

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

VI.

(1 COR. XV. 53-58.)

WITH the preceding verse of the chapter the great assembly marking the day of the Lord's coming had been convened. The last trumpet had sounded, the dead had been raised incorruptible, and the living had been changed. Everything was thus ready for that song of triumph even now in the mind of the Apostle, and soon to burst from his lips. But, before he sings the song, he must pause for a moment to behold, in this wonderful gathering of redeemed souls in glorified bodies, the contrast to the present state of things on earth, and to show that that contrast, in all its brightness, was nothing more than the accomplishment of the Divine plan: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." It is certainly a question whether these words may not be intended only to give fresh utterance to the principle enunciated in ver. 50: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption"; and this seems to be the view generally entertained.¹ In that case, as ver. 50 referred to none but believers alive at the *parousia*, the same reference would need to be given to the words before us, and both clauses of ver. 53 will have to be understood of one and the same class of persons. The probabilities of the case seem to be against this view.

There is no need to repeat a principle already stated with sufficient clearness, and it is highly natural that St. Paul, before uttering the language which celebrates the completeness of the Christian victory, should think once

¹ Comp. Hofmann, Rückert, Edwards, Ellicott.

more of all who, in any part of the argument of this chapter, have been before his mind as conquerors in the strife, and not of one class of them alone. If so, ver. 53 will contain a reference not only to such believers as shall be alive at the *parousia*, but to such believers also as have died before that event. The two clauses will then be best understood as relating to the two classes of believers in the order in which they have been mentioned in the chapter: the first, "this corruptible," applying to Christians who have died, but shall at the great day of judgment be introduced to new and more glorious forms of life; the second, "this mortal," applying to those who, without passing through death, shall be in that day changed. Nor does the verb "put on" (*ἐνδύσασθαι*) appear to be less suitable to that receiving of a new body which is to be the portion of believers who have passed through the grave than to that transformation of their old bodies which shall be experienced by Christians who are alive when the Lord comes again. It can hardly be shown that the words of 2 Corinthians v. 2-4 are inconsistent with this idea. When St. Paul uses the same verb in that passage, it is not clear that he speaks only of the living. He seems to speak also of the dead, for at the beginning of the chapter he mentions "the earthly house of our tabernacle to be dissolved"; and Edwards, while making the word as employed in the passage before us refer only to the living, says of it as used in the quotation now given from the second epistle to the same Church: "It is this personal exultation at the prospect of living to the day of Christ that the Apostle corrects in the pathetic language of his second epistle, when he sees the outward man perishing, and intimates the probability of the earthly house being dissolved (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 16 to v. 10)."¹ On the whole, therefore, it would appear as if the "corruptible" of ver.

¹ On 1 Cor. xv. 53.

53 were to be understood of those who die before the *parousia*, and the "mortal" of those who live on to that great event.

The purpose or plan of God is now regarded as fulfilled, and the Apostle hastens on to take his stand upon the field where all has been accomplished, that there, in the very presence of the apparent conquerors, he may lift up his shout of triumph. "But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then," etc. Of the various reading here, which omits the words "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," it is hardly necessary to speak. The sense is in no degree affected, and the conclusions of different critical editors appear to have been mainly determined by the views taken by them of the question whether the words "corruptible" and "mortal" in the previous verse refer to two different classes or to the same class. Refer them to the same class, and there is no need for both clauses; refer them to different classes, and the repetition is natural. External authority, too, is in this case in favour of the longer, rather than the shorter reading.

At the moment therefore, the Apostle now exclaims, when the great result shall have been at last attained, when those who have died shall have risen from their graves clothed with their incorruptible bodies, and when those who are alive shall have been changed, "then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

The quotation is from Isaiah xxv. 8, but it cannot have been taken from the LXX. as we have it, since it reads now, with an entirely different and even opposite sense, *κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας*, "death, having prevailed, swallowed up." The probability is however that there is some corruption of the text; for, thus read, the clause

has no connexion whatever with its context. Aquila read *καταποντίσει τὸν θάνατον εἰς νίκος*,¹ and St. Paul obviously and correctly understood the Hebrew in that sense. The prophet is describing the glories of the Messianic age,—the removal at that time of all the evils from which man suffers in his present state, the introduction of all the blessings for which he longs. Among the former is death, and therefore it is said, “He shall swallow up death for ever.” The same figure is met with in 2 Corinthians v. 4, and in a connexion similar to that here supplied, “That what is mortal may be swallowed up of life” (*ἵνα καταποθῇ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς*); and again, in Hebrews xi. 29, the Egyptians are said to have been swallowed up in the Red Sea (*κατεπόθησαν*). Complete destruction is thus denoted by the word. Death shall be no more. The words *εἰς νίκος* of the quotation are also interesting. The Hebrew represented by them is usually rendered by *εἰς νίκος* in Greek, and by “for ever” in English: “Shall the sword devour for ever?” (2 Sam. ii. 26); “And he kept” (said of Edom) “his wrath for ever” (Amos i. 11); and it is possible that in the instance before us St. Paul understood it in this sense. No better meaning indeed could well be afforded, “Death is swallowed up for ever.” Yet the recurrence of the word *νίκος* in ver. 57, with its undeniable sense of “victory” there, seems to show that the Apostle understood it in a similar sense here. That sense is also peculiarly appropriate to the whole tone of the passage, and may even be said to be the most suitable introduction to what follows. There has been a victory; but, O Death, that victory is not thine; it is ours: and in thy destruction our victory is declared.

Then the Apostle bursts forth into his triumphant song, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” Again it will be observed that the readings of

¹ Turpie, *Old Testament in the New*, p. 134.

the Textus Receptus have been departed from, but, it may be added, with universal consent. No later editor of the New Testament doubts that, on what Bishop Ellicott calls "clearly preponderating authority,"¹ the order of the clauses ought to be different from that in the Authorized Version, and that "death" ought to be substituted for "Hades" or "grave" in the second clause. "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

Death had seemed until now to have the victory. It had exercised its sway not only from Adam to Moses, but from Moses to the days of the Apostle. Through all the successive generations that had come and gone since the beginning of the world the tokens of its power had been seen. According to St. Paul's expression elsewhere, it had "reigned" (Rom. v. 14); *i.e.* it had not only been master of the fate of man, but it had also reigned like an unfeeling, tyrannical, and cruel king. It had spared neither age nor sex; it had cut down the nobly born not less than the humble, the powerful not less than the weak, the brightest ornaments of refined society not less than those who spread around them misery and crime. The richest, the fairest, the most highly gifted, the most loving, and the most loved had sunk into the dust at its command. Its conquest too had been complete. The eye gleaming the one moment with life and with affection was the next moment insensible to every impression that earth had been wont to make upon it; the voice that had adapted itself to every variety of human passion was hushed into a silence that no entreaty for one more utterance could break; the hand once so mobile and warm was motionless and chill. Nay, not only had there been victory on the part of death, and that victory complete, the victory had been also cruel. Taking man from this world, from all that he had valued and that had sweetened his existence,

¹ *Commentary on 1 Corinthians in loc.*

it might have been thought that death would at least be gentle, if at the same time irresistible, in its sway, and that it would smooth as much as possible a passage out of life that at the best could only lead to desolation and darkness. The contrary had been the case. In the very moment of triumph death had seemed to gloat over the miseries of its victims. It had employed every form of torture to accomplish its purpose—the wounds of the battle-field, exposure on the trackless ocean, fire and hunger and thirst, excruciating pains that had so racked the body as to deprive it of one moment's rest, and slow, lingering agony, far worse for the sufferer to bear or for his friends to witness than the one final blow that in an instant might have ended all. It had listened also to no prayer, and had yielded to no effort, to delay its coming. No money had ever bribed it, no tears softened it, no despair moved it. Oh, what a victory had that of death been! The Apostle beheld it in the full comprehensiveness and mercilessness of its sweep. As he travelled back in thought through the ages of the past, there was no spot upon which he set his foot that did not sound hollow beneath him; there was no corner of the earth's surface from which the voice of a weeping that refused to be comforted did not rise.

But again he looked abroad, and all was changed. Gathered together in one vast assembly, he beheld the multitudes whom death could no more touch; one part of them risen from their graves in glorified bodies, another part so changed that they needed not to pass through the grave in order to be fit companions for those who had been "raised incorruptible." He beheld—for the unredeemed are not in his thoughts—death for them destroyed and prostrate at their feet; and he exclaims, "O death, where is thy victory?" (ver. 55a.)

More, however, he must say; for he remembered what a

powerful weapon death had used to accomplish its end, and, lo ! that weapon too was for ever blunted and made useless. Therefore he cries again, "O death, where is thy sting?" (ver. 55*b*.)

We must not think of this "sting" here as a goad or prick within the conscience of the sinner, troubling him in the hour when he comes to die, and, even long before that hour, whenever he does not succeed in hardening himself against it, making him all his life "subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15). The word may be used with this thought of a mere goad lying at its root in Acts xxvi. 14, when it was said to Saul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads," although even there it ought to be remembered that the goad is iron. But here it would seem, both from the context, and from the fact that St. Paul is moulding his words upon the Septuagint translation of Hosea xiii. 14, "Where, O death, is thy judgment? where, O Hades, is thy sting?" that we must understand it in its strongest sense. As such it expresses the sting of a poisonous animal like the scorpion, which carries torment that leads to death along with it (comp. Rev. ix. 10). When, accordingly, the question is asked, "O death, where is thy sting?" our attention is not directed to the human victim of death, or of the fear of death, as he recalls his transgressions and trembles in the thought of judgment, but to death itself, with its dart in its hand, first raging over the field, and then not only prostrate, but the dart fallen from its grasp and lying useless by its side.

St. Paul has been speaking figuratively, but even the figure of death with its poison-sting will hardly express all that is in his mind, and hence he hastens onward to the words of the following verse: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (ver. 56). The truths contained in these two clauses were among those upon which, in his teaching, the Apostle was most accustomed

to dwell. We may look at them for a moment, and then at the purpose for which they are here referred to.

(a) "The sting of death is sin." It is the Apostle's constant lesson. When in this very chapter we read, "By man came death," and "In Adam all die" (vers. 21, 22), he obviously refers to sinful man and sinful Adam, although to have mentioned this would have diverted attention from the point then immediately in view. Still more clearly is the thought expressed in other passages: "For if by the trespass of the one death reigned through the one"; "What fruit had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death"; "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. v. 17; vi. 21, 23). The Jew felt powerfully that there was nothing more alien to the nature of God than death. God was the living God, and life was what He had appointed for man. Not indeed in the first instance necessarily perfect life; for in perfect life the spirit must be the one supreme influence, all the behests of which the body must implicitly and unresistingly obey. The condition of the body of man, even in his best estate, prevented this. At the moment of his creation, therefore, man could not stand at the highest point of the development he was designed to reach. But, if he continued obedient, there was nothing before him inconsistent with the full manifestation of God's loving will. There was thus no death before him. There was training, discipline, education, of one kind or another, by which he would have been brought nearer to the perfection for which he was designed. Only if he sinned would this training be interrupted—"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—and death would then be due not to God, but to sin. Can we not sympathise with this even now? Many say that death is rest from toil, relief from trouble, freedom from pain of body and disappointment of spirit. True; but toil and trouble and pain and disappointment are as

unnatural as death. They are its followers. "All our woe" accompanies it. How terrible, then, the sin of which it is the consequence! Not the moral evil of sin, but the dire nature of the evil that it brings on man, is in the Apostle's mind. The scorpion's sting distils no poison, inflicts no curse on man, like the poison the curse of death.

(b) "The strength of sin is the law." Let us compare the words of the same Apostle in another passage: "Sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. v. 13). It is not of the fact that the law discovers or even provokes sin that St. Paul speaks either there or here. What he dwells upon is the thought that the law is the "strength," or rather the power, of sin. If sin be the poisoned arrow discharged from the bow of death, the force that sends the arrow home and makes it penetrate the life of man so as to bring him to the grave, is the law. St. Paul is looking at the law in all the breadth with which it embraces, in all the sharpness with which it cuts into, the human heart. He sees in it the expression of the will of God, and no one hath successfully resisted His will. Like the thunder of Sinai, he hears the twang of death's bow; like the lightning that flashed around the mountain he sees the arrow shot by death go swift and straight to its mark. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

(c) And now what is the special purpose of these clauses? It is to bring out how great had been the victory of death, and how much greater, in consequence, the victory gained for the believer over death. We shall go wholly astray if we imagine that St. Paul is taking us into the inner chambers of the soul, and showing us that law-work there by which the law awakens the consciousness of sin, and the consciousness of sin awakens the spirit of bondage and fear. He is looking at things in a more outward way, but at the same time on a larger scale. As he does so, death is the

first great fact by which he is arrested. He acknowledges the terror with which, in itself, as the simple dissolution of life, it inspires man. But, terrible as it was, it did not stand alone in the war it had never ceased to wage, in the victories which, until met by One stronger, it had never ceased to win. It was backed by an earlier enemy, sin; and sin again was backed by that holy law of God, with its voice of condemnation most fitly expressed by winds that rend the mountains, by fire, and thunder, and earthquake. Death, sin, the law! The three go together, and cannot be separated from one another. But for sin there would have been no death: but for law there would have been no power in sin to kill. Law brings sin to its bar, and with all the force of a Divine majesty compels it to condemn its own worshippers. Sin commits the execution of the sentence to death, and death is the penalty the sinner pays. What a victory would have been the victory of death could death have made it sure! What a monument would death have reared!—the desolation caused by the violation of the law of God the pedestal of the pillar; out of it sin rising rampant and spreading everywhere; on the top death crowned with triumph.

But victory is not given to death. Even over so great a foe it is given to believers: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 57). If we ask, What is meant by the description, "our Lord Jesus Christ"? it would seem as if the answer were at hand. The humiliation and death of the Redeemer are included. They belong to the appellation, "Jesus Christ": "Jesus," the human name; "Christ," the anointed One, the Saviour commissioned and qualified by the Father for His work of suffering and death on behalf of man. But the resurrection and eternal life at the right hand of God are also included. They belong to the appellation, "Lord." And this last comes first, because St.

Paul had been called to the apostleship in a manner different from that of the other members of the apostolic band. He had not, like them, been first brought to faith by companionship with his Lord's earthly life. He had first believed in the risen and glorified Lord. Let the following words of Dr. Matheson, in his eloquent and deeply interesting work on *The Spiritual Development of St. Paul*, illustrate this :

“But to my mind the passage on this subject which of all others most trenchantly illustrates Paul's position is his remarkable aspiration contained in his letter to the Church of Philippi: ‘That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.’ I have called it a remarkable aspiration, because it seems to invert the natural order. Why did not Paul say, ‘that I may know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and the power of His resurrection’? Is not this the historical arrangement in which the events of the life of Jesus actually presented themselves? Undoubtedly it is. But it is not the order in which the events of the life of Jesus presented themselves to Paul's experience; that which was last, to him came first. The passage has a biographical ring in it. It tells us that Christ had come to the man of Tarsus in the inverted order of His own life. To the primitive disciples the Christian revelation had presented itself in its natural and historical order: first the Man; then the fellowship with His sufferings; and, last of all, the power of His resurrection. To Paul the Christian revelation presented itself in exactly the opposite arrangement; it began with the crown, and it went back to the cross. Paul's vision rested first of all on that which was supernatural and superhuman, and he had thence to retrace His steps into that which was earthly and historical; he began with the ‘power of the resurrection,’ he passed next into ‘fellowship with the sufferings,’ and he ended with the recognition of that which identified Christ with humanity. His spiritual life was in one sense a progress from Damascus to Galilee; it had to find its terminus where that of Peter and John had found its beginning. Its goal was to be the discovery of that perfect bond of humanity which bound the heart of the disciple to the heart of the Master; and in reaching that discovery it attained the completion of its journey precisely where the first apostles had begun” (p. 41).

Once more: the word “our” brings out the personal appropriation of Christ in the unity of faith. In the back-

ground, therefore, of the Apostle's thoughts it may be said that there lies the idea of a complete redemption; but only in the background. The main thought is still, as it has all along been, victory over death. To that victory it may be said that every element of redemption in its widest sense belongs. Death is the highest expression of man's "corruption," "dishonour," and "weakness." We behold in it the most striking token of his defeat and fall. Victory over it thus includes victory over everything that brings condemnation, or degradation, or misery. Death is the "last" enemy. When it has been bound, banished, destroyed, there has been given us a victory over every other spiritual foe, and not over it alone.

The Christian victory is won. Before we part from it, let us fix our minds a little more fully upon the thought that it is a "*victory*" of which St. Paul has spoken. The Christian, if he must die, enters the valley of the shadow of death, not as one who is submitting to the inevitable, but as a conqueror. Most men can submit in their last hours to God, and can lie down to die without trying to rebel against the strong hand which has them in its grasp with a power that they would vainly endeavour to shake off. "When a man," it has been said, "feels that there is no help, and he must go, he lays him down to die as quietly as a tired traveller wraps himself in his cloak to sleep."¹ That is not victory; it is defeat. It is the weaker yielding to the stronger. It is saying, "O death, thou hast conquered at last: do thy worst, I contend no more." Such is not the position of the Christian as here contemplated. With him rather the victory remains. "All things" are his, and among these "death" is his (1 Cor. iii. 22).

Now therefore we may adopt the practical conclusion added by St. Paul to everything he had said: "Where-

¹ Robertson, *Sermons*, vol. iii.

fore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord" (ver. 58). It is unnecessary to suppose, as has been sometimes done, that the first two expressions met with in these words, "steadfast" and "unmovable," refer to doctrine, the third, "abounding," to active exertion, as if the words "in the work of the Lord" were to be connected only with the one mentioned last. Had the Apostle intended this difference, he would undoubtedly have brought it out more clearly. But there was no need to direct our thoughts to any such distinction between belief and practice. To St. Paul's mind the two constituted one whole. There could be no genuine belief which was not followed by corresponding practice. There could be no Christian practice which did not rest upon the facts of the person and the life of Christ. Doctrine is as distinctly implied in the mention of "the work of the Lord" as though it had been expressly named. To be "steadfast" and "unmovable" in good works is as much required of the Christian as to display these qualities in regard to doctrine; while to be "abounding" in our love and appreciation of doctrine is as necessary as to be abounding in work. In these circumstances it seems best to connect all the three adjectives with the same subject, "the work of the Lord."

All of them express ideas of their own. "Steadfast" connects itself with the thought of a building reared upon a good foundation, a building settled and firm (comp. Col. i. 23). "Unmovable" connects itself with the thought of movement occasioned by outward causes—storms or earthquakes in the case of a building, heresies or temptations of any kind in the case of Christian men (comp. Col. i. 23). "Abounding," again, reminds us that our Christian life is not to be a stunted growth; that the Christian does not ask himself how little, but how much

he can do for the Lord who has redeemed him by His blood; and that, forgetting the things that are behind, he constantly presses onward to those that are before. This last note of their high calling is that in which the followers of Jesus are even more apt to fail than in either steadfastness or unmovableness; and therein may lie the reason why the Apostle gives it peculiar emphasis by placing the word "always" before it. Certainly for no part of their life do Christians stand more in need of the voice of exhortation. They fail to think enough, not simply of "the blessing of the gospel of Christ," but of "the fulness" of its blessing (Rom. xv. 29). Into the depths of the love which has been revealed to them they do not seek to penetrate. To the heights of the glory to which they may be brought they make no effort to ascend. With the boundless treasures that are before them they do not care to be enriched. They have passed, it may be, the line which separates death from life and hell from heaven. They are out of the wilderness, delivered from its trials; and there, therefore, they will rest from their labours. The pleasant land that is before them they will explore no further; and already, on this side of Jordan, they would pitch their tents, and be at peace.

Nor is this spirit less apt to display itself in relation to the duties than in relation to the privileges of the Christian life. Too often in Christian living, even when thoroughly sincere, there is a want of largeness of heart, of freedom of spirit, of those ever loftier flights with which they that wait upon the Lord ought like eagles to mount into the air (Isa. xl. 31). One would think that the spirit of the Old Testament must in this respect have been not unfrequently higher than ours. We too seldom speak of "running" the way of God's commandments, when He shall "enlarge" our hearts (Ps. cxix. 32). We too seldom hear the song: "O Lord, truly I am Thy

servant: I am Thy servant, the son of thine handmaid
Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to Thee the
sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of
the Lord. . . . Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. cxvi. 16, 17, 19).
Perhaps it is not difficult to explain why it should be so.
The Israelite of old dwelt in the presence of God, although
that God was less fully revealed to him than to us in the
more attractive features of His character. God was in the
midst of Israel. The devout Jew could always lift his
eyes to the temple on Mount Moriah and sing, "In Salem
also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion"
(Ps. lxxvi. 2). He knew that his Friend, his Protector,
his Shield in the day of battle, his Tower of defence against
any besieging foe, was always at hand, and ready to deliver
him. His spirits, therefore, could always rise in adversity,
and he could "abound in hope." Christian men often fail
to have this deep sense of the immediate presence of their
Father and Redeemer. Their minds are occupied with the
process by which the work of their redemption was carried
through at the time when Jesus was on earth. They
accompany Him who loved them and gave Himself for
them to the successive scenes of toil and suffering and
agony and death through which He passed when He
tabernacled in the flesh. They go in search of Him, and
do not sufficiently realize that He has come, and that
He is always coming, in search of them. Their Christian
graces and privileges are not nourished, to the extent at
least that they ought to be, by the light of the counte-
nance of a present and a living Lord.

It is quite otherwise with the New Testament itself, and
with the displays of feeling that are brought under our
notice there. In particular, that we may keep close to
the passage which we are now considering, it is so with
St. Paul in the words before us. The work "of the Lord"
he says, and again he speaks of labour not vain "in the

Lord"; and there cannot be a moment's doubt that by "the Lord," thus twice mentioned, he means Jesus Christ, not merely in His earthly life, but in His exalted and heavenly life. That glorified Lord was continually by His people's side, knowing them, sympathising with them, making His grace sufficient for them, and perfecting His strength in their weakness. Therefore might they always be steadfast, always be unmovable, always abound. He that was with them was far more than all that could be against them.

Finally, also, they might look beyond this present scene, when everything they had toiled or suffered for here would bring with it its own reward. It is not a merely general reward of which St. Paul speaks, one that may be valuable in itself, but may have no correspondence to the labours previously undergone, or no intimate bond of connexion with them. The word used by him for "vain" is that used in ver. 14 of this chapter (*κενός*), and distinct in meaning from that translated by the same English term in ver. 17. It expresses not only what is vain, in that it comes to naught and produces no result, but what is in itself empty and void. That therefore which is not "vain" or "void" is that which is full, rich in substance, pregnant with results. And such is the Christian "labour" to which St. Paul refers. To the eye of the world it may seem vain. These labours for the good of others who often neither think of them nor value them when known; these self-denials and self-sacrifices to bring about, though it may be on a narrow field, a better time for the poor, the criminal, or the sorrowing; these struggles in the distant recesses of the soul and in the private chamber to rise above the world, and to gain in larger measure the spirit of that heavenly and Divine Master whom he follows, but of whom he continually falls so far short; these renouncings of earthly pleasures which he might enjoy, and of earthly

riches and honours which he might gain,—all these may seem to those around the believer the outcome of a fantastic imagination or of fevered dreams. Is it possible to say that they would be more than this were there no hereafter, were there nothing but the grave before us at the end of thankless and not unfrequently disappointing toil, were there no resurrection of the dead? But they assume a new character in the light of the eternal world, and of the resurrection of Him who died for us, and rose again that we, having partaken of His spirit, may also share His glory. They are the labours of the seedtime, to be followed by an abundant harvest. They are the battle to be crowned with victory, the race to be ended at a glorious goal, the voyage over stormy seas that the ship may reach a more smiling land, and may enter an eternal haven. Even while they are endured they are full of promise and of hope, and along with each is given a foretaste of the coming blessedness. The heart rises above everything that would otherwise weaken or discourage it. We may be counted fools for Christ's sake; but in Him our weakness is strength, our tears are smiles, our sorrow is joy. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? it is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"; "Let us not be weary in well-doing"; "Our labour is not void in the Lord."

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