

A SPIRITUAL DEATH AND A HIDDEN LIFE

Preached on Lord's Day Morning, July 20th, 1856, at Gower Street Chapel, London

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:2-4

What a signal mercy! what a blessing, as beyond all price, so beyond all conception, and all expression, is it to be a believer in the Son of God! Hundreds, thousands, millions, live and die without any knowledge of Him, any faith in Him, any love towards Him. And what must be their eternal destiny? What but the lake that burns with fire and brimstone? Our reasoning mind, when not subdued by divine teaching, our naturally compassionate feelings, when not softened into acquiescence with the divine will, pause and ponder; and when in imagination we seem to look down into the flames of eternal woe, and think of the thousands and millions that will for ever welter there, we instinctively shrink back. If such feelings be indulged, we may soon be drawn aside to pity lost souls; when once we begin to pity lost souls, Satan may draw us on to pity lost devils; and when we begin to pity lost devils we rebel against God, until the mind becomes filled with every base imagination too vile for me even to allude to. We must, therefore, at any cost, hold fast by the Word of God's testimony; for when once we depart from that, we wander into mazes of error and confusion. Now, if we adhere to God's testimony, we seem, to my mind, to come to these three points: 1. That the soul which lives and dies without knowing the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be a partaker of eternal life; for He Himself says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and

Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." If, then, eternal life consists in the knowledge of Christ, eternal death must be the consequence of not knowing Him. 2. Again: the Lord says, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." We come, therefore, to this solemn conclusion, that if a man live and die without a spiritual faith in the Son of God, he is and must be eternally lost. And, 3. We come to a third conclusion, from the same inspired Word of testimony, that if a man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, and live and die without His love being shed abroad in his heart, he falls under the curse of God; for the Apostle Paul, speaking in His name, says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema," i.e., let the solemn curse of God rest upon him. So that if we adhere to the Word of God's testimony we come to this solemn conclusion, though in coming to it we seem to cut off and indeed do cut off millions, that without a saving knowledge of, without a spiritual faith in, and without a divine love to, the Son of God, there is no salvation; and therefore that those who die without that knowledge, without that faith, and without that love, must perish in their sins.

But the point that concerns you and me is, whether we have this saving knowledge of, this living faith in, and this heavenly love toward the Son of God; for we have to stand before His bar, we have souls to be saved or lost, and the grand question with every one whom God has quickened into spiritual life is, "Lord, is it I? How stands my soul before God? On what ground does it rest for eternity?"

The Epistles, and amongst them the Epistle to the Colossians, are addressed to the Church of God. When, therefore, the Apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right

hand of God," he addresses these words to believers—to those who, by virtue of a vital union with the Son of God, and by being made partakers of regenerating grace, have risen with Christ, and having risen with Christ, and sitting with Him in heavenly places, are seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." It is, therefore, to believers, and to believers only, in the Son of God, that he addresses the exhortation of our text, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Why? "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." But will it be always so? No; for "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

In looking at these words, I hope I shall not confuse your minds, nor complicate my subject, if I arrange my thoughts under five heads.

I. I shall endeavour to show how Christ is "our life."

II. How the believer is "dead."

III. How his life is hid with Christ in God.

IV. How it springs from this—that he is to "set his affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

V. Lastly, the sweet and blessed promise that puts the crowning blessing upon the whole: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

I. *Union with Christ* is the grand truth revealed in the Scripture, and the fountain head out of which every blessing springs. But to understand this we must carry our thoughts upward and backward, to look at the foundation of the

eternal union that subsists between Christ and the Church. The Fall did not break in upon the purposes of God as a river swollen with heavy rains bursts in upon and desolates the smiling plains. It was an event fore-viewed and fore-provided for; and therefore, in the counsels of eternity, a people, "a multitude which no man can number," was given to the Son of God, and united to Him by a union so close, so ineffable, and so indissoluble, that though the Scripture does give us figures to help our conception, yet all earthly figures fall far short of the divine reality. There is no union in nature that approaches in closeness the union betwixt Christ and His people. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." What natural oneness can ever approach a union thus set forth by the words of Him who cannot lie?

But to help our conceptions, the Scripture has given us various figures to set forth the eternal union that subsists between Christ and His Church. The vine and the branches, the corner-stone and the stones that surround it, the husband and wife, the head and members—all these are Scriptural figures, whereby the eternal union between Christ and His people is set forth. Now, it is by virtue of this eternal union between Christ and His people that when He suffered they, so to speak, suffered with Him; when He died, they died with Him; when He lay in the tomb, they lay with Him; when He rose from the grave, they rose with Him; when He ascended up on high, they ascended with Him; and when He sat Himself down in heavenly places, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, they virtually sat down together with Him. All this was independent of the work of grace upon their soul, whereby they are brought in due time to a living apprehension of it. There are members of Christ who are not at present in living union, and yet have an eternal union with Him. We may conceive this even in the instance of the human body. Take the case of a frost-bitten hand. That is to

all vital movement and feeling perfectly dead; and would, unless vivified and restored, rot and perish. But by timely aid, and proper appliances, it is restored, and becomes a living, active member of the body. So there are members of the mystical body of Christ still dead in trespasses and sins. Nay, many are not even in existence, but are still unborn. As the Lord Himself speaks, "In Thy book were all My members written, when as yet there was none of them." These, then, have not yet received regenerating grace to give them a vital union; but they have eternal grace stored up in Christ, as their covenant Head, whereby they possess an eternal union. In due time the Spirit of grace will come into them, and quicken them into spiritual life; and then they will be not only one with Him in that eternal union, which is the source of all other, but they will have a living union by faith, whereby being joined to the Lord, they become one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), and so receive out of His fulness grace for grace.

In this sense Christ is "*our life*." When the blessed Spirit has breathed upon us, quickened us into spiritual existence, communicating the life of God, brought Him near to us and brought us near to Him, and given us a living faith to apprehend Him, then He becomes "our life," our Head, and from Him we derive all supplies of faith, hope, love, and every grace.

II. I pass on to consider how a believer is "*dead*;" for the text says, "Ye are dead." Religion, true religion, is full of paradoxes. There is no real contradiction in the work of grace upon the heart. But there are many paradoxes. The apostle, for instance, says, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." These are not contradictions, but they are paradoxes; that is, they are apparent, not real inconsistencies. So in the text, the believer is not dead in one

sense, yet he is dead in another; yea, by a singular paradox, when he is alive he is dead, and when he is dead he is alive. As the apostle says, "I was alive without the law once." He was not really alive, for he was dead in sin; but when the law came and slew him, though there was life in his soul, yet by that law he was killed and slain; as he says, "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Now, a believer, a child of God, is dead in two senses: he is dead as regards the law, and he is dead as regards the gospel; and I shall show you how. First, he is dead by the law; as the apostle says, "I through the law am dead to the law." The law comes home with spirituality to his conscience, and by its condemning sentence it slays him utterly; it kills him as to all legal hope.

But we may say, perhaps, if we examine the subject a little more closely, that the law kills in three senses, and in three ways.

1. First, it kills by its spirituality and curse, when it is opened up in a sinner's conscience, in some such words as, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." When that killing sentence comes into a man's conscience, it slays him as to salvation by the works of the law; it condemns him, and kills him outright, as to any hope that may spring from his own righteousness.

2. The law kills, secondly, by stirring up the movements of sin in the carnal mind. As the apostle says, "The motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Sin lies in our mind at times almost torpid; at least we are unconscious of any vigorous movement. The law comes. What is the consequence? Sin is revived by the condemnation that the law brings. There is

something in our nature that resists prohibition, and rises up against it. If there were so many rooms in a house, and there was a strict charge given you that you should not go into one certain room, that would be the first room you would want to enter. If there were so many different kinds of fruit put on the table, and you might touch every fruit but one, that one would be the one you would want to eat. There is something, then, in our perverse nature, which prohibition seems to stir up into movement. Thus the law, prohibiting sin, rouses up sin by the very prohibition it gives. "Thou shalt not do this." "Aye, but I will." "Thou shalt do this." "Aye, but I won't." There is thus the vigorous movement of the carnal mind setting itself in opposition against the will of God. And thus the spirituality of God's law kills, not only by cursing us in every thought, word, and deed that does not come up to the required perfection, but by rousing up the very sins that it does condemn; and thus brings us in doubly guilty.

3. And there is a third sense in which the law condemns; which is, by not only slaying once, outright and for ever for transgressions past and gone, but by continually passing a fresh sentence of condemnation against every sinful thought, word, or deed, as it springs up into manifestation. Thus it is not only the scythe in the hayfield that mows down the long and strong crop of grass, but the scythe on the lawn which cuts down the fresh grass as it springs up. And thus, first, by its spirituality, secondly, by its stirring up of sin, and thirdly, by its constant sentence of condemnation, the law kills and slays the soul which is under its curse and bondage. In that sense, then, a believer is "dead." When, however, the law has executed its office it is virtually dead also. It has done its worst, and dies in doing it. Like a bee it dies in stinging. Let us look a little more closely at this point. A man is arrested for a certain crime, for the commission of which the law of the land adjudges six to twelve months imprisonment. The

man is found guilty, and the law takes its effect. But with the last stroke of twelve on the last day of his imprisonment, he is as free as his jailer; the prison doors are thrown open, and the law is as dead to him as much as if he had never broken it. So in the case of the condemned murderer. When the law has hanged him, and his body is taken down from the fatal beam, the law is as dead to him as if it had never executed him. This is the apostle's meaning when he says, "I, through the law, am become dead to the law." When the criminal dies by the law, he becomes dead to that law which has killed him. The law is then dead to him, and he dead to it.

But there is another sense in which a child of God becomes "dead;" and that is by virtue of a living union with Christ. When, after being killed and slain by the law, mercy reaches the soul with any revelation of Christ, any manifestation of the love of God, or any application of His truth, a divine power is put forth that raises up a living faith in the Lord Jesus, as sitting at God's right hand; and this living faith puts us into a vital possession of all those benefits and blessings which are in Christ Jesus. We know not who or what Christ is till He reveals Himself; we know not what He has suffered, or what we are in Him till He is pleased to manifest Himself. But when he discovers His blessedness and beauty, He raises up a spiritual faith in Himself; and by this spiritual faith we apprehend what He is and has, and receive out of His fulness grace for grace; and thus we enter by living faith into the benefits and blessings of His death and resurrection. It is in this sense that we become "dead" by the gospel, as we became "dead" by the law. Now, it is only as we drink at the fountain-head, and receive by living faith out of Christ's fulness, that we can be dead in the full sense of the apostle's meaning; for when he says, "Ye are dead," he implies the death of a child of God to everything around him—to all those things that lead the soul into captivity and bondage.

We are to become "dead" to everything by which we are surrounded. How? By a vital union with the Son of God; by seeing who and what Jesus is, and entering by faith into His sufferings and sorrows, death and burial; and then rising with Him into heavenly places, and receiving supplies out of His fulness. It is by this experience that a death is put upon the things of time and sense, and we become, as the apostle speaks, "dead" in the true gospel sense of the word.

How many poor souls are struggling against the power of sin, and yet never get any victory over it! How many are daily led captive by the lusts of the flesh, the love of the world, and the pride of life, and never get any victory over them! How many fight and grapple with tears, vows, and strong resolutions against the besetting sins of temper, levity, or covetousness, who are still entangled and overcome by them again and again! Now, why is this? Because they know not the secret of spiritual strength against, and spiritual victory over them. It is only by virtue of a living union with the Lord Jesus Christ, drinking into His sufferings and death, and receiving out of His fulness, that we can gain any victory over the world, sin, death, or hell. Let me bring this down a little to your own experience. Say your soul has been, on one particular occasion, very sweetly favoured; a melting sense of the Saviour's precious love and blood has come into your heart, and you could then believe, with a faith of God's own giving, that He is eternally yours; and through this faith, as an open channel of divine communication, His merits and mediation, blood, righteousness, and dying love, came sweetly streaming into your soul. What was the effect? To lead you to sin, to presumption, to licentiousness? Nay, just the contrary. To a holy obedience in heart, lip, and life. Sin is never really or effectually subdued in any other way. I have often thought of the conversion of Colonel Gardiner as an instance in point. It is an extreme case, I admit, and one,

perhaps, unparalleled in the annals of grace, but it will, perhaps, throw light on the subject before us. He, being dead in sin, had made an assignation with a married female, and was waiting to keep his criminal appointment. To while away his time, he took up a book; and whilst reading, a light suddenly streamed on the page. Looking up to see the cause, he beheld in vision Christ hanging on the cross, surrounded with heavenly glory, and these words seemed spoken as with an audible voice, "Did I suffer all this for thee; and are these thy returns?" I offer no opinion on the vision itself, though I believe it was from the Lord. What I want to show is, the effect produced on his soul. It overwhelmed him in a flood of sorrow, and swept away in a moment every thought of his criminal engagement. Saul struck down at the gates of Damascus, and turned from persecution to praying, is a scriptural instance of the death of sin by the power of Christ. It is not, then, by legal strivings and earnest resolutions, vows, and tears, which are but monkery at best (a milder form of the hair shirt, the bleeding scourge, and the damp cloister), the vain struggle of religious flesh to subdue sinful flesh, that can overcome sin; but it is by a believing acquaintance with, and a spiritual entrance into the sufferings and sorrows of the Son of God, having a living faith in Him, and receiving out of His fulness supplies of grace and strength—strength made perfect in our weakness. In this sense the apostle says to these Colossians, "For ye are dead;" not merely by the law having condemned and slain you, as to all legal hopes, but by virtue of a participation in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of a living union with the suffering Son of God. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law," where sin reigns with increased dominion, "but under grace," which subdues sin by pardoning it. If you read Rom. 6 with an enlightened eye, you will see how the apostle traces out the death of the believer unto the power and prevalence of

sin, by virtue of a spiritual baptism into the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

III. But I pass on to our third point, which is very closely connected with the two preceding. I have been endeavouring, hitherto, to trace out from the Word of God, and from the experience of His saints, these two vital positions; first, the union that a believer has with the Son of God, giving him communion with Him in sufferings and death, as well as in resurrection and life. I then went on to show how the believer, by having this living union with the Son of God, received into his soul Christ's death and sufferings; and by virtue of these, felt in living experience, obtained a victory, according to the measure of his faith, over sin and the world. Now I pass on to a point closely connected with these two, which is, the life of a believer being hid with Christ in God.

I said religion was made up of paradoxes. Paradoxes are not contradictions; at least so only in appearance, for though they contradict each other in one sense, yet not in another. Here, then, is a paradox: dead, and yet alive. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." But, my friends, what a blessed thing it is to have a life in the soul that never can die! What will all our profession avail us if we are not made partakers of this spiritual, this eternal life, by regenerating grace? But if we are, this life can no more die out of our heart than Christ can die out of heaven. His own words are—and let His own words stand, say unbelief and Satan what they will—"Because I live, ye shall live also." Here, then, is our life, if God has quickened our souls into spiritual being. It is Christ Himself; and the life that He gives out of His fulness He will Himself maintain, according to His own declaration: "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

But this life is a hidden life; and hidden in two senses. 1. First, from all human view. As Hart speaks of faith,

"Deep in the heart it lies;

so with the life of God. It lies deep in the heart, and lying there is necessarily hidden from all human eye, except so far as is manifested by fruits following.

There is nothing so deep, nothing so hidden, as the life of God in the soul. It seems to be enshrined in the lowest depths of a man's heart. It does not float upon the surface, like a cork upon the water, but sinks deep, very deep, into the very bottom of the soul. Therefore hidden from the eyes of a profane world; hidden from the professing world; and what is more, sometimes hidden from the subject of it himself. A child of God often cannot see his own faith, nor can he discern the life that is bubbling and streaming up in his own bosom. It is not a lake, spread abroad in the meridian sunshine, to attract every eye; nor is it a brook that flows babbling on over the clear pebbles; but it is a well. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Therefore hidden from view. The best part of our religion is that which is least seen. The secret cries, groans, tears, confessions, supplications, and breathings after God do not for the most part come abroad; the despondency, heart sickness, trials, perplexities, and powerful temptations, with which many a dear saint of God is exercised, do not come to view. No; nor his fears, sinkings, guilt, misery, and self-condemnation. Yes, the best part of his religion is hidden from view, for the weightiest ever sinks the deepest. And as it is with the dealings of his soul with God, so it is with the dealings of God with his soul—making and keeping his conscience tender,

reviving the fear of God, drawing the heart upward into prayer and meditation, watering his spirit, and bedewing it with the secret dew and rain of His grace. Thus, the best part, because the spiritual part, of a man's religion is hidden from the eyes of all, except as the fruits thereof are manifest. Take your stand upon yon hill, and see that thread of verdure spreading itself through the barren plain. Whence comes that green strip which you see? Coming down to examine it, you find a little brooklet threading its way through the barren plain. It is this brooklet that, watering the roots of the grass, gives it that verdure; yet the brooklet itself is hidden till the eye is brought close to it. So it is with the life of God in the soul. We see the effects, the verdure produced by the brooklet: but the brooklet itself, the life and grace of God in the innermost soul, is hidden, "hid with Christ in God."

And if not merely hidden, but hidden with Christ in God, what a sacred, what a holy, what a truly divine life it must be! If this be spiritual religion, that it dwells with Christ Himself in the bosom of God, what a divine thing, what a heavenly possession! how full of eternal blessedness must the religion of a child of God be! It is locked up in two distinct places, yet united with each other by virtue of the humanity of Christ, and the faith that embraces it. If I may use the expression, one end is in the bosom of God, and the other in the believer's breast! Compare man's paltry, beggarly religion with this supernatural life of God in the soul—Christ Himself formed in the heart the hope of glory. Words would fail to express the eternal distinction between them.

2. But the word "hidden" will carry another idea—out of reach, treasured up, therefore safe. What would have become long ago of the life of God in the soul, if it could have been robbed, trodden out, or lost? But this it never can be,

for it is locked up in the person of the Son of God. It is, therefore, out of the reach of Satan, sin, death, and hell; safe in Christ's keeping, locked up in His eternal bosom. Were it otherwise, where should you and I long ago have been? Where would our religion have gone to, unless we had reason to believe that it had been kindled by the power of God, and was maintained by the same power which first gave it birth? This is the grand consolation of a child of God—to believe that he has the life of God in his soul; and to feel, day by day, that He who gave that life maintains it in firm and living exercise.

IV. This brings us to our fourth point: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Has God by His Spirit and grace planted divine life in your soul? Has He made you a partaker of the benefits and blessings of Christ's sufferings and death, blood and righteousness? and is your life "hidden with Christ in God?" Where are your affections, then, to be? Are they to be set on things on the earth—those perishing toys, those polluting vanities, those carking cares, which must ever damp, though they cannot destroy, the life of God in the soul? Oh! we may well say to those who have any vital evidence of being dead, yet alive, "Dear brethren, set your affection on things above; let your thoughts, your desires, your wants and wishes, be fixed on heavenly realities; let them not grovel on things below, which, fondly loved and eagerly pursued, can only bring bondage and death into your soul."

The expression, "Things on the earth," takes a wide scope. It embraces not only the vain toys, the ambitious hopes, the perishing pleasures in which a gay, unthinking world is sunk and lost; but even the legitimate calls of business, the claims of wife and home, family and friends, with every social tie

that binds to earth. Thus every object on which the eye can rest, every thought or desire apart from God that may spring up in the mind, every secret idol that lurks in the bosom, every care and anxiety that is not of grace, every fond anticipation of pleasure or profit that the world may hold out, or the worldly heart embrace—all, with a million pursuits in which man's fallen nature seeks employment or happiness, are "things on the earth" on which the affections are not to be set. Love we may our wives and children; pursue our lawful callings we should with diligence and industry; provide for our families we must according to the good providence of God; but set our affections on these things we may not when they pull us down from heaven to earth. He who is worthy of all our affections claims them all for Himself. He who is the Bridegroom of the soul demands, as He has fairly won, the undivided love of His bride.

But how are we to do this? Can we do this great work of ourselves? No; it is only the Lord Himself manifesting His beauty and blessedness to our soul, and letting down the golden cord of His love into our breast, that draws up our affections, and fixes them where He sits at God's right hand. In order to do this, He captivates the heart by some look of love, some word of His grace, some sweet promise, or some divine truth spiritually applied. When He thus captivates the soul, and draws it up, then the affections flow unto Him as the source and fountain of all blessings. We are not flogged into loving Him, but drawn by love into love. Love cannot be bought or sold; it is an inward affection that flows naturally and necessarily towards its object and all connected with it; and thus, as love flows out to Jesus, the affections instinctively and necessarily set themselves "on things above, and not on things on the earth."

But what are these "things above?" They are all things stored

up in Christ, that breathe of Christ, and come out of Christ. Pardon, peace, righteousness, love, "joy unspeakable and full of glory," with strength against sin, victory over death and hell, power against besetting lusts and temptations—in a word, every blessing wherewith God hath blessed His people "in heavenly places in Christ;" these are the "things above" that the soul has to set its affections upon. But we must have some view by faith of the Person of Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father; He must be revealed to our soul by the power of God before we can see His beauty and blessedness, and so fall in love with Him as "the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely." Then everything that speaks of Christ, savours of Christ, and breathes of Christ, becomes inexpressibly sweet and precious.

This is "the golden oil" that flows into the heart; this is the "sweet-smelling myrrh which drops upon the handles of the lock;" this is "the aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces;" this is "the love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown;" and by an experience of this the affections become set on things above. And in no other way can they be lifted up from earth to heaven. We cannot control our affections; they will run out of their own accord. If then our affections be earthly, they will run towards the earth; if they be carnal and sensual, they will flow towards carnal and sensual objects. But when the Lord Jesus Christ, by some manifestation of His glory and blessedness, or the Holy Ghost, by taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to the soul, sets Him before our eyes as the only object worthy of and claiming every affection of our heart, then the affections flow out, I was going to say naturally, but most certainly spiritually, towards Him; and when this is the case, the affections are set on things above.

Again, there is no way except by being spiritually baptized

into Christ's death and life, that we can ever get a victory over our besetting sins. If, on the one hand, we have a view of a suffering Christ, and thus become baptized into His sufferings and death, the feeling, while it lasts, will subdue the power of sin. Or, on the other hand, if we get a believing view of a risen Christ, and receive supplies of grace out of His fulness, that will lift us above its dominion. If sin be powerfully working in us, we want one of these two things to subdue it: either we must have something come down to us to give us a victory over sin in our strugglings against it, or we must have something to lift us up out of sin into a purer and better element. When there is a view of the sufferings and sorrows, agonies and death of the Son of God, power comes down to the soul in its struggles against sin, and gives it a measure of holy resistance and subduing strength against it. So, when there is a coming in of the grace and love of Christ, it lifts up the soul from the love and power of sin into a purer and holier atmosphere. Sin cannot be subdued in any other way. You must either be baptized into Christ's sufferings and death, or you must be baptized (and these follow each other) into Christ's resurrection and life.

A sight of Him as a suffering God, or a view of Him as a risen Jesus, must be connected with every successful attempt to get the victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. You may strive, vow, and repent; and what does it all amount to? You sink deeper and deeper into sin than before. Pride, lust, and covetousness come in like a flood, and you are swamped and carried away almost before you are aware. But if you get a view of a suffering Christ, or of a risen Christ; if you get a taste of His dying love, a drop of His atoning blood, or any manifestation of His beauty and blessedness, there comes from this spiritual baptism into His death or His life a subduing power; and this gives a victory over temptation and sin which nothing else can or will give. Yet I believe we are

often many years learning this divine secret, striving to repent and reform, and cannot; trying to get better by dipping the Ethiopian into the washing tub, till at last by divine teaching we come to learn a little of what the apostle meant when he said, "The life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." And when we can get into this life of faith, this hidden life, then our affections are set on things above. There is no use setting people to work by legal strivings; they only plunge themselves deeper in the ditch. You must get Christ into your soul by the power of God, and then He will subdue, by His smiles, blood, love, and presence, every internal foe.

V. The apostle (to come to our fifth and last point, upon which I must be brief) sets before the believing church a blessed prospect, to cheer and encourage them in their onward struggle towards this heavenly kingdom. "When Christ," he says, "who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." If Christ be your life upon earth; if you have a living faith in His divine majesty; if any drops of His love have ever bedewed your soul; if any sweet smile has ever comforted your heart, the apostle would say to all such, "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear with all His saints, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." No longer pestered by sin and Satan, no longer carrying about a weak, infirm tabernacle, the seat of innumerable evils and maladies, but endued with a soul pure as He is pure, and a spiritual body capable of enjoying the bliss and blessedness of eternity, "then shall ye appear," ye suffering saints, who have set your affections on Him whom ye have not seen, and yet in whom ye believe, "then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." And is not this worth struggling for? Is not this a blessed goal at the end of the race? Is not this a worthy prize to run for? Is not this an ample reward of all your temptations, troubles, griefs, and sorrows, to believe, and

not in vain, that "when He shall appear," you "shall appear with Him in glory?" The Lord, if it be His will, lead our souls into these divine and blessed realities! They are the substance of vital godliness; and so far as we feel them, and live under the sweet influences and bedewing operations of the Spirit of grace, these things will prove all our salvation, as they must be, if we be rightly taught, all our desire.