

There is another part of the threatening that deserves consideration. It says, that man should not only die, but die the very day of the offence. Now, if by death we understood merely a removal out of the world, or a separation of soul and body, the threatening was not executed after the forbidden fruit was tasted. But if it meant also, and chiefly, a state of sorrow, pain, and suffering, a liability to disease and fatal accident, the goadings of a guilty conscience, and the consequent fear of punishment beyond the grave, then death began on the very day when man sinned, and the dissolution of the soul and body was but the closing scene of the tragedy.

The beautiful passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians already quoted, where the Christian, in view of death, exultingly exclaims, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" will doubtless occur to all who hear me, in this connection. Here the sting of death is expressly declared to be sin, and that the pardoned Christian obtains the victory over it. To him all that renders this king of terrors formidable is gone. Its physical sufferings may indeed be left, but these are hardly worth naming, when that which constitutes the sting of this great enemy, unpardoned guilt, is taken away. Little more than his harmless shadow is left. Worlds, indeed, are to be exchanged, and so they must have been if Adam had never been driven from paradise. The eyes, too, must close on beloved friends; but how soon to open them upon the bright glories of heaven! In short, the strong impression of this passage upon the mind is, that the essential thing in death is unpardoned sin; and therefore the death threatened to Adam may have been only the terrible aggravations of a departure out of this world, which have followed in the train of transgression.

Another striking passage, bearing upon the same point, is the declaration of Paul, that "Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

The apostle does not surely mean that Christians are freed from what is commonly called death, since universal experience shows that animal life in them is as sure to be extinguished, and the soul to be separated from the body, as in others. But so different is death now, since Christ has brought to light a future and an immortal life, and by the sacrifice of himself shown