

a prey thereto, there will appear, to every reflecting mind, very much indeed of a gloomy and mournful and painful character: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," (Rom. v. 12). Being thus instructed and enlightened as to the aspect and relation which death bears to sinful man, there is much which makes the words "corruptible" and "mortal," as used in the text, have a peculiarly expressive import. They declare to us that our bodies are stamped with marks and tokens of death's existence and reign—that, from our very birth, we carry about with us the elements and seeds of physical decay. Of this sad fact, the many sicknesses and pains which we know do afflict our race, and which we do often feel, are unanswerable proofs. That man's bodily frame is a pabulum for disease, and that a variety of such disorders do consume and break it up, our hospitals, and infirmaries, and the science and profession of medicine, are a standing testimony. What mean the care-worn countenance, the pallid cheek, the whitened locks, and the tottering step, but so many sable shadows of death's approach to us, and sure signs of his power over us? How many millions of our race has he already prostrated and consigned to darkness and dust? Think, too, of the certainty that all the present living must die. From all the ranks and walks and callings in this earthly life, he will strike down his victims, and be as busy at his fatal work in every succeeding generation. Think of all such. Think, too, of the diseases and pains which do, in general, precede and accompany his attacks and strokes. Think, also, of those griefs and tears which his ravages leave among survivors;—and surely every one of right feeling will see much which is so distasteful and humiliating and repulsive about death and the grave, as to own the truth embodied in the text, that death, in his reign over us, has a victory and a sting.

But whilst death has thus a reign and power—in many respects distasteful and humiliating to us—he has, indeed, a painful sting to us, and a grievous victory over us, if, by his stroke, our time and space for making our peace with God be cut off. We are, perhaps, too ready to confine our ideas respecting death to what we see of it—to its obvious and visible effects. These are, the dissolution of the body—the unwilling removal from the attachments of time—the marring of the fair scenes of earthly bliss, and the mocking of the friendships and endearments of humanity. But let us bear in mind, however, that death is a consequence of sin. (Gen. ii. 17; Rom. vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 56.) Now the death of the body is but a part, and a very small part, of this punishment; and, therefore, what death inflicts upon the body, is, in the case of unpardoned sinners, but the preparation and prelude for

the footsteps of the second death—that death of the soul which is the penal infliction of wrath. To those, then, who have never fled to "the hope set before us"—who know not God as a reconciled Father in His dear Son—who are strangers to the Divine pardon and love and eternal life through Jesus Christ the Saviour;—to such, I say, death must be an object of dread, and invested with every circumstance of terror. To all such, death is indeed an enemy—a tyrant. He comes to take them away from all that is of value in their estimation, and to lead them as criminals through the dark and cheerless valley to judgment, and thence to the blackness of darkness for ever,—to experience that sense of the Divine displeasure which burns like a consuming fire.

In further pursuing the thought that death reigns as an enemy to man, it might be remarked that he has an aspect and power inimical, in some respects, even to the true believer. It might also be discoursed upon from this text, that death's triumphs will continue till that final time when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Death will reign over this visible creation with all his customary diseases and pains and bereavements, till then. The grave, as a strong man armed, will keep his palace and spoils till then. Till the last day and hour of this world's history and course arrive, the ravages of death's reign will be legible. They will remain as the last obstacle or hindrance to be taken out of the way, ere the mediatorial kingdom is accomplished: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

But we pass on now, in the second place, to speak shortly of that coming time when death's reign shall be abolished—when his long continued ravages shall be arrested, and when the ruins which his power has perpetrated, shall be fully repaired.

It is to this glorious time that the text points, (verses 52-55.) It declares the truth that the destruction wrought by death will be completely reversed, and the whole redeemed family of God fully emancipated from death's grasp and sway. Long, indeed, has death held a sway, and wielded a power over creation, that she groans and travails in bondage and vanity. For ages has this tyrant grasped the visible part of the intelligent creation—even man's body—the wonderful workmanship of God, and consigned it to the corruption and ruin of the grave. Nor have God's people been spared his stroke, excepting in two cases. Their bodies, too, must be buried out of our sight. But how complete the triumph, how glorious the victory, and how blessed the results here spoken of! The reign of death is to come to an end. Man-kind is to die no more. The ravages and ruins wrought by the long and wide-spread reign of death are to be repaired. The whole company of redeemed humanity that has