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A SERMON PREACHED AT THE
FUNERAL OF MR CHRISTOPHER LOVE,
IN LAWRENCE CHURCH,
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THOMAS MANTON

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> But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 COR. 15:57.

THESE words are a part of Paul's ἐπινίκιον, or triumphant song. In the song there are two parts, and this is the last.

1. A confident challenge.

2. A solemn thanksgiving.

The one is directed to the enemies, the other to the Giver of victory.

1. A confident challenge, in which he outbraveth death and all the powers of the grave: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The words allude to Hosea 13:14, wherein Christ is brought in speaking, 'I will ransom them from the power of death, and redeem them from the grave: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.' There is Christ's engagement and undertaking for a full conquest of death; Christ threateneth death, and the apostle insulteth over it. The form of the words is altered, because the enemy was now fallen, and Paul proclaimeth the victory. Hitherto death and the grave had insulted over the misery and frailty

of mankind; all the tombs and charnels of the world were but so many monuments of death's conquests. Golgotha, the place of skulls, seemed to be designed on purpose to upbraid and discourage our Redeemer; so many skulls and rotten relics of human frailty as there were in that place, so many trophies and monuments of triumph did death produce before the eyes of Christ; as if it were said to him, Canst thou, darest thou, grapple and enter into the lists with such an enemy? But our Lord was not discouraged: when he ascended upon the cross, he did as it were answer these bravings of death thus: 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction;' and because he was as good as his word, and every way performed his engagement, the apostle, as one of Christ's followers, cometh and insulteth over this proud adversary that was now fallen, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

This challenge is illustrated by a prolepsis, or an anticipation of an objection. Some might ask, What is this sting of death? what is this power of the grave? The apostle answereth, 'The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law.' Death cometh to have this power by sin, and sin to have this power by the law.

The sting of death, κέντρον, the prick. It implieth both the stroke of death and the anguish of it, as in the sting of a serpent, there is the deadly touch and the pain and torment of the wound; and so it noteth the power of death over us—the prick or weapon by which it striketh is sin: Rom. 5:12, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin'—and the terrors and horrors of it, which also do arise from sin. Now, by horrors, I mean not only the natural aversion, retirement, or flight of the spirits, but the bondage, torment, and despair that is upon the conscience. As death is a penal evil, inflicted by the justice of God, guilt maketh death terrible, so that a sinner is 'all his lifetime subject to bondage,' Heb. 2:14, 15, and

kept under an awe of judgment to come. It is not always felt, but soon awakened, especially in sickness and approaches of death. When we feel the cold hands of it ready to pluck out our hearts, conscience is whipped with a scourge of six strings—fear, horror, distrust, grief, rage, and shame.

The strength of sin is the law. How is that to be understood? The law giveth strength to sin, ratione cognitionis, obligationis et augmentationis; they are the words of a German divine, and will yield us a fit method wherein to open this matter.

[1.] The law discovereth sin, and maketh it appear in its own colours; the more light and knowledge of the law, the more sense of sin, as in transparent vessels dregs are soon discerned: Rom. 7:9, 'I was alive without the law, but when the law came, sin revived, and I died.' When by a sound conviction disguises are taken off from the conscience, we find sin to be sin indeed. Paul was alive before, that is, in his own hopes, as many a stupid soul maketh full account he shall go to heaven, till conscience be opened, and then they find themselves in the mouth of death and hell.

[2.] The law giveth strength to sin in regard of the obligation of it; it bindeth over a sinner to the curse and wrath of God. God hath made a righteous law, which must have satisfaction, and till the law be satisfied, we hear no news but of a curse, and that maketh death to be full of horrors: Heb. 10:27, 'There remaineth nothing but a fearful expectation of the fiery indignation of the Lord.'

[3.] It augmenteth and increaseth sin by forbidding it; lusts are exasperated and rage upon a restraint, as the yoke maketh the young bullock more unruly. Now, put all together, and you will understand the force of the expression, 'The strength of sin is the law.' The discovery of the law stoppeth the sinner's mouth, and the curse of the

law shutteth him up, and holdeth him fast unto the judgment of the great day, by which restraint sin groweth the more raging and furious; all which put together make death terrible; not an end of misery, but a door to open into hell.

Now, this being the case of every man, what shall we do? and how shall we extricate our souls from such a labyrinth of endless horror? You have an answer to that in the next verse in the apostle's thanksgiving, where he acquainteth you not only with grounds of hope, but triumph: 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

In this thanksgiving you may observe:—

1. The author of the mercy: God, by Jesus Christ.

2. The manner how we come to be interested in it: 'He giveth us victory.' Or rather, you may observe:—(1.) The act of the Father as to Jesus Christ, in that he appointed him to get the victory. (2.) The act of the Father as to us, in that he applieth this victory to our souls. Christ's victory, and the application of it, are the two grounds of this thanksgiving.

1. Christ's victory over sin, death, and the law, for it must be extended to all the things mentioned in the context; they are enemies by combination, and knit together in a fast league. The law giveth strength to sin, and sin giveth a sting to death; as long as the law hath power, sin will be strong, and as long as sin hath strength, death will be terrible. But Christ hath overcome death; he foiled it in his own person, as I shall show you anon fully; and for sin, he hath taken away the guilt of it by his own merit, and will destroy it more and more by the power of the Holy Ghost. When he stood before the tribunal of God, he stood there as a surety and undertaker: Heb.

7:22, 'A surety of a better testament.' Now, he was a surety, mutually God's and our's, to work God's work in us, and our work for us. Among other things which he undertook there, he undertook the abolition of sin: on God's part, he obliged himself that it should be performed by his Spirit; on our part, he obliged us to endeavours of mortification. Now, because Christ is an able surety, the work is as good as done already: Rom. 6:6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' Mark, it 'is crucified with him,' as implying his undertaking upon the cross, that 'the body of death might be destroyed;' as noting the work of God's Spirit, which was engaged and made sure by Christ's death upon the cross, 'that we should not serve sin;' as noting the concurrence of our endeavours, to which we are obliged by the same sponsory act of Christ. Thus much Christ hath done for the abolition of sin; now for the law. That was an enemy that could not be overcome, but must be satisfied, and so it was by Christ, who both performed the duty and sustained the penalty of it, chiefly the latter; and therefore it is said, 'He was made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:13. The sting is lost in Christ, and the honey left for us. But this is matter of another respect and cognisance.

2. The next reason of the apostle's thanksgiving is the application: he 'hath given us victory;' for understanding of which you must note that (1.)—Christ's victory is imputed to us as if it were done in our own persons. When we are actually united to him, we are possessed of all his merit. Christ fought our war and joined battle in our stead. We have a mystical victory in Christ, and are said to overcome when Christ overcame. This is the reason why the acts of believers are complicated and folded up with Christ's acts in the expressions of scripture: 'Crucified with him,' 'quickened with him,' and 'raised with him,' and 'set down with him in heavenly places,' Eph. 2, &c.—all which are terms proper to the judicial union, which is different both

from the moral and mystical, as I could easily show you, were it not a matter of another nature. Now this mystical victory is of great use to a believer in time of discouragements. If the law challenge, Satan and conscience say, Thou art a sinner under a curse, thou mayst answer, I am a sinner, but I am crucified in Christ, in my surety—his payment and suffering is mine. If death or the world discourage, you may say, This is a beaten enemy; I foiled it in Christ, I ascended in Christ, &c.

(2.) The benefit of this victory is imparted and applied to us, by which he maketh us conquerors over sin and death. All Christ's work was not done upon the cross; there is much to be accomplished in our hearts: Rom. 16:20, 'The God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet,' &c.—not only under Christ's feet, but ours; as Joshua called his fellows to come and tread upon the necks of the Canaanitish kings: Josh. 10:24, 'Come, put your feet upon the necks of these kings;' so Christ will see us conquer. He that got a victory for us, will get a victory in us, over sin, and death, and hell. Christ hath trodden them under foot already when his own heel was bruised, Gen. 3:15; now he will do it under your feet.

Having laid this foundation, the point and head of doctrine which I shall discuss is, Christ's victory over death for the comfort and profit of believers.

Death is either the first or second, temporal or eternal. Sinners are under the sentence of both, and both are in a sort put into the hands of Satan; he 'hath the power of death,' Heb. 2:14, as God's executioner; and the one maketh way for the other. Death to the wicked is but a taking them away to torment, as unruly persons are committed to prison that they may molest no more. God's patience expireth with their lives, and then his vengeance beginneth. The curse of the first covenant was eternal death: Gen. 2:15, 'Thou shalt

die;' that is, eternally. The curse must carry proportion with the blessing; the blessing was eternal life, and the curse was eternal death. I say the sorrow and pain must have been perpetual, answerable to the life which he should have enjoyed; therefore Christ is said to have 'delivered us from wrath to come,' which certainly was our portion and inheritance by Adam; and without Christ there is no escape. But to come to particulars, I shall show you:—

1. How Christ delivered us from death.

2. How far.

1. How he delivered us. The apostle answereth that, Heb. 2:14, 'By death he destroyed him that had the power of death.' Now Christ's death cometh under a twofold consideration—as a merit, or as a glorious act of war and combat; as the act of a Redeemer, or the act of a conqueror, which answereth to the double evil in death. It is a natural evil, and a penal evil. It is a natural evil, as it is the dissolution of soul and body; it is a penal evil, as it is a curse of the covenant, or the punishment of sin. (1.) There was merit in Christ's voluntary death—it was a ransom for the elect. He died not only in bonum eorum—for their good and profit, but loco et vice omnium—in their room and stead. As when the ram was taken, Isaac was spared so Christ's death was instead of ours. God will not exact the debt twice, of us and our surety: Job 33:24, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have have found a ransom.' The sinner must die, or the surety. Now, saith the Lord, I accept of the death and passion of Christ for this penitent man. If we go down to the pit, we go not down by way of vengeance. By Christ's death the merit of our sin is expiated, justice satisfied, God's wrath appeased, the law fulfilled, sin pardoned, and so the jaws of death are broken. Death in itself is the sentence of the law, the fruit of sin, and the recompense

of angry justice, and so it hath no more to do with us, for God 'hath found a ransom.' (2.) You may look upon it as the act of a conqueror. Christ foiled death in his own person. Ever since he rifled the grave, death hath lost its retentive power: Acts 2:24, λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου, 'loosing the pains,' &c. It is an allusion to the throes of a travailing woman. The grave was in travail till this precious burden was egested, for he could not be holden of it, and ever since the grave is a womb rather than a dungeon and pit of vengeance. Non vitam rapit, sed reformat (Prudentius). It doth not destroy life, but renew it. In almost the same metaphor Christ is called 'The first-born from the dead,' Col. 1:18; not that he was the first that was raised from the dead, howbeit he was the first that arose. Others were raised by the power of another, but Christ arose by his own. So he is called, 1 Cor. 15:20, 'The first-fruits from the dead.' As the offering of the first-fruits was a blessing to all the store, so Christ dying and rising is a ground of conquest to all the elect. Christ before his death had been combating with the powers of darkness and all the subordinate instruments. Death was Satan's beast of prey that was set upon him; but our Lord foiled it in its own dungeon. The battle between Christ and death was begun upon the cross; he grappled with it there, and they went tugging and wrestling to the grave. Christ, like a prudent warrior, carried the war into his enemy's country, and there got loose of the grasp of death, foiled it in its own territory. He arose, and left death gasping behind him; so that the quality of the grave is quite altered. Before it was a prison, Satan's dungeon; now it is a chamber of repose, a bed of ease, ever since Christ slept there. When the prophet speaketh of Christ's resurrection, he saith, Isa. 53:8, 'He shall be taken from prison and from judgment'—by prison meaning the grave; but speaking of the death of the faithful, he saith: Isa. 57:2, 'They shall rest in their beds.' It was for a while to Christ a prison, that to us it might be a bed of ease.

2. The next question is, How far he hath delivered us from death? We see the godly are obnoxious to the changes and decays of nature, yea, to the strokes of violence, as well as others; and how are we delivered? I answer—It is enough that 'the second death hath no power over us,' Rev. 20:6; nothing to do with us, Rom. 8:1, οὐδέν κατάκριμα, 'not one condemnation,' &c. We may die, but we shall not be damned; and though we go to the grave, yet we are freed from hell. But this is not all. In the first death believers have a privilege—they do not die as others do.

[1.] The habitude and nature of it is changed. That which is penal in death is now gone. It is not a destruction, but a delivery. Believers have wrong thoughts of death. We are delivered from it as it is a punishment and a curse. Now it is a blessing, one of Christ's legacies to the church: 1 Cor. 3:22, 'All things are yours.' While death was in the devil's hands it was an enemy; but it is made a friend and a blessing in Christ, a passage from the vale of tears to the kingdom of glory, the end of a mortal life, and the beginning of that which is immortal. As Haman to Mordecai, it intended a mischief, but it proveth a privilege. To a wicked man it is properly an execution, but to the godly a dismission of their souls into the bosom of Christ: Luke 2:28, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;' they quietly send away their souls, but a wicked man's soul is taken away. It is twice so expressed: Luke 12:20, 'This night shall they take away thy soul from thee;' and Job 27:8, 'When God taketh away his soul,' &c. They would fain keep it longer, but God taketh it away whether they will or no. A godly man resigneth, and sendeth away his soul in peace. His life cannot be taken away—it is only yielded up upon the call of providence; and he dieth, not because he must die, but because he would die. He may die sooner than he thought, but not sooner than he would; for when God willeth it, he submitteth. But to return. The blessing of death lieth in three things:—

(1.) The funerals of the godly are but the funerals of their sins and frailties and weaknesses. Peccatum moritur, miseria moritur, homo non moritur. It is not the man dieth, but the sin, the misery dieth. All other means and dispensations do but weaken sin, but death destroyeth it. When God justifieth, the damning power is gone; when God sanctifieth, the reigning power is gone; but when by death we come to be glorified, then the very being of it is gone. When the house was infected with leprosy, so as scraping would not serve the turn, it was to be digged down; we are so infected with sin that all other remedies are too weak, nothing but death will serve the turn. When ivy is gotten into a wall, it cannot be wholly destroyed till the wall itself be demolished: cut off the stump, the body, the boughs, the branches, still there are some strings that are ready to sprout again. So it is here, original sin cannot be destroyed, the constant groans of the faithful are, 'Who shall deliver us from this body and mass of sin?' Rom. 7:24. But now death is a sudden cure; sin brought in death, and, as it were in revenge, death destroyeth sin.

(2.) There is a way made for a present and complete union of the soul with Christ: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved and be with Christ.' We are loosed from the body and joined to Christ. It is better a soul be separated from the body than absent from Christ. We have a union here, but not a presence. Now judge you, which is better,—to be present with the body or to be present with the Lord; to have the company of the body or the company of Christ? Here the soul is enclosed and imprisoned, as it were; but there thou hast the free enjoyment of Christ, without the clog of an earthly estate. The soul, as soon as it departs the body, goeth immediately to Christ. As when Potiphar's wife laid hold on Joseph's coat, he escaped, so you leave your upper garment in death's hand, but the soul flieth to God. The body came from Adam, and runneth in a fleshly channel, and what we had from Adam must for a while be mouldered to dust, to purge it

from the impurity of the conveyance; but the soul, by a natural right, returneth to God who gave it, and by a special interest to Christ, that redeemed and sanctified it by his own Spirit.

(3.) The body, which seemeth most to suffer, hath much advantage; a shed is taken down to raise up a better structure. 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,' &c., 1 Cor. 15:44. Here it is not capable of high enjoyments; it is humbled with diseases, unfit for duties. Again, 'It is sown a corruptible body, it is raised an incorruptible body.' Here it is liable to changes, there it may live for ever without change and decay. If we love long life, there is eternal life. It is carnal self-love that maketh us willing to abide in the flesh; if we did but love ourselves, but love our own flesh, we would not be afraid to die; for to die is to be perfected, to have body and soul free from sin and corruption.

[2.] The hurt of it is prevented. As you are chosen and sanctified in Christ Jesus, it cannot hurt you. I say again, death may kill you, but it cannot hurt you, it hath no power over the better part. Like a serpent, it feedeth only upon your dust; nay, and for your bodies, that which dieth as a creature, is sure to live as a member of Christ. The Lord Jesus is our head in the grave; your bodies have a principle of life within them; believers are raised by the Spirit of holiness; the same Spirit that quickeneth them now to the offices of grace shall raise their mortal bodies. So Rom. 8:11, 'He shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' The Holy Ghost can never leave his old mansion and dwelling-place. How many grounds of comfort have we against the mortality of the body! Christ is united to body and soul, and he will not let his mystical body want one sinew or joint. In the account that he is to make to the Father, he saith, he is to 'lose nothing,' John 6:39. Mark, he doth not say none, but nothing. Christ will not lose a leg, or a piece of an ear. Again, God

is in covenant with body and soul; when you go down to the chambers of death you may challenge him upon the charter of his own grace. God is the God of Abraham's dust, of a believer's dust; though it be mingled with the remains of wicked men, yet Christ will sever it, Mat. 22:32. Christ proveth the resurrection of the body by that argument, that 'God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' The ground of the argument is, that God made his covenant not only with the souls of the patriarchs, but with their whole persons. Again, Christ hath purchased body and soul; so much is intimated in that place, 1 Cor. 6:20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies.' Christ hath paid price enough to get a title to body and soul, and therefore he will not lose one bit of his purchase; the Lord will call the grave to an account, Where is the body of my Abraham, my Isaac, my Jacob? It is said, Rev. 20:13, 'The sea gave up her dead, and the grave gave up her dead, and hell gave up her dead.' Let me note that hell is there taken for the state of the departed, or else what is the meaning of that passage that followeth afterward, 'and death and hell were cast into the lake that burneth'? &c. Well then, all the dead shall be cast up; as the whale cast up Jonah, so the grave shall cast up her dead. The grave is but a chest wherein our bodies are kept safe till the day of Christ; and the key of this chest is not in the devil's hands, but Christ's. See Rev. 1:18, 'I have the keys of death and hell.' When the body is laid up in the cold pit it is laid up for another day. God hath an especial care of our dust and remains; when our friends and neighbours have left it, Christ leaveth it not, but keepeth it till the great and glorious day.

[3.] We are eased from the terrors and horrors of death. Death is terrible, as it is a penal and natural evil, as I distinguished before. (1.) As it is a natural evil. Death in itself is the greatest of all evils, φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον, said an heathen (Aristotle), which, in Job's language, may be rendered, 'The king of terrors,' Job 18:14. We gush

to see a serpent, much more the grim visage of death. Moral philosophy could never find out a remedy against it. Heathens were either desperate, rash, stupid, or else they dissembled their gripes and fears; but Christ hath provided a remedy, he hath delivered us not only from the hurt of death, but the fear of death: Heb. 2:14, 'To deliver them from the fear of death, that all their lifetime were subject to bondage;' by his Spirit he filleth the soul with the hopes of a better life. Nature may shrink when we see the pale horse of death approaching, but we may rejoice when we consider its errand, it is to carry us home; as when old Jacob saw the chariots come from Egypt, how did his heart leap within him, because he should see his son Joseph. Death, however we figure it with the pencil of fancy, is sent to carry us to heaven, to transport us to Jesus Christ. Now, who would be afraid to be happy? to be in the arms of our beloved Jesus? Let them fear death that know not a better life. A Christian knoweth that when he dieth he shall 'not perish but have everlasting life,' John 3:17. The world may thrust you out, but you may see heaven alluring, ready to receive you, as Stephen saw heaven opened, Acts 7:56. There is an intellectual vision, or persuasion of faith, which is common to all the saints, though every one hath not such an ecstasy and sensible representation as Stephen had; yet usually in the hours of their departure faith is mightily strengthened, and acted so that they are exempted from all fear and sorrow. (2.) As it is a penal evil. It is sad when death is sent in justice, and clothed with wrath, and cometh in the quality of a curse. You know what was said before, 'The sting of death is sin;' they die indeed that die in their sins; death is a black and gloomy day to them, they drop down like rotten fruit into the lake of fire. Now Christ hath taken away the sting, the dolours and horrors of it; he hath taken away death as he hath taken away sin; he hath not cast it out, but cast it down, taken away the guilt and power of it, though not the being of sin: so the hurt, the sting is gone, though not death itself; it is like a serpent disarmed and unstinged,

we may put it into our bosoms without danger. There are many accusations by which Satan is apt to perplex a dying soul; these make death terrible and full of horrors; but 'they overcome by the blood of the Lamb,' Rev. 12:11, and get the victory of these doubts and fears; when sins are pardoned fears vanish. Luther said, Feri, Domine, feri, absolutus sum a peccatis meis—Strike, Lord, strike; my sins are pardoned.

[4.] It will be utterly abolished at the last day. We scarce know now what Christ's purchase meaneth till the day of judgment. It is said, 1 Cor. 15:26, 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;' it is weakened now, but then it shall be abolished as to the elect: Rev. 20:14, 'And death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death.' The dominion of death is reserved for hell; it must keep company with the damned, whilst you rejoice with God; for the present it is continued out of dispensation, it doth service to promote God's glory; but then the wicked must share death and hell amongst them, and be kept under a dying life or a living death: but 'all tears shall be wiped from your eyes,' Rev. 7:17; death shall be no more, and you shall take the harps of God in your hands, and in a holy triumph say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' It is true we may say it, yea, and sing it now in hope, as some birds sing in winter; but then we are properly said to triumph.

To apply it now.

Use 1. Here is terror for wicked men. You may think it strange that I should draw terror out of such a comfortable doctrine; but consider Jesus Christ hath conquered death for none but those that have an interest in him; others, alas! are under the full power of it: for the present the case of wicked men is sad, in death it will be worse, in hell it will be worst of all. (1.) It is sad for the present; there is a

bondage upon your souls, not always felt, but soon awakened; you cannot think of death and hell without torment; the thought of it, like Belshazzar's handwriting against the wall, smiteth you with trembling in the midst of all your cups and bravery; a small thing will awaken a wicked man's conscience, the fingers of a man's hand upon the wall. Belshazzar seemed a jolly fellow, a brave spirit, sets light by the Persian forces that were even at his door; but God soon taketh off the edge of his bravery, and then his joints trembled, his knuckles smote one against another for fear. If the Lord will but whist to conscience, the bravest spirits are soon daunced; he needeth arm nothing against you but your own thoughts; certainly none but a child of God can have a true and solid courage against death; you cannot suppose it without consternation. David said, Ps. 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I will fear no evil.' That is a grisly, sad, dark place to walk in, the very borders of death, side by side with terrors and destruction; yet there David would be confident: it is otherwise with wicked men; hereafter they would not live, and here they would not die. (2.) In death it will be worse, the nearer you draw to the everlasting estate, the more will conscience be opened, and scourge you with horror and remorse. I confess every wicked man doth not die sensible; some are stupid and foolhardy; they may sacrifice a stout body to a stubborn mind; but at last they die uncertain, doubtful if not anxious, and full of horror. As Adrian to his soul, O animula vagula, blandula, &c.—O poor soul! whither dost thou now go? thou shalt never sport it more, jest it more! Or, as he said, Anxius vixi, dubius morior; heu, quo vado!—I have lived doubtfully and die uncertainly; alas! whither do I go? A man that leapeth in the dark near a deep gulf, knoweth not where his feet shall light; and this is the case of wicked men. But this is not all; usually their death is full of terror. Things written with the juice of a lemon, when they are brought to the fire are plain and legible; so when wicked men are within the stench and smell of hell, they howl

upon their beds; few or none are able to look death in the face with confidence. Oh! consider, when you come to die sin stareth in the face of conscience, and conscience remitteth you to the law, and the law bindeth you over to hell, and hell enlargeth her mouth to receive you; what will you do in such a case? Satan insulteth, your old tempter is become your new accuser; nay, you are at odds with yourself; the body curseth the soul for an ill guide, and the soul curseth the body for a wicked instrument. It is a sad parting when they can never expect to meet again but in flames and torments, and therefore curse the memory of that day whenever they were joined together. A godly man can take fair leave of his body: Farewell, flesh! go, rest in hope; thou shalt one day awake out of the dust, and then I shall be satisfied with God's likeness: I have a longing desire of thy re-union; we have lived together and glorified God together thus long; God will not suffer thee to see corruption, &c. (3.) In hell it will be worst of all; envy will be a part of your torment as well as despair: Luke 16:23, it is said of the rich man, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes, and seeth Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and saith, I am tormented in this flame.' It will be an additional torment to compare the believers' eternal happiness with your own misery: they are in the presence of God and his holy angels; you have no company but the devil, death, hell, and the damned, and are holden under the power of everlasting torments; you would not live and cannot die; when you have run through many thousands of years you cannot look for one minute of rest; conscience gnaweth more and more, you burn but consume not. Oh! 'it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. 10:31. Mark that attribute, living God. We do not speak in the name of an idol that cannot avenge his quarrel upon you, or of a God that shall die and suffer decay, but in the name of a living God, that liveth for ever to see vengeance executed upon his adversaries. There is no hope of release; as long as God is God, hell is hell.

Use 2. It serveth to exhort us all to get an interest in this conquest of Christ. Every one is not fit to make use of Christ's victory over death; there are many things necessary to enjoy the full comfort of it. I shall name them:—(1.) A care to get sin pardoned. All the power of the devil and death hangeth on sin; therefore see sin buried ere thou art buried, or it will not be well with thee. There are two deep pits wherein you may bury your sins, and you shall never hear of them any more—the ocean of divine mercy, and the grave of Christ. See them buried in the ocean of mercy: Micah 7:19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' There is depth enough to bury them and drown them, that they may no more come into remembrance. Then there is the grave of Christ; the merit of Christ is a deep grave, deep enough wherein to bury all the sins of the world: 'Buried with him in baptism,' Rom. 6:4. Otherwise, if this be not done, you will desire to be buried eternally, and never to rise more. Let me use one metaphor more in this matter, and it shall take its rise from that expression of the apostle, 2 Cor. 5:3; we shall be 'clothed upon,' saith he, 'if so be that we shall be not found altogether naked.' It is the great fault of Christians, when they come to die, they are to seek of a shroud, and are found altogether naked. It is uncomely to see a man in his nakedness; you should be wrapt in the winding-sheet of Christ's righteousness; there is no shroud like to that; come thus to the grave, and the grave shall have no power over you. But to leave the metaphor: This must be your great work and care, Christians, to reflect upon these things in the serious applications and discourses of faith, the infinite mercy of God, the abundant merit of Christ, and the sufficiency of his righteousness for your acceptance with God. (2.) Do not only act faith, but strive after assurance of God's love to your souls. Old Simeon said, Luke 2:29, 30, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation; now let me depart in peace.' He held the Messiah not only in his arms, but in his heart, and then he could comfortably dismiss his soul. 'Now let me die,' Said Jacob,

when he had seen Joseph. He can never die too soon, as for himself, his own comfort and profit, that hath seen Jesus; his death is not untimely and immature, by what stroke soever he be cut off; whereas otherwise, if you live a hundred years, you die too soon if you die before you have gotten an interest in Christ: 'The sinner of an hundred years shall be accursed.' Old sinners that are left to be eaten out by their own rust, are chimneys long foul, and come at last to be fired. (3.) Mortify corruptions. Sin must die ere we die; he dieth well whose sins are dead before him. Either sin must die or the sinner. As the prophet said in another ease, I say in this, 'Thy life must go for its life.' You will find those sins mortal that are not mortified. What should an unmortified man do with heaven? There are no sports nor carnal pleasures there; those blessed mansions seem to him but dark shades and melancholy retirements. The apostle hath an expression: Col. 1:12, 'He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' We are first made meet for heaven before we enter into it; we are weaned from the world before we leave it. When men hang upon the world as long as they can, and when they can hang no longer, think then to make use of God, the Lord will refuse them with disdain: 'Go to the gods which you have chosen,' Judges 10:14; let the world now help you and save you. In short, a mortified man is prepared and ready; he doth but wait for wind and tide, and falleth like a shock of corn in season. (4.) A holy life and conversation. Men live as if they never thought to die, and then die as if they never thought to live. The best way to die well is to live well; they that are not ashamed to live are not afraid to die. Balaam desired to 'die the death of the righteous,' but would not take pains to live a godly life. Every man cannot say, 'Thanks be to God that giveth us victory by Jesus Christ.' You cannot die in Christ unless you live in him, and in the power of his life advance towards heaven. Oh, labour to exercise yourselves in these things, that you may be in a constant preparation. You never enter into the combat with death but once. It

is impossible to mend oversights; either we are slain or saved eternally. Now, if you do what I have here exhorted you to, you may wait till your change come; and when it cometh, your last hour will prove your best.

Use 3. It serveth to press God's children to improve the comforts of Christ's victory; do not let it go out of your hands. (1.) Improve it for your friends that are departed in the Lord. Our weeping puts some disparagement upon Christ's conquest. Why should we weep in the day of their preferment, in the day of their solemn espousals to Jesus Christ? In the primitive times, at funerals, they were wont to sing psalms of thanksgiving. We should bring them as champions to the grave, as those that have passed the pikes, and finished their course, and kept the faith, and have conquered the world, and sin, and death, and danger. Chrysostom, in one of his homilies on the Hebrews, speaketh of the ancient rites at funerals, of their hymns, and psalms, and praises: Hæc omnia sunt lætantium, saith he—all these signify joy; and wilt thou weep and sing a psalm of praise and triumph at the same time? I confess it is said, Acts 8:2, that 'devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.' It is our loss when the church is bereaved of such excellent persons; there is cause of sorrow, but there should be a mixture; we should not mourn as those without hope, 1 Thes. 4:13. As Christians must not rejoice without sorrow, so they must not be sorry without some mixture of joy. Let us declare that we hope for a resurrection, that we expect to meet our friends again in heaven; and when we weep, let it be like rain when the sun shineth. There should be somewhat of joy in our countenances, as well as tears in our eyes. (2.) Improve it for yourselves, and that—(1st.) In lifetime, that in your resolutions you may be willing to die. Many times we are like Lot in Sodom, or like the Israelites in Egypt, we could wish for Canaan, but are loth to go out of Egypt. This argueth little faith. Can we believe

there is a heaven so excellent and glorious, and yet shun it? Can we hope for such an 'incorruptible inheritance,' 1 Peter 1:4, and yet be afraid of it? that we shall enter upon it too soon? What prince would live uncrowned? What heir would whine when he is called to come and take the inheritance? What thoughts have we of eternal life? Do we count it a privilege, or a misery and a burden? And again, it argueth little love. Can we pretend to love Christ, and be shy of his company? He should be unwilling to die that is unwilling to go to Christ. And again, it argueth little judgment and consideration. Wherein is this life valuable? The world is nothing else but a place of banishment. Here is nothing but groaning; all the creatures join in comfort with the heirs of promise, Rom. 8:23. What do you see in the world, or in the present life, to make you in love with it? Are you not weary of misery and sin? The longer thou livest thou sinnest the more. Certainly thou hast provoked God long enough already; it is high time to breathe after a better estate; and thou hast had taste enough of the world's misery and deceit, and of the frailties and weaknesses of the body. A longer life would be but a longer sickness. What is the matter that we are so loth to let go our hold of present things? If it be not want of faith or want of love to Christ, or too much love of the world, certainly it must be fear of death. And what a baseness and lowness of spirit is this, to fear an enemy so often vanquished by Christ and his saints? If you be at this pass, I have preached all this while in vain; and the victory of Christ, which I have discoursed of, is to little purpose. Oh! consider, generous heathens may shame you. You make all the provision of Christ in the gospel to be of less effect than mere moral principles. (2dly.) Especially improve this in the very season and hour of death. The great Goliath is now fallen, and you may come forth and look upon the carcase, Isa. 66:4. Death itself, that startleth the creature, and seemeth to be the great check and prejudice of Christian hopes, is vanquished by Christ; therefore, in the very season when it seemeth to prevail over

you, apply the victory, and say, 'Thanks be to God,' &c. When the pangs come upon you, remember this is death's last pull and assault; you may bear with it, it shall molest you no more; as Moses said, Exod. 14:13, 'The Egyptians which ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them no more again for ever.' So you shall feel these things no more. In heaven there are no groans, nor tears, nor sorrows; have but a little patience, and as soon as the last gasp is over, the soul shall be carried by angels to Christ, and by Christ to God. Believers have the same entertainment that Christ had; he was carried into heaven by angels: Dan. 7:13, 'They brought him to the Ancient of days.' And so we are carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22. They have a train to accompany them into heaven, as their friends accompany their bodies to the grave. And as Christ was welcomed into heaven with acclamations, and God saith, 'Sit down at my right hand,' Ps. 110:1, and 'Ask of me, and I will give thee,' &c., Ps. 2:8, so are believers welcomed: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy master's joy.'

What remaineth, then, but that we die by faith, as well as live by faith; but that we welcome death with confidence, and breathe out our souls in triumph? Moses, when he took up the serpent in his hand, it was but a rod; death thus welcomed and entertained by faith will prove at most but a correction, yea, rather a blessing of the covenant, a means of passage into glory.

One thing I had almost forgotten, to press you to thankfulness to Christ. Oh! bless your Redeemer, that hath delivered you from the fear of death; admire his love and condescension, that he should come down from heaven and substitute himself in our room and place, and take the horrors of death into his own soul. It is said, Mat. 20:28, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' Christ was a prince

by birth, heir of all things, yet he came not in the pomp and equipage of a prince. If he had come in state to visit us, and to deliver comfort to us by word of mouth, it had been much; but Christ came not in this way, not in the pomp of a prince, but in the form of a servant, to minister to our necessities, and that in the highest way of self-denial; he gave his life as a ransom for many. Other princes are lavish of their subjects' blood, and care not how many lay down their lives for them: many give their lives as a ransom for the prince, but here it is quite otherwise, this prince layeth down his life to redeem the subjects, and he suffered death that it might not be terrible and destructive to us. Oh! blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ for this love for evermore.

Some may expect that I should speak something concerning the servant of God, our dear brother now departed, but I need not say any more than what I have spoken already all along the discourse. I have indeed spoken of him, and that in the judgment of your consciences; the duties which I pressed upon you he performed; the comforts which I have propounded to you he enjoyed. I shall not make any particular rehearsal of the passages of his exemplary life: I judge it not convenient. Only to you of this place I may take liberty to commend his doctrine, and entreat you to be careful of those precious truths which he sowed among you while the Lord used him here as a skilful seedsman. God looketh for some increase, and taketh special notice of the time that you have enjoyed his labours: there is an exact account kept in heaven, as in that parable, 'These three years came I seeking fruit,' Luke 13:7; probably the three years of Christ's ministry are intended, for then he was entering upon his last half-year. God reckoneth how many years, how many months, your minister hath been with you, and accordingly doth expect fruit. Your pastor, a little before his suffering, professed high and worthy thoughts of you; let him not be deceived. It will be sad for you in that

great day of separation, that when he expecteth to find you among the sheep, and to be his crown and rejoicing, he should see you among the goats. He will know you there; memory in heaven is not abolished, but perfected. I say he will know you, though without any lessening of is own happiness, or repining, at God's righteous judgments.

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