—21. But for the other sort, that sorry, pitiful, dying life they have, wherein they are even dead while they live will be swallowed up in a victorious, eternal, death; in which there remains to them, a perpetual night, and the blackness of darkness for ever. We are next to consider,

2. The reasonableness of the divine determination, which this saying imports. And that is to be collected, by reminding who it is that hath so determined, he that can effect all his determinations, and do all his pleasure. The reason of his intend-

ments, and performances, must be fetched from himself, and the perfection of his own nature ; unto which nothing can be more agreeable. When death, let in by sin, hath been reigning, doing the part of a king, as Rom. v. 17, over so great a part of God's creation, it can be little suitable to him, who doth all things after the counsel of his will, (Eph. i. 11.) to let it reign for ever. Sometime it must be swallowed up in victory. Otherwise,—his own glory would suffer a perpetual eclipse, and—the felicity of his redeemed should never be complete. Neither of which, as we are taught to apprehend the state of things can consist with the absolute perfection of his being.

(1.) Can we think it agreeable to him, to suffer such a perpetual solecism or incongruity within his dominion, that when death, by means of a most criminal apostacy, had made so great an inroad into the nobler part of his creation, that is, had broken in amongst creatures capable of immortality (who indeed otherwise had not been capable of sin) and thereby darkened the glory which shone more brightly in such an order of creatures ! it should be so always that is, that such a sort of creatures should be perpetually continued, to be born, and sin, and die. Sometime we must think this course of things should have an end, and not by yielding an everlasting conquest to an enemy. We can well conceive it most worthy of God, when he had made such creatures, unto whom liberty was as agreeable as holiness and felicity, to leave them to themselves awhile, as probationers and candidates for that state of immortal life, whereof they were not incapable. It well became a self-sufficient Being, and an absolute Sovereign, to let them understand dependance, and subjection ; and that their state was precarious, not his : to let them feel the cost of ungovernableness, and self-will, and the disagreeableness thereof to their condition who were not self-subsistent, and had not their good in their own hands : if, being put upon this trial, they would transgress, and open a way for death to come in upon them, the real loss could only be their own, and none of his. He had no reason therefore to prevent it, by so unseasonable an interposition ; as should prevent the orderly connection between duty, and felicity ; that is, the precedence of the former to the other. All this was a most unexceptionable procedure. But then, when being left to themselves, they as men, or as Adam had transgressed, (Hos. vi. 7.) and done like themselves, that is, like frail, mutable creatures, in their lapse into sin and death ; how opportune was it for him, now, to do more illustriously like himself, that is, by so surprising, unthought of methods, as the gospel reveals, to recover to himself this glory out of the cloud, and make it shine more brightly than ever, in this final victory

over death, and him that had the power of it! So that it shall at last retain no dominion over any, but such as by their own choice, during a new state of trial, remained in an inviolable union with that prince of darkness; and death. How glorious will the triumphs of this victory be, over the grand apostate! And how unsupposable is it, that he should have occasion left him to glory in an eternal conquest! And,

(2.) It is not a light thing to him, whose nature is love, that without this final victory the felicity of the redeemed should never be fully accomplished. Antecedently to the gospel revelation, it would seem more agreeable to the nature of God, that some should be rescued from the power of death, than that all should lie under it for ever. But we, to whom that revelation is vouchsafed, cannot now but think it the most unlikely thing in the world, that the design of Almighty love should finally be defeated; and that such as are in vital union with the Redeemer, should either be overcome at last by death, or remain in an eternal struggle with it. Whence nothing can be conceived, in this case, but that, as to them, death must be swallowed up in this glorious everlasting victory.

Whereupon how admirable a display will there herein be of sundry the most known attributes and excellencies of the divine nature, as his wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, and truth, in the whole conduct, and in this final issue of things! as might be distinctly shewn of each, if we were not within limits. He at first dealt with them very suitably to their natures, at length he deals with them according to his own: that it may be the theme of eternal contemplation to themselves, and the whole intelligent world, how far his ways are above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts, Isa. Iv. 8. And that as, at first, he thought it not fit to hinder them from doing as too little became such creatures; nothing should at last hinder him from doing, as became a God.

II. But come we now to the use. And,

1. Do we find this saying, in the sacred word of God, that death is to be swallowed up in victory? then we are not to doubt, but so it shall be. A plenary assent is to be given to it. But what sort of assent? Not that which arises from the sight of our eye. If that were to be our only informer, we see no such thing; but quite the contrary. That represents death to us as the only conqueror, it visibly swallows up all in victory, wheresoever it makes a seizure. Nothing stands before it! we behold it turning every where living men and women, like ourselves, into breathless lumps of earth! It irresistibly introduces itself, and life is fled, and gone! Such as conversed with us, walked to and fro amongst us, reasoned, discoursed with us,

managed business, pursued designs, delighted themselves with us, and gave us delight, become death's captives before our eyes, are bound in its bands, and we cannot redeem them, nor save ourselves. Where then is this swallowing up of death in victory? which is itself so constantly victorious! Our reason may tell us it shall not be always and universally so, but it flutters, and hallucinates. It is the divine word that must at last put the matter out of doubt; and our faith therein, which is the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we do not see. If faith be to assure our hearts in this matter, it must be as it relies upon his word, who can do this, and hath said he will. If we believe his power, that renders it possible to us; if his word, that makes it certain. Hath he said it? Who then shall gainsay it? It is one of the true and faithful sayings of God.

2. If this be a credible saying, it is certainly a very comfortable one. If we can but make that first step, and perceive this not to be a hard or incredible saying; it is very obvious to make a second, and acknowledge it to be a very consolatory saying: and that both in reference to—the past death of our friends and relatives, even such as were nearest, and most dear to us;—and in reference to our own, most certainly future and expected death. In the one case, and the other, we are to look upon it as a comfortable saying, that this mighty raging enemy shall have all his power lost, and swallowed up, in so glorious a victory, one day.

(1.) It is surely a very comfortable saying, in the former of these cases, the case of our losing friends and relations very dear unto us. And there only needs this to make it most deliciously pleasant, that is, to have a comfortable persuasion concerning such, that they are part of Christ's seed, they are some of them, in reference to whom Christ is, in the most peculiar sense, the first-fruits, so as that they have a preassurance of victory in his conquest and victory over death and the grave. And we have great reason to be so persuaded concerning that worthy gentlewoman, whose late decease is the more special occasion of this solemn assembly at this time. She was one who (as such as had most opportunity to observe, and best ability to judge, did reckon) had given abundant evidence of the work of God's saving grace upon her own spirit, and who thereupon did long walk with God in a very continued course; so indeed, as that though her comforts were observed not to be rapturous, yet they were steady and even; so as that she was rarely troubled with doubts, to give obstruction or hinderance to her in her Christian course: if any such doubt did arise, it soon vanished, and she quickly, through the mercy of God, received satisfaction, and

so went cheerfully on in her way. She was abundant in reading, especially of the Holy Book ; that was her business and delight. She very little cared to concern herself in reading writings that were merely notional, or polemical and disputative ; but the most practical ones she was most of all taken with, such as treated of the other state, and of the duties of christians in the mean time in reference thereto ; future felicity, and present spiritual-mindedness, that has so certain connexion therewith, and so direct a tendency thereto, were, with her, the delightful subjects, which she chose to read of, and meditate upon.

Her temper was observed to be even, betwixt a freeness, and reservedness. She was not melancholy, though much inclined to solitariness ; and would frequently lament, that so much of her precious time was passed away, either in necessary business or civil conversation, that was not to be avoided. It was observed that her disposition was most highly charitable, very apt to give, even to her uttermost, as occasions did occur.

In reference to her children, her care was most tender. Much of her time was spent in instructing them, while under her instruction, and within her reach ; teaching them their catechism with the proofs at large, and how to apply the proofs to the answer, so as to bring them to a distinct understanding thereof. And in this way and course she passed through the world. Her last sickness did very little alter the temper of her spirit, it was calm and sedate all along. Only so much does deserve a remark that she was prepossessed with an apprehension that she should die suddenly, so much of God's secret he was pleased to impart to her, as he sometimes does to more inward friends ; that discovery he vouchsafed to her, as to a favourite, to let her have some kind of pre-signification, that her passage out of this world should be very quick, whensoever it came : and so it was, that sitting in her chair, amidst familiar discourse, in a demediated sentence, she made a full stop, and life was ended, before that could have an end.

Now certainly the decease of such a one ought not to be lamented with that bitter sorrow, as if there were no such thing as this, that death were certainly to be swallowed up in victory, in an entire and complete victory, with reference to such a one. It seems indeed, in such cases, as was said to you before, unto the judgment of our sense, that death only overcomes, we see not beyond that ; it turns a living creature into a dead clod, and so it is laid among such, it is buried in the grave, our sight goes no further. But when we are persuaded, by the word of the Lord, that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption, and death be swallowed up in such a

victory, as you have heard ; certainly this takes away the cause of all bitter and reliefless sorrow.

I am not unapprehensive that reverend brother, whom this stroke touches more nearly, is much fitter to administer this consolation, than receive it from such a one as I. But as we may any of us put in for our share, as our case may require and can admit, in what is so generally spoken with reference to christians dying in the Lord, and their surviving fellow-christians, that as yet live in him, 1 Thes. iv. from verse 13, onward to the end : so, we are directed to comfort one another therewith. Be patient, I pray you, while I present to you this most suitable portion of Scripture. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, 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 them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we be ever with the Lord : wherefore comfort one another with these words." We shall be in a great promptitude and disposition of spirit to do so, if these words be looked upon as divine sayings, as the words of the living and immortal God. My friends, do you not find there is spirit in these words ? Is there not strong consolation in them ? How can we but think so, unless our whole religion be with us but a fable ? This concerns us all upon the common Christian account, who are but a residue, a remnant, escaped, and exempted awhile from being part of the spoils and triumphs of death ; which hath slaughtered, and thrown into the dust, probably a much greater number of our friends and relatives, than we ourselves do make, who are left behind. And it is likely we have been most of us divers times mourners, upon such occasions. This shews upon what account, and in what case, we may intermingle very reviving consolations with our sorrows, and that we ought freely, as the occasion recurs, to apply it to ourselves, and one another.

But I withal think there may be somewhat of more special import, tending to repress intemperate sorrow, on such an occasion, in that of Ezek. xxiv. 16. I think there may be somewhat, I say, collected, besides what was more peculiar and appropriate by way of signal to the prophet himself, that may teach the last mentioned case. It was a thing enjoined upon

him : that he should not mourn nor weep, nor should his tears run down, when God should take away from him the desire of his eyes with a stroke. I reckon that, as we have seen, christians should not mourn like other men ; so the Lord's prophets are not to mourn altogether like others of his people, but somewhat more of restraint they are to put upon themselves, that they may discover a higher excellency, or somewhat a greater measure of that spirit of faith ruling in them, that gives a great allay to present things, whether good or evil, as it begets clearer and more vivid apprehensions of things yet future and out of sight. And that as all believers should endeavour, in things of common concernment to all, to be exemplary to one another, and to other men ; so they who are so much nearer to God, in office and relation, should be examples to believers in conversation, spirit, faith, 1 Tim. iv. 12.

(2.) This should be very comfortable too unto them that are in union with Christ, in reference to their own future death, which they are continually to expect. Death is often saying to us repeatedly, and very sensibly, to our very bone and our flesh you shall be my prey shortly ; at least, sooner or later. It is ready to make its seizure upon us, when, we do not know ; but we are sure some time, it will.

But, my friends, it does not become christians to look upon this thing, called death, as so formidable a thing, as it is commonly reckoned ; it is ignominious to our profession, not to be endured amongst them that have life and immortality brought to light, and set in view before their eyes in the gospel ; such as profess to be united with Christ, who hath life in himself, and imparts it to all that are so united, such a life, hid with Christ in God ; and hope that when he who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory. It becomes not such to die continually, by the fear of dying, or that the very thoughts of death should be deadly to them.

This is remote from what was much observed to be the temper and character of primitive christians. A heathen prince\* who thoroughly understood them not, censures them too hardly, as being in the other extreme (though he at length became kinder to them) as if they rashly threw themselves upon death. Whereas he says, the soul should rationally, and becomingly be in readiness to be loosed from the body, *Λελογισμενως, και σεμνως*. But how come we to lose our character, and our glory ! How degenerated a thing is the Christianity of our age ! To die without regret, is counted an attainment ; it should be with gladness, (psal. xvi. 9, — 11.) and upon the considerations there

\* Marc, Antonin. de vit. sua lib. 11.

mentioned, as being now upon the confines of that world of perfect purity, bliss, and joy; and having so great an assurance that the intermediate death, we are to go through, is no sooner suffered, than overcome!

We should deal closely with ourselves in this. Do we think this saying a fable, or a trifle? Have these words no meaning? We should labour to come to a point, and say, If we have no reason to disbelieve them, we will believe them absolutely; and live as having gained our point, and overcome already; that is, who are as sure of victory, as of death. Some overcome by dying, as others are overcome by it. There are, who are not hurt by the second death. If death strike once, it thereby puts it out of its own power ever to strike a second time, or hurt them more. Let us once bring our case to that state as to live in continual defiance of death, let it strike when it will. Dependence, only on the grace and Spirit of Christ, must give us this confidence; not an opinion that we are ourselves strong enough to act separately, but that knowing our relation to him, we are, through him that loved us, more than conquerors, or as that *υπερνικωμεν*, Rom. viii. 37. may be understood to signify, we are a glorious triumphant sort of conquerors. We not only conquer, but triumph too, through him that loved us, being persuaded that neither death, nor life—shall separate us from his love—so a noted expositor understands that word, observing how great a delight this apostle takes, when he would heighten a matter, in the use of that particle *υπερ*.

It is elsewhere said, (Colos. iii. 3.) Ye are dead, but your life, &c. We are dead, that is, in ourselves, we are a sort of dead, or dying creatures, death hath almost got the possession of us already, has partly seized, and partly sentenced us to die, and irreversibly. This the apostle intimates, where he adds what you have heard: Ye have a life hid with Christ in God, that life is safe, and out of the reach of death, no death can touch that life. They that are born of God, have in reference to this life (though the other must be given up) a self preserving principle and power in them, 1 John v. 18. They keep themselves, that the evil one touches them not; that is, not mortally, or with any deadly touch. In having a new, holy, divine life; they have an assuring pledge also of the permanency, perpetuity, and everlastingness of it. If a man have once drank of that water which Christ gives, it shall be in him a perpetual fountain, a well of water springing up into everlasting life, John iv. 14.

Are we christians, and with the springings of this life do we not feel a lively joy springing, and exulting in our hearts! Add vital Christianity to the rational nature, and lothness to die is a repugnancy, and a reproach to both. Christianity so plainly

stating our case, reason should judge upon it; and suitable affections arise in us thereupon, as they would if our Christianity were vital, and the product of the divine Spirit. Then, how should we bless God that we are mortal! and that it is not in the power of all this world to keep us from dying out of it, when we know in how glorious a victory that death will be swallowed up! But it may be said, by some: "We should very little fear death, if we did know our interest in Christ, if we were not in great uncertainty, and had not our hearts hanging in doubt within us, about this thing. And therefore,

3. This saying should be monitory to us (as it is a credible, as it is a comfortable, so it is a monitory saying also) Death shall be swallowed up in victory. This said, in reference to some (which cannot be meant as to all) so great a thing, spoken with restriction, ought to make them of whom it is not meant look about them! With what solicitude should we concern ourselves, to be at a certainty! Am I one of them, in reference to whom death shall be swallowed up in such a victory? It should awaken us to consider, Have we made our interest sure in our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Prince and Lord of life? He that hath the Son hath life. It is eternal life that is spoken of in that context, 1 John. v. 11, 12. This is the record that God hath given us, eternal life; and this life is in his Son; that is, this eternal life. He that hath the Son, hath this life; he that hath not the Son, hath not this life. Spiritual life, and eternal life are all one, all of a piece, the same in nature and kind; the one will grow up into the other.

That life only is here meant, that will be eternal life. To the same sense is that: He that believeth in me, shall never die, John. xi. 26. These are plain words. He hath a life in him that is immortal, sacred, and not liable to be touched. It was before said: They that believe in him, if dead, shall live, ver. 25. But not only that, but it is further added: they that believe in him shall never die.\* If dead, they shall live; if they live, they shall never die. What means this? That they have a life, besides this bodily one; which is continued through death. Of this line or thread, death makes no intercision. But we can never justify it to God, or our own understandings, to rest in a dubious uncertainty about a matter of so vast consequence as this. Unconcernedness here, is the most unaccountable thing in the whole world; that is, whether we have only that life in us which will end in the darkness and rottenness of a grave, and a horrid hell; or that which runs into eternal life? Things will come to this issue very shortly with us

\* Vid. Ham. in loc.

that either death must, as to us, be swallowed up in victory, or we be swallowed up of victorious death; nor have we any ways to ascertain our own state, but, as was said, by uniting with the Prince of life; that is, by receiving him in all the capacities wherein we are to be concerned with him; and by resigning ourselves entirely to him. For if we must have him, that we may have life; how can we otherwise, have him but by receiving him. The gospel, under which we live, can only be a saviour of life to us, as it disposes us hereunto. Recollect yourselves then, how do your Lord's days, and other seasons of attending this gospel, pass over with you? Have you long expected life, and (which is less likely) do you meet with continual and total disappointments? And doth it cause with you no qualmish thoughts? But it is infinitely a sadder case, if you never feel yourselves begin to live, and yet are never disappointed; because you never attend upon the gospel-dispensation with any such design or hope. Is the matter thus, that if you speak the truth of your case, you must say: "I have a soul dead to all the actions, motions, sensations, enjoyments, of a divine and spiritual life." And shall it be always thus, by our own consent with any of us? We have however the rational, intellectual life, and can think; do we think it is fit for us to rest satisfied and secure, in such a state? What, satisfied in the midst of death? such a death? while we are capable of apprehending at once the horror, the danger, and the remedibleness of our case? What will this come to? It can only be holy, divine life that must be victorious over death, as the warring, opposite principle: if there be nothing to oppose it, what shall conquer? Death is in that case total, and upon such terms, till life begin to spring in thy soul, thou must reckon it likely to be eternal. Yet let none so mistake as to imagine this life an enthusiastical thing, that must discover itself in rapturous extatical motions, or go for nothing. It perfects our faculties, therefore destroys them not; and chiefly consists in a rational judgment, choice, and love of what is most worthy of us; what is fittest to be done by us, and what is with fullest satisfaction to be enjoyed; with a stedfast, most resolved adherence thereunto.

4. This saying ought to be instructive to us, in reference especially to this one thing, that is, that we abstain from rash censures of providence, that God lets death be *regnant* in so great a part of his creation, so long a time. It shall be swallowed up in victory, let that solve with us the phenomenon. It seems indeed, an untoward one, and might at first, be an amazing spectacle, even to the blessed angels themselves, to behold so great a revolt in heaven; and afterwards to take notice of an intelligent world, of creatures beneath them, successively,

through one first delinquent drawn in as accomplices, into a like defection; and death hereby spreading its horrid shadow, and extending its power, over so great and so noble a part of the universe! Committing such wastes, making such desolations, from age to age, in so great a part of the creation of God! But there are many alleviating considerations, that should compose our spirits to a rational quietude, and be satisfying and pacifying to our minds with reference to this thing. Let me but name some few to you which I shall leave with you for this purpose.

(1.) Do but consider how minute a part of the creation of God, this globe, this point, this punctilio rather of our earth is, where death has reigned, and so long had place.

(2.) Consider how much of life there is in, and about this little world of ours. When upon one single mole-hill, you see the brisk motions and efforts of so many hundred lives, you have reason to apprehend there is a great deal of vitality about this little spot of earth.

(3.) Consider and collect how probable it is, that as we go higher and higher, the nobler and finer parts of God's creation must be much more replenished with a nobler, and more excellent sort of life. It is very unreasonable to think, that this clod of earth should be so full of life; and that in higher and pure regions there should not be a richer plenitude of life, or of such inhabitants as live nobler and more excellent lives than we. And,

(4.) For ought we know, death never reaches higher than this earth of ours, and what is in a nearer vicinity to it. And that, therefore, there be vast and ample regions, incomparably beyond the range of our eye, or thought, where now no death ever comes; after the detrusion of the first revolvers, from those bright regions. When we are told, Eph. iv. 10. our Lord Jesus Christ is ascended far above all heavens, as it were a fond attempt to pretend to count them, so it were rash philosophising, to go about to describe them. But can we suppose them spacious, wild wastes? or not suppose them replenished with numberless numbers of excellent creatures that, in their confirmed state, fear no death; and continually pay a willing, joyful homage to their great preserver. For every knee must bow to him of things in heaven, Phil. ii. 10. And when we are told, Eph. i. 20, 21. God hath set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name—&c. And I Pet. iii. 22. That he is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him. Though we cannot form distinct thoughts what those dynasties, principalities and dominions are; yet we cannot but suppose those unconceivably vast

and ample regions fully peopled, with immortal inhabitants, that reign in life, in a more excellent sense. For it being said our Lord ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, (Eph. iv. 10.) this must suppose suitable recipients. And if his influences reach down in such plenty to our minute earth (as ver. 11, 12, 13.) how copious are they here!

(5.) Consider that here, where death has made its inroad, though the apostate spirits surround us, and encompass this earth of ours, and go to and fro throwing death among us every where; yet even here is a glorious offspring continually arising, the Redeemer's seed, in whom a divine life is gradually springing up from age to age. So that, at length, they make a great multitude, which no man can number, standing before the throne, clothed with white robes, and, as ensigns of victory, having palms in their hands, Rev. vii. 9. Here is life then disseminated through all this death, that inwraps our world, which for ought we know, is the centre of death; it may be here, for ought we can tell, and no where else (here, or hereabouts) and yet even here, a holy divine life is insinuating and spreading itself, even among us, over whom death has reigned; and there are great numbers, that having received abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 17. Here is supposed a kingdom, with a counter kingdom, and one head against another; one that brought in death and condemnation upon the world, but another that brings in righteousness, and life. And that here, even in this lower region, the Redeemer should have so large a portion, (we know not how large) this very much narrows the confines of death. And let it be further considered,

(6.) That where death shall be perpetual, it is there but self-procured. They only lie under death, that loved it. All they that hate me, love death, Prov. viii. 36. They inwrap themselves in death, they make a covenant with it. That sin, which is death, which carries death, and hell in itself, that they loved: it was so, it is true, with the rest, that finally perish not; but it was not always so. The grace of God made a difference, not to be quarrelled at, when striving with many, it is victorious with some. But of those with whom it is not so, it must be said, as their final, never-altered sense, even to the last, they would not be plucked out of the gulph, that deadly gulph, where they therefore lie, as in their most agreeable element. And let it further be considered,

(7.) That for the death that shall be perpetual, it is to be confined, and go no further. Before it was diffused and continually more and more diffusing itself. But in the future state of things, when time has run to its period, and the affairs of it are

shut up by the final judgment, death and hell are now to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev. xx. 14. All death is now to be gathered into death, hell into hell. It shall be contracted, gathered into itself. It is true, it will be therefore consummate, finished, perfect in its kind, or full of itself, as that which is without mixture cannot but be, (as was noted before) here will be pure death, without mixture, and which therefore will have no allay. But then, whereas formerly it ranged to and fro uncontrouled, now it is confined to its own narrower circle, and can have no new subject; and shall therefore give no further trouble or disturbance to the rest of God's creation. Moreover, consider,

(8.) That this victory will not be gradual only, but total and entire. Every thing of mortality, that was hanging about these glorious victors, shall be swallowed up in perfect, and in endless life. Death is unstung first, disarmed, and then easily overcome. Its sting is said to be sin, the deadliest thing in death. A plain further proof, by the way, the intended death also, in the moral sense. And the insulting inquiry, "Where is it?" implies it is not any where to be found, and signifies a total abolition of it; and, by consequence, must infer that every thing of death besides must, as to them, for ever cease and be no more. Which also the phrase of swallowing up, doth with great emphasis express. And this completes the vindication of providence, that is, in this whole affair; and not only vindicates but magnifies the conduct of the supreme disposer of all things. For by this means, as his wisdom, power and goodness are most highly illustrated; so the trial of his people's faith, the great instrument of this their victory, as well as of that over the world, (1 John v. 4.) is found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. i. 7. And they find, what, by patient continuance in well-doing, they were enjoined to seek, which shews they were not vainly put upon so noble a pursuit, honour, glory, immortality, to their actual attainment of eternal life, Rom. ii. 7.

Now therefore shall this saying be made good, in its fullest sense; and if there shall be such a victory, so glorious a one won at last: surely we should be tuning our instruments, and labouring to get our hearts into a frame to sing the *επιθυμιον*, the triumphant song, ver. 55, 56. and conclude it, as ver. 57. Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.