

## Crucifixion with Christ

Preached at the North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Lord's Day Morning, August 19, 1860

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest mystery of divine wisdom and Almighty power, of eternal love and superabounding grace, which could ever have been displayed before the eyes of men or angels. I call it a mystery, not only as incomprehensible by natural intellect, but because the very essence of a mystery, in the Scripture sense of the term, is to be hidden from some and revealed to others. Thus the Lord said to his disciples when they asked him why he spake unto the multitude in parables, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11.) In the same spirit he on another occasion said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21.) The cross, then, is a mystery, not only as enfolding in its bosom the deepest treasures of heavenly wisdom and grace, but because the power and wisdom of it are hidden from some, and made known to others. The apostle, therefore, begs of the saints at Ephesus that they would pray for him that utterance might be given unto him that he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which he was an ambassador in bonds. (Eph. 6:19, 20.) And again he says, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the

Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph. 3:8, 9.) Salvation by the cross was of all doctrines the most offensive, and the most unintelligible. That the promised Messiah should be crucified was unto the Jew, who anticipated a triumphant king, a stumbling block; that a crucified man was the Son of God was to the Greek foolishness, for it contradicted sense and reason. Thus the preaching of the cross was to them that perish foolishness. But there were those whose eyes were divinely enlightened to see, and their hearts opened to believe and receive it. He therefore adds, "But unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18.) Though foolishness to the learned Greek, there were those who saw in the cross a wisdom as much surpassing all other as the midday sun surpasses the faintest star; which made the apostle say, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2:6, 7, 8.) This, then, is the mystery of the cross; this is the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, that the Son of God, who as God the Son, is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, should take our nature into union with his own divine Person, and in that nature should suffer, agonize, bleed, and die; that by his sufferings, blood-shedding, and death an innumerable multitude of sinners should be redeemed from the curse of the law and the damnation of hell, and be saved in himself with an everlasting salvation. It is not my present object to enter further into the depth of this mystery as a display of

the infinite wisdom, love, and grace of God; but I may briefly say that by the cross of our suffering, dying Lord, justice and mercy were thoroughly harmonised; every attribute of God blessedly glorified; the Son of his love supremely exalted; redemption's work fully accomplished; the church everlastingly saved; Satan entirely baffled and defeated; and an eternal revenue of praise laid up to redound to the glory of a triune Jehovah. Well then may we say, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. 3:16.)

But there never lived a man more deeply penetrated, or more thoroughly and inwardly possessed with a sense of the grace and glory displayed in this mystery than the apostle Paul. Such wisdom and power, such love and grace, such fulness of salvation did he see and feel in the cross, that, as a preacher of the gospel, he was determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified. United to Christ by a living faith, he could declare, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14.) And knowing experimentally what it was to have sacred fellowship with Christ in his sufferings and death, he could speak of himself as being crucified with him, as if he were so one with Jesus in spirit, so conformed to his suffering image, and so baptized into his death, that it was as if Christ and he were nailed to one and the same cross. "I am crucified," he says, "with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

In opening up these words, I shall, with God's blessing, direct your minds,

I.—*First*, to the grand foundation on which the whole of the text rests, as intimated in the last clause—the *love and gift* of the Son of God.

II.—*Secondly*, the effect of that being made known to the soul by a divine power: it causes it to *be crucified with Christ*.

III.—*Thirdly*, the consequence of this crucifixion with Christ; which is not, as we should expect, death, but rather *life*: "*Nevertheless, I live.*"

IV.—*Fourthly*, that *self* has no hand in this divine life; "*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"

V.—*Fifthly*, that this life is a *life of faith* on the Son of God.

I.—Union with Christ is the grand, I may say the sole source and spring of vital godliness; for union must precede communion; and "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" is indeed the very sum and substance, the very life and power and blessedness of all true religion. What fruit can the branch bear without union with the vine? And is not union maintained as well as manifested by abiding communion? "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John 15:4.)

But the original source as well as the closeness and individuality of this union and communion with Christ are pointed out by the language of the apostle, "*who loved me and gave himself for me.*" He had a testimony in his own breast that the Son of God loved him, and gave himself for him; and it was the sweet enjoyment of this inward assurance of Christ's personal, individual love to his soul, and the flowing forth of faith and love toward him in return,

which enabled him to say in the language of holy fellowship with him, "I am crucified with Christ."

Now, many of the saints of God may not be so highly favoured as to take up into their lips Paul's language of strong, personal assurance. They may hope, and at times may rise beyond a hope, into a sweet confidence, by the shining in of the Sun of Righteousness, that the Son of God has loved them and given himself for them. But the strength of Paul's persuasion and the full expression of his confidence so far out-strip both their assurance and their language, that many real saints of God confess they come short both in heart and tongue. Yet their coming short of this blessed certainty as an enjoyed reality in the heart, and as a declared confidence by the mouth—for conscience and tongue must move together where God works—does not affect the fact. Clouds and mists sometimes obscure the sun, but they do not blot him out of the sky. So the mists and fogs of unbelief may obscure the Sun of Righteousness, yet they do not blot him out of the spiritual hemisphere. He still loved you and gave himself for you who believe in his name, though you may not be able to rise up to the faith of Paul, or speak with the same fulness of assurance. The bud has the same union with the vine as the branch, but not the same strength of union; the babe is as much a member of the family as the grownup son, but has not the same knowledge of its relationship; the foot is as much a part of the body as the eye or the hand, though it has not the same nearness to the head, or the same honours and employments. If, then, you can find any inward testimony, be it but a rising hope of your interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he loved you and gave himself for you, look with me to the three particulars connected with Paul's expression of his confidence:—First, the *Person* of "the Son of God." Secondly, *the love* which he, as the Son of God, bore to his church. Thirdly, *the fruit* of

that love, in *giving* himself for her; for that the church was the object both of the love and the gift, is plain enough from the apostle's words, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25.)

i. In speaking here of the glorious Person of the Son of God, I do not wish to enter into the field of controversy. In fact, with me, the true, proper, and eternal Sonship of our blessed Lord is not a matter of controversy. I receive it as a most blessed truth, no more to be controverted than the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity of Christ, or the Trinity itself. Apart, then, from all controversy, looking at the words in the simplicity of faith, receiving them purely and plainly as the Spirit of God dictated them and left them on record by the hand of Paul, I would ask any child of God here present if they do not in themselves afford sufficient proof that the Son of God was the Son of God from all eternity? If any one doubt this conclusion, and I were to ask him "When did the love of Christ begin?" must not his answer, to be consistent with truth, be, "It had no beginning, for his own words are 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee?'" (Jer. 31:3.) And he would rightly add, "It must from the very nature of God, from the eternity of his purposes and the infinity of his perfections, be eternal, for if this love knew beginning, it could know end." But Jesus, as the Son of God, loved Paul; for we read, "the Son of God loved me;" if, then, this love was eternal, the Son of God must have been eternal, or he would have loved him as the Son of God before he was the Son of God. Thus, without entering into the field of controversy, to seek there for other arguments, in the simplicity and in the strength of faith, as taking our stand upon this one text, were there no other, we at once say, if the Son of God loved his church from everlasting, he was the

Son of God from everlasting. But, to bring this to a practical head, to a close and experimental bearing upon our own conscience, how can we know for ourselves that he is the Son of God who loved us from all eternity, unless we have some knowledge of him as the Son of God from all eternity? This makes me say that I have passed beyond the region of controversy—beyond the Arctic Sea ever shrouded in the chilling mists and fogs of dispute and uncertainty into the Pacific Ocean of a southern hemisphere, where we can look at the Sun of Righteousness as shining in the bright, clear sky. Those who doubt or deny his divine Sonship have never seen his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Theirs is not the faith of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16); nor of Nathanael, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God" (John 1:49); nor of Paul, when straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20); nor can they say with holy John, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5:20.) If we are to live a life of faith in the Son of God, we must know him in our own souls to be the Son of God, as John so plainly speaks. If we are to believe that he loved us from all eternity, we must have some knowledge of him as the Son of God from all eternity. But, how can we have this knowledge or this faith unless he is pleased to reveal himself to our soul? As Paul speaks in this very Epistle, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." (Gal. 1:15, 16.) God revealed his Son in Paul's heart, and by this revelation he knew for himself that he was the Son of God; for he received him as such into his inmost soul and into his warmest affections. And when the Son of God was thus revealed in his soul, the love of God was shed

abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; and as that love was shed abroad, it raised up a firm persuasion that the same Son of God loved him, and had loved him from all eternity. For when the Son of God was revealed, love was revealed in him, and with him, and through him. Yea, the Son of God himself came with such power into his soul, shone into his heart with such heavenly beams, and revealed his love and blood and grace so gloriously and so conspicuously that he could say, in the sweet language of assurance, "the Son of God loved me."

ii. But look with me at this *love*. When did this love begin? As I said before, this love knew no beginning; for if this love knew beginning, it might know end; if it knew rise, it might know decline. If you can assign an origin to any thing, you must assign to it a termination; for every thing which in time began to be, may in time cease to be.

1. It was then necessarily *eternal*; and in this consists its peculiar blessedness, that, being from eternity, it will last to eternity; having no beginning, it will know no end. What would heaven be, if it lasted only a few ages, and then an end, a blank, a dissolution, an annihilation, a ceasing of love? What else but a very ceasing to be? for God being love, the end of his loving would be the end of his being. The very thought, the remotest prospect, would change the anthems of heaven into wailings of mourning and lamentation. It would thoroughly damp, if not fully extinguish the joys of the saints, that they could look forward to a period when those joys would cease, and a Triune God, he who is God the Son, would love them no more.

2. But this love was not only eternal: it was *infinite*. We speak sometimes of the attributes of God, and we use the words to help our conception. But God, strictly speaking, has



no attributes. His attributes are himself. We speak, for instance, of the love of God, but God is love; of the justice of God, but God is just; of the holiness of God, but God is holy; of the purity of God, but God is pure. As he is all love, so he is all justice, all purity, all holiness. Love, then, is infinite, because God is infinite: his very name, his very character, his very nature, his very essence is infinite love. He would cease to be God if he did not love, and if that love were not as large as himself, as infinite as his own self-existent, incomprehensible essence. The love of the Son of God as God the Son, is co-equal and coeternal with the love of the Father; for the holy Trinity has not three distinct loves, either in date or degree. The Father loves from all eternity; the Holy Ghost loves from all eternity. The love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as one, equal, indivisible, infinite Jehovah cannot be otherwise but One. We therefore read of "the love of God," that is the Father (2 Cor. 13:14); of "the love of the Son," in our text; and of "the love of the Spirit." (Rom. 15:30.) This love being infinite, can bear with all our infirmities, with all those grievous sins that would, unless that love were boundless, have long ago broken it utterly through. This is beautifully expressed by the prophet. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man." (Hosea 11:8, 9.).

3. But this love is also *unchangeable*, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. 3:6.) "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. 13:8.) Thus this love knows neither variableness nor shadow of turning: but is always fixed on the same objects, without the least change, the least

augmentation, or the least declension. It is hard to conceive love that knows no variation, if we measure the love of God by our own. We are naturally mutable creatures, overwhelmed by infirmities through the fall, and, therefore, ever subject to changes; but he changeth not. Our love to him is ever sinking or rising, as fluctuating as the tides of the sea, as variable as the winds in the sky; but his love to us, whose hearts he has touched by his grace, is as immutable as his own immutable Being.

4. And from this circumstance his love is *indissoluble*. Our love to each other is soon dissolved. How a little strife, a little envy, a little difference of opinion, an angry word, or a reported tale, may alienate our affections from one another! How soon jealousy, suspicion, or dislike may creep into our warmest feelings and sever the closest ties! Were we to review the chains which have bound us at various times to our warmest friends, how many would lie upon the ground with broken links; links, alas! so severed as to yield scarce any prospect of re-union in this time-state. I fully admit that a spiritual union is never really broken; but Christian communion and that sweet intercourse which should exist among brethren are often so interrupted that they seem almost utterly gone. What would be our condition for time or for eternity if the love of Christ to us resembled our love to each other? But one of the sweetest features of the love of the Son of God to his saints is, that it is indissoluble.

III. But, now let us look at the *fruits*, and *results* of that love wherewith Christ loved his church. And what heart can conceive or what tongue express the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of that love? As the apostle speaks, "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which

passeth knowledge?" (Eph. 3:17, 18.) Could he have afforded a greater, a richer, a clearer evidence of this love than by *giving* himself for us? There is something in this expression which seems to outstrip all conception and all expression. As viewed by faith, there is something so large, so comprehensive, and yet so inexpressibly touching in the words "*gave himself for me,*" that I despair of bringing it before your minds as my heart could desire. But let us make the attempt; and in doing so let us first, if the Lord enable, take a view by faith of the Son of God as lying in the bosom of the Father from all eternity as his only-begotten Son. If thus enabled to contemplate the glories of heaven, the bliss and blessedness that fill those celestial courts, the sweet employments ever going on in the worship and adoration of angels, and what far surpasses all human thought, the holy fellowship and divine intercommunion between the three Persons of the sacred Godhead, and that from all eternity,— shall we then not see what Jesus left in leaving the bosom of God? Now if, lowering our view, we cast a glance at the sins and sorrows of this lower world, what it is in itself, as a mere earthly abode, and what sin has made it with all its dreadful consequences; then to look at the Son of God freely giving himself out of the bosom of his Father and all the bliss and glory of heaven, to come down to this world of sin and grief: we seem for a few moments lost in wonder at love so great, at love so free, at love so self-sacrificing as this. How *broad* to spread itself over such a seething mass of sin and sorrow; how *long* to know neither beginning nor end, but to stretch from eternity to eternity; how *deep* to sink so low as the gates of the grave; how *high* to raise from thence poor lost sinners to the glories of heaven! And when we take a further view of what the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself *unto* as well as gave himself *from*, for we must take both into consideration; when we see by the eye of faith the condescension of his glorious Majesty in taking our flesh in

the womb of the Virgin; when we think how he tabernacled here below amid such scenes of misery and abomination as daily met his eye; when we view him in Pilate's judgment hall exposed to the buffetings of the rude Roman soldiers, scourged and mangled, as if he were the vilest malefactor, and then see him hanging upon the cross, and there dying the most painful and ignominious death that the cruelty of man had ever devised; and when we remember that he who bled and suffered there was the Son of God who thus gave himself to redeem us from the lowest hell, how lost we seem to be in wonder! These are the things which the angels desire to look into; for they in heaven beheld his glory before they saw him in the manger, ministered to him in the wilderness, strengthened him in the garden, viewed him on the cross, and watched over his sepulchre. A part of the great mystery of godliness is that "God manifest in the flesh" was "seen of angels" (1 Tim. 3:16); seen by them as the Son of God in heaven; seen by them as the Son of man on earth. To see him, then, with angels' eyes is to look at what Christ came from, and what Christ came unto; what he was in heaven and what he was on earth; the glories of his Father's house, and the ignominy of Pilate's judgment hall; the bliss of his Father's bosom and the tortures of Calvary's cross; the love of his Father's heart and the hidings of his Father's face; the worship of adoring angels and the shouts of the blasphemous multitude; the glory of the only begotten Son and the bloody sweat of Gethsemane.

And do you not see in the expression "*gave himself*," how freely, how fully, how voluntarily, how unreservedly he yielded himself up to the lowest depths of shame and sorrow! No force but the gentle force of love; no compulsion but the compulsion of grace; no constraint but the constraint of doing his Father's will, which was his delight (Psal. 40:8), moved him to give himself. He could give no more; he would

give no less. And all this he did to save our souls from the bottomless pit. Now these heavenly mysteries are not matters of mere doctrine or theoretical speculation, but to be received into a believing heart as a matter of personal and living experience; in a word, they are to be revealed to our soul by the power of God, and made experimentally and feelingly ours by the sealing testimony of the Holy Ghost upon our breast. Now just as we are put into possession of these divine realities by an inward experience of their heavenly power, can we make use of the apostle's language, to which I now come.

## II.—*"I am crucified with Christ."*

Let us seek, if the Lord enable, some spiritual entrance into the experimental meaning of these words.

i. And take them *first* in their simple meaning, neither adding to, nor diminishing their literal signification. To be "crucified with Christ" is to be nailed to the cross with him. But this could not be *actually* done; for Jesus had no partner in his cross, though there were those who were crucified by his side. It was, then, in the feelings of his soul that Paul was crucified with Christ. This blessed man of God had such a view in his bosom of the crucifixion of the Lord of life and glory, that it was as if he were nailed to the same cross with him, as if the same nails that pierced the hands and feet of the blessed Redeemer were struck through his hands and his feet. It was not in body, but in soul; not in his flesh, but in his spirit, that he was thus crucified with him. In this sense he was nailed side by side, or rather to the same cross, with the suffering God-Man. In this sense, therefore he mystically and spiritually suffered as Christ suffered, died as Christ died; and was thus made conformable to his suffering, dying image.

ii. But taking the words in a wider sense, as applicable to all the saints of God, we may lay it down as a certain truth that there are two senses in which every saint is crucified with Christ: first, *representatively*; secondly, *experimentally*.

Both these senses I shall now unfold.

1. *First*, then, there is a union which the Church of Christ has with her Head, which we may call *representative*; that is, there is such a union between Christ and his Church as exists between the head and its members, between the Husband and the wife; and as this is not a nominal but a real, not a dead but a living union, she has such an interest in all that he did and suffered for her sake, that she may be said to have been one with him in those acts and sufferings. Thus, when he died, she died with him; when he rose, she rose with him; when he went on high, she ascended with him; when he sat down at the right hand of the Father, she was made to sit in heavenly places with him. All these you will remember are scriptural expressions, and are meant to show us not only the intimacy of this union, but its efficacious nature; for the virtue and validity of these acts and sufferings of her glorious Head become hers in consequence of this close, and intimate, and eternal union of person and interests. In the same way, when Christ was crucified, the Church of God was crucified with him; for so intimate is their union, that when the Head was crucified, the members were crucified also. This may seem mysterious and incomprehensible. But why was Christ crucified? Was it for himself? Why did Christ suffer? Was it for his own sins? If a husband go to jail for his wife, or die for her, does she not mystically go with him to the prison and to the scaffold? Thus mystically and representatively, every member of Christ's body was crucified with their crucified Head.

2. But this is not the only, nor indeed the chief meaning of the passage before us. The apostle was speaking *experimentally* of the feelings of the soul—what he was daily passing through as a living member of the mystical body of Christ; for though there is a representative crucifying of all Christ's members in which all the family of God have a share, even those yet unborn, as united to him by eternal ties, this can only be made known by regenerating grace. There is, then, a being experimentally crucified with Christ, made known to the soul by the power of God; and of this felt, inward, daily, experimental crucifixion the apostle here especially speaks.

iii. But you will observe, if you look at the text carefully, that the apostle uses the word "I" very much through it. And if besides this observation of the letter, you are able to read the text in the light of the blessed Spirit, and understand it experimentally for yourselves by sharing in the same gracious work upon your heart, you will also find there are two "I's" that run through the whole text, and that these two "I's" are perfectly distinct. Thus there is an "I" that is crucified, and an "I" that lives; there is an "I" not worthy of the name, which is therefore called a "not I;" that there is an "I" which lives in the flesh, and that there is an "I" which lives by the faith of the Son of God. These two "I's" are perfectly distinct in birth and being; in beginning and end; in living and dying; in thought and feeling; in word and action; in desire and movement; and they are so essentially distinct as never to unite, but to be at perpetual warfare. There is therefore, a natural "I" and a spiritual "I." These are the two "I's" which look upon us from the text; and whose life and death, history and actions, are faithfully recorded by the pen of one who know them both from daily, hourly intercourse. The solution of this mystery is not difficult. Every believer

carries in his bosom two distinct natures; as born of Adam, one nature which the Scripture calls the "Old man;" and another which, as being born of God, the Scripture terms the "new man." The first is the natural "I," and the second is the spiritual "I;" and it is in the struggle between these two principles, the old man and the new, the fleshly "I" and the spiritual "I," that so much of the conflict in a Christian's bosom consists. How vividly has the apostle described these two "I's" and the conflict between them, Rom. 7.: there we find an "I" which is "carnal, sold under sin;" an "I" which does evil, in which no good dwells; which serves the law of sin, and in which the body of death is ever present. And then we have an "I" which delights in the law of God; which consents unto it that it is good; which serves it and hates everything opposed to it; which cries out, "O, wretched man that I am," and yet thanks God through Jesus Christ. Is there one born of God who does not daily find and feel these two "I's?" Is there a living soul in which they are not ever at war?

There being then these two "I's" in every believer, the question naturally rises in our mind, which "I" is crucified with Christ: the fleshly, natural "I," or the spiritual, gracious "I?" We cannot for a moment doubt which "I" is crucified when we turn to the language of the apostle. "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." (Rom. 6:6.) We have a similar light cast upon the point by another expression of the apostle in this very epistle, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. 5:24.) And again, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14.) Thus we see, from God's own testimony, that it is the old man, the flesh, and the world which are crucified; so that when the apostle says, "I am crucified," he means his



old Adam "I;" his worldly, his fleshly, his sinful, his selfish "I;" in a word, the whole of that native and natural "I" which he derived from our fallen parent. But let us look at these things a little more closely.

1. If we are crucified with Christ, the *world* is to be crucified to us and we to the world. But which world is crucified, for there are two; a world without, and a world within? Can we take the outward world in our grasp and drive through it the nails of crucifixion? This we can no more do than we can embrace the globe, or drink up the Atlantic. That huge world which lies spread before our eyes is beyond our reach; out of all proportion with our grasp. But we have a worldly "I" in our bosom which is but the reflection of the great world without. For what is the world all around us but an aggregate of human hearts; a motley, mingled multitude of carnal "I's;" so that each individual is but a specimen of the whole, and the whole but a huge collection of individual specimens? It would indeed then be but lost labour to attempt to nail the outward world to the cross of Christ. This is not the task that lies before the child of grace. His crucifixion is *within*. His own carnal heart, worldly spirit, proud, covetous, aspiring mind, it is, which is to be crucified with the Lord of life and glory. For it comes to this, that our worldly "I" must either reign and rule; be pampered and petted; fed and nurtured in pride and pleasure; or it must be crucified, mortified, and subdued by the power of God's grace. The apostle therefore speaks of the world being crucified to him and he unto the world. What attraction would the world, with all its pleasures and profits, have to the eyes of one dying on a cross? Or what charms could he, writhing with pain, groaning in agony, dropping blood from his hands and feet, present to the eyes of the gay and glittering world? The cross killed the world to him; the cross killed him to the world. What was a living world to a dying man? What was a dying man to a living world? Now we cannot be *literally* crucified. Even if we were,

that would give us no spiritual change of heart, nor cause us to be crucified with Christ. It is, therefore, not the actual body or the literal flesh—the mere outward material man which is crucified; but it is the worldly spirit in a believer's heart, the proud, selfish, carnal "I," which, by virtue first of his *representative*, and then by the power of his *experimental* crucifixion with Christ is crucified with Jesus, nailed to the cross to suffer, bleed, and die with him. This inward crucifixion of the worldly spirit, of the natural "I," kills the believer to the world. Do you not find this in your own experience? The world without would little attract, influence, or ensnare your mind, unless you had the world within alive to it. As long then as the worldly spirit lives in you unsubdued, unmortified, uncrucified, your religion is but skin deep. A thin coat of profession may film the surface of the heart, hiding the inside from view; but the whole spirit of ungodliness is alive beneath, and as much in union with the world as the magnet with the pole, or the drunkard with his cups. But, on the contrary, if the world within be crucified by the power of Christ's cross, the world without will have little charm. And this will be in exact proportion to the life and strength of your faith and the reality of your crucifixion. The world is ever the same; one huge mass of sin and ungodliness. That cannot be changed; that can never die. It must be *you* who are changed; it must be *you* who die to it. Now, is it not true that it is the meeting of the two worlds in one embrace, which gives the world without all its power to ensnare and entangle your feet? Let the worldly spirit be but crucified in our breast, then we shall be like the dying man who has no sympathy with the living world. The poor criminal that was nailed to the cross, dying there in agony and shame, could look down with expiring eyes upon the crowd below him, or cast his last glance on the mountains and vales, woods and rivers of the prospect before him. Might not such a one say, "O, busy crowd! O, once fair and beauteous

world! I am dying to you, and ye are dying to me. O, world, where now are your fashions; where your maxims; where your lusts; where your vain and gaudy shows; where are ye all now that I am dying here upon the cross? My eyes are sinking into the shades of night. I am leaving you, and ye are leaving me. Here we part, and that for ever. I once loved you, and ye once loved me; but there is between us now separation, enmity, and death." Is not this crucifixion? This at least is the figure of the apostle; and a most striking one, in which he represents the world as crucified to him, and himself to the world.

But you will observe that it is only by virtue of "the cross of Christ," that is, by a spiritual union and experimental communion with Christ crucified that this inward crucifixion can be really effected. There are two things whereby the inward, spiritual, and experimental crucifixion of a child of God is distinguished from that of a Papist, a Puseyite, or a Pharisee. The first is that it is by "the *cross* of Christ," that is, it flows from a spiritual knowledge of union with a crucified Jesus. "I am crucified with Christ." I do not crucify myself; nor does my flesh crucify my flesh. The second feature is that the *whole* of the old is crucified; it is not one limb, but the *whole* body which suffers crucifixion; as the Apostle says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not sin." (Rom. 6:6.) In the literal crucifixion, though the nails were driven through the feet and hands, the whole body was crucified; so spiritually, though the nails may chiefly be struck through the working and moving members of the old man, yet the whole of him is crucified with them. So not only our worldly spirit, but our whole flesh, with all its plans and projects, with all its schemes, motives, and designs, is nailed to the cross; and especially our religious flesh, for this is included in the "affections" of it, which are

crucified. (Gal. 5:24.)

But now arises another question. Is this crucifixion with our consent, or against our consent? To this I answer that it is partly voluntary, and partly involuntary. We may illustrate this by the example of Peter. The Lord said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wert young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." (John 21:18.) The Lord was here referring to Peter's crucifixion, and tells him that "when he would be old, another would gird him, and carry him whither he would not." Do we not see from this that Peter would shrink from being crucified, but that he would be carried to the cross against his will? Yet we read in ecclesiastical history, that when that time arrived, Peter begged of his executioners to crucify him with his head downwards, because he could not bear to die in the same posture with his crucified Lord. Thus we see in the actual, literal crucifixion of one of the Lord's most highly favoured followers, there was a shrinking from the cross, and yet a submission to it. "The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak." The natural "I" was unwilling, the spiritual "I" was willing. So, it is with us in a spiritual sense. The coward flesh rebels against, and cries out under the nails of crucifixion; but the spirit submits, and, when favoured by divine help, counts itself unworthy of such an honour and such a blessing. But no man ever spiritually crucified his own flesh. This is God's work, who in so doing spares not for our crying. Perhaps we are hugging close some bosom idol, some secret lust, some rising ambition, some covetous plan, or pleasing prospect. This may be as dear to us almost as our natural life. Can we then drive through it the crucifying nails? Or if we could, would that crucify it? No. God himself must take it with his own hand, and drive through it the nails of

crucifixion; yes, and so drive them through this worldly spirit, this covetous heart, this proud, unbending mind, this self-righteous, self-pleasing, self-exalting affection, this deceptive, delusive, soul-destroying, fleshly religion, that it may ever after live a dying life. It is he, not you, who thus crucifies it, that its hands can no more move to execute its designs than the hands of a man nailed upon a cross, and its feet no more walk in the plan projected than the feet of a crucified man can come down from the cross and walk abroad in the world. Here is God taking your darling schemes, your favourite projects, your anticipated delights, so that they become to you dying, bleeding, gasping objects. Have you not again and again experienced this in providence? Have not all your airy castles been hurled down, your prospects in life blighted, your hopes laid low, your projects disappointed, in a word, all your schemes and plans to get on in life so nailed to the cross that they could move neither hands nor feet, but kept dying away by a slow, painful, and lingering death? But did you approve of all this? Very far from it; but you were in God's hands, and could not fight against his cutting strokes. Thus, then, you have a proof in yourself that your worldly schemes and projects were taken by the hand of God, contrary to your wish, for you loved them too dearly to part with them, but were as if torn from your bosom by God's relentless hand, and nailed to the cross, not by you but by him. And yet mercy was so mingled with these dealings, and your heart was so softened by a sense of God's goodness in and under them, that there was a sweet spirit of submission given you, which mingled itself with this unwillingness, and subdued and overpowered it. Thus you were made willing in the day of his power that God should take the idols out of your bosom with his own hand; you consented generally, that they should be crucified, because by this lingering death only could the life-blood of your worldly spirit be at all drained out of your breast. For

crucifixion is a gradual death which drains life and blood slowly away.

So with the *flesh* generally, for the whole of our flesh is to be crucified; for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." And again, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13.) To mortify means to put to death; and that death is the death of the cross. By his Spirit and grace God gives his people strength at times, to mortify and crucify the deeds of the body, with all the wretched passions and affections of the carnal mind. In this sense they do it; for he fires their soul with a holy hatred of sin, and godly resentment, what the apostle calls "indignation" and "revenge" (2 Cor. 7:11), against its movements and horrid opposition to the will and word of God. So that, in a sense, a believer's spiritual "I," under the influence of grace, drives the nails of crucifixion through his carnal "I." Have you not felt at times that you could with your own hands take vengeance upon that dreadful flesh of yours which has been and is such a deadly foe, not only to God but to your own soul's peace? Could you not almost kill your wicked heart for being what it is? Now, as the grace to do this only flows into the soul from union to Christ as crucified for us, we are in this sense "crucified with Christ." There is no other way whereby sin can be subdued, or the flesh crucified with all its affections and lusts; so that not one, however small, however hidden, can escape the crucifying nail. O, how blessed it is to have a view by faith of the cross of Christ; to derive strength out of that cross, so as to give up our flesh to crucifixion, yield up our bosom idols, and with our own hands crucify our darling lusts, saying to the Lord, "All these evils of my heart are sworn enemies of thee: take them, Lord, and nail them to thy cross, that they may not live in my bosom so as to grieve the blessed Spirit, cause thee to hide thy face, wound and distress my

conscience, and bring me into captivity and bondage." Thus you see that this inward crucifixion is done unwillingly, and yet done willingly. The carnal "I" rebels against the cross, but the spiritual "I" submits to it, sees the will of God in it, and joins with him in the doing of it. We may compare them, perhaps, to the two malefactors who were crucified with Christ. The one felt nothing but the outward agonies of the cross, and rebelled against it to his latest breath: this may be a figure of our fleshly "I." The other malefactor at first rebelled and blasphemed too; but when grace touched his heart and God revealed his dear Son in him, he could bless the Lord for being crucified with him, and counted it his happiest day and his dearest delight, for out of it came salvation and Paradise. I offer this, however, as a figure, not as an interpretation. Yet we cannot but feel deeply the crucifying nails, and cry out under them; but the Lord will not spare for our crying. The Lord has no compassion for our sins, though he has compassion upon our persons. As he would not take his dear Son from the cross, though as a Father he pitied him, so he may pity you as a child (Psal. 103:13), yet not spare your lusts.

The crucifixion of self is indispensable to following Christ, as he himself said:—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The criminal always carried his own cross. To take up the cross, then, is to be crucified by being affixed to it. What is so dear to a man as himself? Yet this beloved self is to be crucified. Whether it be proud, or ambitious, or selfish, or covetous, or, what is harder still, religious self—that dear, idolized creature, which has been the subject of so much fondling, petting, pampering, nursing, to part with which is to part with our very natural life—this fondly loved self has to be taken out of our bosom by the hand of God, and nailed to Christ's cross.

Now what can compensate us for this pain and this sacrifice? Nothing that earth can give. But there is a most blessed compensation which earth never dreamt of, but which is the special gift of heaven. And this compensation begins here below; for as the child of grace is thus experimentally crucified with Christ, the benefits of Christ's cross begin to flow into his soul. Pardon through his blood; peace through his sacrifice; communion and fellowship with him in his dying love; power over sin; victory over the world; subjugation of his lusts, and the subduing of his iniquities, become more or less experimentally tasted, felt, and realised. For as the soul is thus crucified with Christ, and the flesh nailed to his cross, power passes over from the cross into the soul, to give us victory over self; for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And faith in whom? In Jesus as the Son of God, who came "by water and blood"—the blood to cleanse and the water to sanctify. (1 John 5:4, 6.) How deep, how blessed is the mystery that Christ is of God made unto us "sanctification," as well as "righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30); and that the same grace which pardons sins also subdues it! Who of you can say, "I am crucified with Christ?" Blessed is such a man! Blessed is such a crucifixion!

III.—But the apostle goes on to add, as I proposed to show in the third pace, "*Nevertheless I live.*" One would think at first sight that this crucifixion would be his death. To be crucified with Christ! to have everything that the flesh loves and idolizes put to death! How can a man survive such a process? In the same way as the three children cast into the furnace were not burnt by the fire. Crucifixion is not death but life to a child of God. This made the apostle say, "Nevertheless I live." But what "I?" I have shown you that there is a twofold I in the Christian's bosom—the old Adam "I" and the new Adam "I," the carnal "I" and the spiritual "I;"



and I have also shown you that it is the old Adam "I" which is crucified with Christ. But as this old Adam "I" is crucified, it is not that "I" which lives, but the spiritual "I;" for the death of the carnal "I" is the life of the spiritual "I." As the old man is put off, the new man is put on; as the world, sin, and self are crucified, subdued, and subjugated by the power of the cross, the life of God springs up with new vigour in the soul. The believing "I," the hoping, the loving, the praying, the watchful, the broken, the contrite, the humble, in a word, the new "I" lives in proportion as the natural "I" is crucified by the grace of God. Here then, is the mystery, and here is the grand, distinguishing difference between the living saint of God and the dead in sin or the dead in profession. It is death to a worldly man to take the world out of his breast. Here is a man immersed in business, whose whole heart is in it night and day. Let him get into difficulties, become a bankrupt, ruin himself and his family, be arrested for debt, and shut up in prison; the man dies of a broken heart. Here is another whose whole heart is in his money: it is his idol, his god, his all. Maddened by the lust of gain, he speculates to a large amount. A crash comes; down he goes; and what is his end? He puts a pistol to his head, or drinks a phial of prussic acid, and dies upon a heath. Take another man living in drunkenness, lust, and every other vile abomination. Put him into a penitentiary; shave his head, and feed him with bread and water. He dies from the mere misery of life. Life's pleasures are gone. He only lived for them. Take them away, and he dies for want of them. Take another person. It shall this time be a lady—full of the world, its fashions, its pleasures, its amusements, its company, its enjoyments. Take away from her those delights of her vain heart; her fine dresses, her admirers, her youthful attractions: the woman is miserable; she dies, if not literally yet inwardly, of vexation and disappointment. But let the world, sin, self, and all that he loves by nature be taken from a child of God. Does he

die? Die? What, he die? No; just the contrary. He lives all the more for now he lives more unto the Lord. How martyrs in prison have blessed and praised God. A dungeon did not kill their inward life. Being taken out of the world and shut up in a dark prison was not their death, for the world was not their life. They only enjoyed more of the sunlight of God's face. Look at Christians on their death bed, when the world with all its gaudy shows is shut out. Does this kill them? Do they not rather live all the more unto God; so that the more the world is shut out, and the more that self is put under their feet, the more they feel a holy joy, a quiet, tranquil contentment, such as God alone is pleased to shower down upon their breast? Just, then, in proportion as the world and the flesh, sin and self, are crucified, does the life of God spring up in the soul of those who fear God. It was this divine life springing up within which made the apostle say—and can we not sometimes echo back his words? "Nevertheless I live."

Here, then, is the great secret of vital godliness that the Christian lives most within, when everything dies most without; that the more that nature fades, the more grace thrives; the more that sin and self, and the world are mortified, the more do holiness and spirituality of mind, heavenly affections and gracious desires spring up and flourish in the soul. O! blessed death! O! still more blessed life!

IV.—But to come to our next point,—in order to discard all idea that he could do all or any of this—that he had any innate strength or power to carry on this blessed work in his own soul—to dispossess us of any such opinion of his own strength or holiness, he tells us in the most pointed language, "*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" "O," he would say, "look not at Paul; take not your measure of him as if he were able to do these things in his own strength. Look not at

him, but at Christ; in him Paul lives, it is true; but not in his own life, but in Christ's. He fights against sin and self; not however in his own strength, but in Christ's. He stands righteous before God. Not however in his own righteousness, but Christ's. He has both will and action; yet neither is his own, but Christ's; for Christ works in him both to will and to do his good pleasure." This made the apostle say "Not I." It could not be his natural "I," for that was crucified; and he even disclaims any part of the work as done by his spiritual "I;" for though that lived, yet, it only lived by Christ living in it.

But how it may be asked, does Christ live in a believer's soul? By his Spirit and grace; by being formed in his heart, the hope of glory; by blessing the soul with his presence and power; by communicating and shedding abroad his love. Thus, it is not the believer, but the Spirit of Christ in him, by which he lives unto God. Do you not find this true in your daily experience? If we pray with any life or feeling in our soul, with any access to a throne of grace, or obtain any answer; it is not we that pray: it is the Spirit of God praying in us. If I preach anything that may instruct, comfort, or edify your soul, or write anything that may be blessed to build up the Church of God on our most holy faith; it is not I, but the Spirit of God that speaks in me, and guides my pen. How else could I, or any other man, be made a blessing to the church of God? It is not my abilities or learning, but the dew and unction of the blessed Spirit resting upon me, which glorifies God or edifies the church. Or take me as a private Christian. If I repent of my sins, it is not I that repent, but the Spirit of God giving me repentance. If I believe in the Lord of life and glory, it is not I that believe, but the Lord giving me faith by his holy Spirit. If I watch, he must watch in me; if I live to his praise, he must live in me; if I act for his honour, he must act in me; if I enjoy his presence, it is

he who must communicate a sense of that presence to my heart. So it is not I, but Christ himself that liveth in me. O blessed guest! O gracious inhabitant! Who that fears God would not have such a blessed inmate ever to dwell in his bosom? And who that has had him once does not long again and again for his sweet presence, and to experience renewed and repeated manifestations of his love? It is true that those are rare seasons; but the Lord never leaves the heart into which he has ever come. If you have not the felt presence, you are longing for it; and these longings, breathings, and desires manifest more or less of his power and presence. You will also find from time to time how secretly and yet how blessedly the Lord will come into the soul. He will come sometimes in a word of promise; sometimes in a look of love; sometimes in a sweet smile; sometimes in a soft whisper; sometimes in a heavenly touch. How he will melt at one time your heart into sorrow for sin; how he will at another encourage you with a word when much cast down; will shine upon your soul when it walks in thick darkness; will renew your life that seems almost gone, and revive your spirit. And as you will thus find your dependence upon him for every spiritual breath and for every gracious desire, you will learn that it is not you that live, but Christ that lives in you.

V.—But to come to our last point, *the nature of this life*. "*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*" It is a life still "in the flesh," with all the infirmities, with all the frailties, all the sins, and all the sorrows of a body of sin and death; a life in the flesh and therefore surrounded with everything that belongs to the flesh. And yet though a life *in* the flesh, not a life *of* the flesh, but a spiritual life in a body of sin and death. Christ in the heart the hope of glory; and yet the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. What a mystery of grace is this! That so holy a guest

should take up his abode in the breast of a polluted sinner, and yet not partake of the sinner's pollution; should work in him by his Spirit and grace, and yet keep himself free from all the sinner's filth and folly.

The great blessedness of a believer here below is that he lives a life of faith in the Son of God. But how can he do this unless he has had a believing view of the Son of God as having loved him, and given himself for him, as having risen from the dead, and to be now ever living at God's right hand to make intercession for him? It is, then, as he is pleased to send his Spirit down into his heart to testify of his grace, and to draw up faith, and hope, and love, and every sweet affection to centre in himself that he lives a life of faith upon him. "Because I live," saith the Lord, "ye shall live also;" and we live because he is "the resurrection and the life." Thus as Jesus lives at God's right hand, he lives also in the believer's soul; and as he sends his Spirit down into the believer's heart, and draws his faith and hope and love to himself, he enables him to live a life of faith upon him as the Son of God. Viewing the Son of God at the right hand of the Father, he looks to him for the supply of all his wants. He sees him at one time a kind God in providence; he views him at another as a most blessed and suitable Saviour in grace; he looks sometimes to his atoning blood as cleansing from all sin; to his glorious righteousness as his only justifying robe; and to his heavenly love as the sweetest balm that God can shed abroad in his heart. He desires from time to time to have fellowship and communion with the Son of God; to be conformed to his suffering image here below, that he may be conformed to his glorified image above. It is in this way he comes up out of the wilderness, leaning upon Christ as his beloved. By his superabounding grace he is recovered and restored from his innumerable slips and falls and backslidings; by his gracious renewings, his youth is renewed like the eagle's; and thus day by day, as the blessed Spirit

works in his soul both to will and to do of his good pleasure, he lives by the faith of the Son of God. And as all this can only be done by the power of faith, by faith he lives, by faith he acts; by faith he walks; faith being the grand moving principle of every action of his soul, and the uniting chain that links his soul to the Son of God upon his heavenly throne. Thus living a life of faith upon the Son of God, he receives out of this fulness grace for grace; and by God's help and strength eventually dies in him, and rising up to the glorious mansions of light, lives with him to all eternity.

Now this is a feeble sketch of the life of a Christian; what we must know something of in our own souls, before we can really believe ourselves to be saints of the living God, by the testimony of the Spirit in our breast. We have to confess that we come painfully short in many of these things; and yet we have every reason to praise the Lord if he has put any measure of this experience into our breasts, for where he has begun that good work he will surely perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.