

THE LIFE OF CHRIST MANIFESTED IN THE DEATH OF THE CREATURE

Preached on Tuesday Evening, October 18th, 1842, at Trinity Chapel, Alfred Street, Leicester

"For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Cor. 4:11

It is very sweet, as well as instructive, to trace the wisdom of God as manifested in the way wherein the Scriptures of the New Testament were written. They were not revealed in any systematic form; they were framed according to no dry theory of truth, or as a code of doctrines and duties, as a human lawgiver would have modelled them; but in their original form they came forth from the pen of the Holy Ghost just as circumstances arose in the Church. And, for the most part, God overruled all the evils that broke forth from time to time in the Church, that they might draw forth epistles from the breasts of the apostles, the Holy Ghost teaching them how and what to write. Thus, to the turning aside of the Galatians unto "the weak and beggarly elements" of the law, we owe that noble defence of justification contained in Paul's epistle to that church. To the persecution under which the church at Philippi was suffering we owe that epistle so full of choice experience. To the mistakes of the Thessalonians concerning the second coming of Christ we are indebted for two epistles full of power and sweetness. To the wavering character of the Hebrews we owe that blessed epistle wherein the apostle has so opened and unfolded the spiritual character of the Levitical dispensation. And to the suspicion of the Corinthian church with respect to the call of the apostle to the ministry, we, in a good measure, owe the experimental epistles addressed to them. It is sweet to

observe the providence of God foreseeing that these and similar evils would exist in the Church, and permitting them to break forth in the times of the apostles, and thus preparing a remedy beforehand, which should be useful to the end of the world, the heart of man being the same in all generations, ever teeming forth with the same corruptions, and to be met only with the same remedies.

It was, then, as I have just hinted, the strong suspicion of the Corinthians respecting the call of the apostle Paul to the ministry that drew out of his bosom much of his personal experience. The second epistle to the Corinthians more especially abounds with it, and no chapter in it more than that which contains our text. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

But we should indeed be mistaken if we limited the experience contained in the text to the apostle Paul, as though it were some of his personal or ministerial experience, with which we, as individuals, had nothing to do. On the contrary, it is so worded as to take in all the quickened family of God. "*We which live,*" says the apostle, as though he would include every living soul whom God the Holy Ghost had quickened into spiritual life. With God's blessing, then, we will look at the words the apostle has here dropped, and see whether we can trace a similar experience in any of our hearts.

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

I. The first thing which strikes the mind is the expression, "*We which live*"—indeed, it is the key of the whole. It cuts off

at one decisive stroke all who are dead in sins or dead in a profession, and draws that narrow and discriminating line which every one taught of God will always draw. Thus it sets all aside except the quickened family of God; and with the same decisive hand that sets aside all who are dead Godward, it lays down a searching line of experience to try the people of God themselves. And this, we may observe, is one important use of vital experience as laid down in the Scriptures, that the family of God may be tested thereby, and brought to the touchstone, whether the work upon their hearts be real or not.

Then, "we which live," includes all whom God has quickened, and into whom He has breathed a new nature—all in whom He has begun and is carrying on the work of faith with power. And how much is summed up in these words, "we which live!" For what is this life but life everlasting? As Jesus said, "He that believeth on *Me hath everlasting life*" (John 6:47). And again, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). This spiritual and eternal life was from all eternity stored up for the elect in the Son of God as their covenant Head, that they might receive it out of His fulness who filleth all in all; and into the heart of each vessel of mercy is this divine and supernatural life breathed in the appointed time. Whatever be their distance from God through sin, however "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts," when the appointed time to favour Zion is come, life and light are breathed into their souls that they may live for ever, that they may see Christ's glory, and sit down with Him in His kingdom. But before they are brought to the eternal enjoyment of that weight of glory to which they are predestinated, there is a spiritual process to be

undergone, a path to be trod, an experience to be carried on with power in their souls. And it is in the possession of this experience that we find the traces of the footsteps of the flock—the landmarks which God has set up in Zion.

II. The first decisive step in this spiritual process is contained in the words, "We which live are alway *delivered unto death*." But the "death" thus spoken of clearly cannot mean temporal death, for that meaning would be utterly inconsistent with the remainder of the text, and with the expression "alway;" for temporal death can be but once, whilst the death spoken of in the text is a *frequent or perpetual* one. It must mean therefore a death experimentally, a death in the soul, not a death of the body.

But it may be asked, "For what purpose is this delivering of the soul unto death? What end is it to answer? What good result is it to produce?" We shall best answer this inquiry by showing the nature of this death. And we may define it, in a few words, to consist in an experimental destruction of everything that is inconsistent with that life which God himself has breathed into the soul. And as frequently in nature, so usually in grace, there is a lingering death before dissolution takes place. The seeds of death are in many persons months or years before the last breath is drawn. And so at the very beginning of a work of grace spiritual dying commences; the gradual dissolution of that life to self, sin, and Satan, which every natural man lives. Thus before the blessed Spirit quickened the soul it was alive to self and dead to God; but when a new and spiritual life is breathed into it, a mighty revolution takes place, and it begins to die to self, and live to God. It is this dying to self in the various branches in which the soul formerly lived to itself, of which the text speaks.

But there is something very striking in the expression, "We which live are alway *delivered unto death*." The sufferers of this death do not deliver themselves to it, but it is done for them and in them. In this sense God's people never commit spiritual suicide. No man ever put death into his own soul whereby self was crucified; but it is done in him by a sovereign act of Almighty power. The figure is taken from a criminal who is carried by the executioner to the place of execution; not one who goes of himself to die. This is the error of the Arminians; we may call them in this sense religious suicides. Though, after all, in them it is more mock than real, and rather resembles the stage death of an actor than a true self-immolation. But the people of God never commit this self-inflicted death; for it is that from which they shrink, which they rebel against, and to which they will never submit till God Himself kills them; for "the Lord killeth, and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." The same idea that it is the act of *another*, and not of *ourselves*, is contained in another expression of the apostle in this same epistle (2 Cor. 1:9), "We had *the sentence* of death in ourselves." The sentence of death is a judicial term, and clearly means not self-condemnation, but a decision from the lips of another, and that from one armed with authority to pronounce, and power to execute it.

III. But we will look a little at the idea couched in the expression "death." We know what a ghastly object death is naturally, and that he is the king of terrors to every man who is not enjoying a sense of his interest in Christ and the favour of God. If then we are to carry the figure out, the meaning which we have couched in the expression of the apostle must be something analogous to death naturally, and to our conceptions and feelings with respect to it. Thus the death experimental to which the soul is delivered must be as painful, as dreadful, and as much shrunk from spiritually as

natural death is naturally.

It points out, therefore, a thorough destruction of that which is naturally dear. Look at natural death in its aspect to the natural man. It comes to take him from all his delights, and from all his schemes; to remove him from the bosom of his family, and sever him from all on which his heart is set, and in which all his affections are engaged. It comes as a gloomy messenger to take him from the things which alone he understands, which alone he loves, in which his heart is wholly wrapped; and to bear him away to an awful and dreaded eternity. Such is the aspect that death naturally wears. Take this idea into spiritual things. This experimental death, then, to which we are delivered, and into which God by a sovereign act of power brings the soul, is that from which the flesh shrinks, for it comes as a sentence of destruction upon those things to which it so closely cleaves.

1. Our *carnal wisdom*, for instance, is a thing to which we naturally cleave. In this day, especially, when religious education and the exercise of the intellect upon the Scriptures is the great Diana of the Ephesians, the temptation to cleave to our own wisdom in the things of God is particularly strong. But when God comes by a sovereign act of power, and delivers us over unto death, in so doing He kills us to that wisdom in which we lived, and, so far as the things of God are concerned, passes an internal sentence of condemnation upon those natural abilities which we were taught to cultivate, and in the exercise of which we found pleasure. Who ever possessed a finer understanding, or received a better education, than Saul of Tarsus? But "what was once gain to him, that he counted loss for Christ;" and he himself proved in soul experience what he so pointedly declares, "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool

that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:18, 19). God by His Spirit makes an effectual stab at all creature wisdom when He enlightens the soul to see and feel its blindness and ignorance, and its utter impossibility of knowing anything savingly but by divine manifestation.

2. So, again, with respect our own *righteousness*. By nature we can have no understanding of any other righteousness than that which consists in obedience to the law. Whatever dim or doctrinal notions we may have of Christ's righteousness, we are unacquainted with it as our righteousness till it is personally revealed to us. A part therefore of the execution of this sentence "to deliver unto death," is the killing us to our own righteousness. The apostle says, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and *I died*." How did he die? Not naturally, but spiritually. The law as a manifestation of condemnation and death came into his conscience, and its spirituality being opened up to his soul, it came as a killing sentence against his righteousness as well as against his sins, manifesting it to be filthiness, and showing the pollution of his heart and the defilement of every thought, word, and deed.

3. So, again, with respect to *all false hopes*. We read of "the hope of the hypocrite that shall perish." This false hope, whatever it rest upon, whether the good opinion of others, reformation of life, acquaintance with the doctrines of grace, or anything short of "good hope through grace," must be delivered unto death. Whilst carnal hope—that is every hope which springs out of or centres in the flesh—lives in the soul, spiritual hope cannot reign. The death of the one is the life of the other; and thus they resemble two rivals for one throne; one must die, that the other may live; one must go to the block, that the other may hold the sceptre.

4. So, too, with respect to all *our creature religion*. There are few who do not profess some kind of religion; though this is, for the most part, traditional, and based on various grounds, as well as called by different names. What these grounds or what these names are it matters little so long as it stands in the flesh, and a profession may be as much based on the creature in the highest Calvinist as in the lowest Arminian. This religion, more or less of which we all naturally possess, of whatever character it be that stands in the flesh and springs from the creature, does not stand in the power of God; is not set up by the Holy Ghost in the heart. However specious, therefore, it may be in appearance, however near it approach the truth, however undoubted by others, however idolised by ourselves, it must be delivered unto death, that the religion from God, the religion that saves the soul, the religion of Jesus Christ, the religion of the Holy Ghost, may be set up in the heart upon the wreck and ruin of all the religion of the creature.

It seems a little thing, comparatively speaking, for a man to have *his sins* taken from him and delivered unto death; it may seem in many cases a harder struggle for a man to part with his *self-righteousness*: but when we come to something deeper, something more intricately interweaved round our heart-strings—*our religion*—this is the hardest stroke of all. For *this* is to what we are trusting to save us from endless misery. To take away this is something like flying over a bridge, and seeing the last arch cut away before our eyes, and the roaring flood opened below. There is no retracing our steps over the bridge of life; and to find *our religion*, the last arch over the flood, fall to pieces, and leave us shivering in the prospect of eternity, is terrible indeed. Why, this is the last thing a man will naturally come to. A man can part with his sins, with his companions, with his pleasures: but when it comes to his fleshly religion which he has been idolizing,

when the Spirit of God takes *that*, and delivers it over unto death, *that* is one of the last strokes that take place in severing the head of creature righteousness. I believe it requires some very sharp work in a man's soul to be brought here. I have known the time when I used to roll upon my bed, and almost count how many months it might be before I was in eternity; for I feared I had a mortal sickness in my body, and felt little else but guilt and condemnation in my soul. Here was the sifting time for all my religion that stood in the flesh. When we come into these straits, and find no well grounded hope to support the soul in the trying hour, *this* will prove whether our faith stands in the wisdom of men, or in the power of God. *Then* whatever we have received of God lives, but whatever we have received from the creature withers and dies.

IV. But mark the words, "we which live are *alway* delivered unto death." What! not *once* only? What! is the head of creature religion not only once to be severed from the bleeding corpse? No; "We which live are *alway* delivered unto death." Therefore the apostle says, "I die *daily*;" "in deaths *oft*;" death *worketh* in us;" words of similar import and similar force. The flesh is like the fabled hydra; as fast as one head was cut off another grew in its place. Creature religion has a hundred hydra heads. Let one be cut off; straightway another grows out of the old neck. Or we may compare it to the ivy that grows out of the wall; you may cut it down to the very stump, and leave apparently not a remnant; but as long as the root is in the wall, it will shoot forth again. So whatever cuttings and killings our fleshly religion may receive, it will shoot out again, the principle being more or less perpetually at work.

Day by day then there is more or less of this being "delivered unto death." A sentence of execution is passed upon the

flesh as it seeks to reign and rule in our hearts; a court of conscience is erected in the soul, as the solemn vice-regent of Christ, whose office it is to deliver over unto death the flesh as it sprouts forth. Does our carnal wisdom spring up? The King's commissioner passes sentence, and it is "delivered unto death." Its head is cut off. Does our legal righteousness spring up? Does it assume some new form, and wear some fresh disguise? Sentence is passed, and it is delivered unto death. Do our lusts rise, our passions begin to storm and swell? Sooner or later they are called before this court of review, are sentenced and delivered to death. Does pride begin to work? Does hypocrisy lift its hateful head? Does presumption puff us up? The rebels may seem to have the mastery for a time, but when the blessed Spirit acts as a spirit of judgment within, the traitors are seized, and a solemn sentence of execution is passed upon them. Conscience made tender in God's fear, discerns the workings of the creature under all its shapes. It is a kind of spiritual police to detect the felon, whatever garb he wears. Much of its divinely-constituted office consists in keenly scrutinizing the workings of the flesh. Its eyes have been anointed with heavenly eye-salve to discern the precious from the vile, and its hands armed with authority to seize and execute every religious and irreligious traitor that would usurp Christ's throne in the soul.

It is in this heart and conscience work that much of the inward conflict consists. The mere professor may be puffed up with spiritual pride, and call it humility; a hardened and seared conscience he may term gospel liberty; he may walk in the most daring presumption, and call it good confidence and the assurance of faith; but no such deceit is permitted in the heart that is made honest by grace. There is a spiritual eye in the soul that detects and arrests the felon, and there is a spiritual sword that is drawn out against him as soon as

detected. Do we not sometimes experience this? When we feel the risings of pride, is there not a solemn admonition against it in the soul? Or the workings of hypocrisy when they heave and ferment within, is there not a check upon them? If we have ever been betrayed into any open or secret sin, has not conscience borne its condemning sentence against us? If temper break forth, is there not something that smites us with remorse? If the lustful eye is looking on our neighbour's wife, is there not a reproach of conscience felt? If a revengeful thought is indulged, is there not a secret monitor who detects it, and passes sentence of condemnation upon it? David knew something of this when he had cut off the skirt of Saul's robe (1 Sam. 24:5).

By this secret work going on in the court of conscience, by this daily conflict, is the living soul distinguished from every other; and in this mainly consists "being delivered unto death."

V. But *why* should the people of God be thus continually delivered unto death? The Holy Ghost, by the pen of the Apostle, gives us the reason: "*For Jesus' sake*, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." "*For Jesus' sake*,"—not for the sake of the creature. That the crown might be put upon the brow of the rightful owner; that the creature might have all the shame, and that Christ might have all the glory.

But the blessed Spirit goes on more particularly to show how Jesus is thus glorified. He therefore adds, "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Observe the words—not merely that the life of Jesus might *be*, but that it might *be made manifest* in our mortal flesh. It is the manifestation of it—the discovery of it—the bringing it to light which the Apostle points out. Life is one thing, the

manifestation of life is another. Thus in the first quickening of the soul life is communicated, but until it is delivered unto death this life is not manifested. This life is "the life of Jesus," that is, the new and hidden spiritual life of which He is the Author. Thus the apostle says, "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is our life* shall appear," &c. (Col. 3:3, 4). This hidden and spiritual life is only brought to light, and only comes forth into action as the sentence of death takes place within; and thus this manifestation of the life of Jesus is in proportion to the delivering of the soul to death, because in this death only it is manifested, and out of this death it springs.

1. To make my meaning clearer, I will run over some of those instances in which I have shown there is a delivering over unto death. Take our own *wisdom*. It is part of the creature, something that however refined and cultivated still stands in the flesh, a member of our earthly Adam. It must therefore come to nought. Sentence has been passed upon it (1 Cor. 2: 6); and it must be delivered unto death. But why? Not that God's people may be fools and idiots, but that a *new wisdom* may reign and rule in its place; that we may find and feel a deeper, higher, nobler wisdom communicated out of Christ's fulness; in other words, that Christ Himself may be our "wisdom," as of God He is made to be to His Church (1 Cor. 1:30). Then, as our earthly wisdom dies, as we become less and less able to understand truth of ourselves, as our plans are defeated, as our projects come to nought, as our schemes are blasted, as we begin to find ourselves ignorant and fools in the things of God—as we thus find our once boasted wisdom and understanding given over unto death, and we acquiesce in that death, there is, to our surprise, a new wisdom communicated, a new light springing up to our solemn wonder, a spiritual understanding in the things of God into which we could not enter, the very existence of

which we did not know, whilst looking to and leaning upon our natural understanding. This is called in Scripture, "An unction from the Holy One," and "The anointing which teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie" (1 John 2:20, 27). This is a fruit of the life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh; and it gives light, power, knowledge, direction, opens the Scriptures, and leads the soul into those paths, into which it could not come, and of which it knew nothing whilst leaning on the wisdom of the flesh.

2. So with respect to our own *strength*. There was a time when you and I were strong in fleshly confidence, when we had no idea that we could not resist temptation and master sin, and overcome the world, and by our own strength get possession of the prize. But we have found, to our shame, the full meaning of those words, the spiritual sense of which we were once so ignorant of: "When we were yet without strength" (Rom. 5:6); and again, "Without Me ye can do nothing." We find now that we have no strength, that we are unable to bring forth anything to God's praise, that we are defenceless against sin, that we are unable to resist the fiery darts of the wicked one. We thus learn a new lesson, and after repeated slips begin to call upon the Lord to succour and help us, and then find, more or less, "His strength made perfect in our weakness." And perhaps few learn this lesson more painfully, and yet more effectually, than a minister of Christ. Till he has lost his natural wisdom, he is never wise unto salvation, nor able to minister in spiritual things to the profit of God's people. But then to find his natural wisdom and strength delivered unto death, to see them handed over to the executioner, suspended from the gallows, and buried in the felon's grave; to have no ability to understand the Word, nor power to open it; to have no spiritual ideas but what are from time to time communicated from above, and to have no door of utterance but what He who has the key of

David unlocks, not daring to go back, and yet not knowing how to go on—this is a trying spot for a minister to stand in. But to find in this death of the flesh strength and wisdom communicated, and power and savour breathed into the soul, is to experience "the life of Jesus made manifest in his mortal flesh."

3. And thus, too, with respect to our *own righteousness*. When it is delivered to death, carried to prison, and executed, the Lord opens to the eye of faith another righteousness, even Christ's spotless and glorious righteousness imparted to the believer, in which he stands without spot or blemish. Till our own was delivered over unto death, we had no eyes to see, no heart to pant after, no hands to receive this righteousness; no spiritual discovery of its power, beauty, and glory.

4. So with respect to our *creature religion*. What a loss to lose it all! But we begin to find built upon its ruins, and growing out of its death, a new religion of a totally different kind; a spiritual, heavenly, saving religion. And whatever painful struggles a man may have had as his old religion sickened and died, when he finds a new, a spiritual religion, breathed into his soul of which God Himself is the Author and Finisher, it more than indemnifies him for his loss, and at times fills him with holy wonder and admiration. He is brought to see the life of Jesus thus made manifest in his mortal flesh, working in him a new religion, of which the other was only an imitation and a counterfeit.

5. So with respect to all his *false hopes*. What a stroke to be left without hope! But to find a good hope through grace, a hope which will support the soul, an anchor sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil; who would not part with all his old hope to get such a

new one? Who would not part with "the hope of the hypocrite which shall perish," for "the hope which maketh not ashamed"?

6. So with respect to all *fond and fancied expectations of creature holiness*, and what is called "cultivating grace." To look for patience, and to find rebellion; to cultivate humility, and to find pride; to expect a flourishing crop of holiness, a heart calm and gentle, increasing prayerfulness, watchfulness, and thankfulness, and to find nothing but rebellion and devilism instead—this is to have our expectations "delivered unto death." But to find from time to time a little *true* humility, *true* patience, *true* resignation, *true* contentment communicated, this is to have "the life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh." And is not this a blessed exchange—to have all the worthless notes of our bankrupt bank destroyed, and gold—pure gold, paid into our heart's exchequer?

VI. But what are we to understand by this expression, "The life of Jesus"? I understand by it that divine and spiritual life in the souls of His people of which Christ is the Source and Author. As He said to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "The life I live in the flesh," says the Apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." And again, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6:57). This life, then, is His mediatorial life; the life that He now lives at the right hand of God, and which He breathes into His people that they may live for evermore.

But if we live spiritually by the same life that Jesus lives, it must be made manifest. Can a man have life, and there be no symptoms nor manifestations of it? If there is the same life in the quickened elect which Jesus lives at the right hand

of God, there must be some internal workings, and some external signs of it. To have spiritual life, then, and have no spiritual feelings; to have neither joys nor sorrows, no temptations and no deliverances, no prayer and no answers; but to glide at ease down the stream of an undisturbed profession, must be a delusion. Such a state resembles the "gross darkness" of which Isaiah speaks when he says, "The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Darkness covering the profane "earth," but "gross darkness"—a deeper, blacker shade, the professing "people."

If, then, there are effects that spring out of the communication of this divine life to the soul, it may be asked: "In what do these effects consist? What are the feelings produced?" We may reply, that they are usually just contrary to what we might expect. When we first set out in religion, being young and ignorant, we made many mistakes and miscalculations. For instance, we thought that religion consisted in having pure hearts and leading holy lives; in serving God to the best of our power, and so on. And when in a measure enlightened into the spiritual nature of true religion, yet we made many mistakes how it was to be obtained. Thus we were looking for life, without knowing that it came through death; for hope, not knowing it sprang up out of despondency; for wisdom, not knowing it was to commence in a knowledge of our own foolishness; for strength, not knowing it was to be made perfect in our weakness. At least, these were my ideas. But when the Lord begins to take the soul more powerfully in hand, He teaches it by His Spirit those humbling lessons of which it was before totally ignorant. And whilst we are under this teaching, we cannot see the end; we are in a labyrinth of confusion. The Lord, it is said, "Leads the blind by a way which they knew not;" and, therefore, depend upon it, if you can always or often see your way, you are not one whom God is leading.

When, then, the Lord is thus leading His people, He "brings them into darkness, and not into light." But under this strange, unlooked for leading, we are staggered, and know not what is the matter with us. Instead of holiness we find unholiness, instead of hope despondency, instead of love enmity, instead of patience rebellion, instead of every good and perfect gift, little else but the workings of corrupt nature. O, what a labyrinth! But why is this? To deliver over unto death the pretender to the throne; to put down the rival that Jesus may reign; to "overturn, overturn, overturn, till He come whose right it is." No man can ever fully or cordially receive Jesus into his soul, kiss His sceptre, bow to His dominion, and embrace it with true affection, unless he has had these rivals dethroned, and his false hopes delivered unto death, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in his mortal flesh.

VII. But what is meant by this expression, "*our mortal flesh?*" It does not mean the carnal mind, but our earthly tabernacle; and the expression is similar to another in this chapter, "We have this treasure in *earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." It is, then, in this poor body, compassed with infirmities, that the life of Jesus is made manifest. This divine life will often spring up in fervent breathings after God—in the actings of living faith, in the sweet intercourse the people of God have with one another, in reading the Scriptures, in the application of precious promises, and under the preached word. From time to time it bubbles up like a spring from its source. Sometimes, indeed, it runs underground, buried as it were under the load of "our mortal flesh;" but again and again it reappears, drawn up by the Sun of Righteousness. "Spring up, O well." But its risings are ever proportionate to its sinkings. Thus in proportion as we cease to pray naturally, do we pray spiritually; as we cease to hope in the flesh, do we

hope in the Lord; as we cease to believe with the head, do we believe with the heart; when we see an end of all perfection in self, then we begin to find perfection in Christ; and when we see nothing in our hearts but sin, misery, and wretchedness, then we begin to taste spiritual consolation. Thus, in proportion as nature sinks, the life of Jesus rises, and is made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Is the soul, then, longing to have sweet manifestations of the life of Jesus? Where must it go to get them? What does the Word of God say? "Whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears" (Job 28:20-22). Till, then, we get to "destruction and death,"—the destruction of fleshly hopes and the death of creature religion, we do not so much as ever hear the fame of true wisdom with our ears. Thus when we get into darkness, then light springs up; when we get to despondency, hope arises; when we are tempted with unbelief and infidelity, faith appears. Thus those are the wisest in whom creature wisdom has most ceased; those are the strongest who have learned most experimentally their own weakness; those are the holiest who have known most of their own filthiness; those are the most religious, in a true sense, who have least religion of their own. So that just in proportion as we are delivered unto death, and execution takes place on what the creature loves, so does the life of Jesus begin to rise and make itself blessedly manifest.

If this be true—if this be the doctrine according to godliness, if it be consistent with the path of life, and in blessed unison with the experience of the saints—if this be the case, what shall we say of those who know, or rather, profess to know (for it is but a profession), all the bright side, and nothing of

the dark; who have all faith, and were never tried with unbelief; who have all wisdom, and never felt their folly; who have all strength, and never knew their weakness; who are all calmness, and know neither fretfulness nor impatience; who are ever full of buoyant hope, and never knew despondency? Must we not say that the life of Jesus is not manifest in them? For if it be true—and who dare say it is not, when it is written by the finger of God? that "we which live"—every living soul—not Paul, not Peter *only*, but every one possessed of spiritual life—"are alway"—day by day, for little else will satisfy the words—"delivered unto death for Jesus' sake," &c., must we not say that those who are *never* delivered over unto death have not the life of Jesus made manifest in them? Does not this follow as a necessary consequence? Is it not plain that he who knows not the one knows not the other?

There are many true children of God, who are eternally His, yet who cannot make it out to their full satisfaction. Some such may be here. But this you find as a matter of painful experience, that you are "alway delivered unto death." You find you cannot be as you would fain wish to be. The preacher, perhaps, under whom you sit tells you to be holy, and you feel that you are unclean; to believe, and you find nothing but unbelief; to hope in God's mercy, and you find nothing but despondency; to meditate, and you find your thoughts at the end of the earth; to exercise patience, and you feel your mind full of rebellion; he exhorts to humility, and you think if there is a proud wretch on the face of the earth, you are one. You cannot make these things square, but God will make them so one day or other. You are passing now under the sentence, "delivered unto death." Why? To be destroyed? Not so. Something must be destroyed; "the wisdom of the wise" must perish, but not you. Something has the sentence of death pronounced against it, but not your

soul. It is a blessed thing to part with our natural wisdom, legal righteousness, and creature religion, that the soul may be saved. If we should keep our own wisdom, strength, righteousness, and false religion, all these would be so many millstone weights to sink the soul into endless woe. Is it not a blessed exchange, then, to part with them all, that when these are delivered unto death the rightful King may reign in the soul; that Jesus may sit upon the throne of the affections? Is it not a blessed exchange to find the life of Jesus made manifest in our bodies—"our mortal flesh?" To find hope rising? Prayer rising? Feeling rising? Are not these a blessed exchange? Yes; such is the mysterious arrangement of God that one is put to death that the other may live. Have you not reason, then, to bless God, if you know anything of these blessed mysteries? If in any measure you have known what it is to be "delivered unto death?" Not like dead professors whose "eyes stand out with fatness"—who are never exercised with temptation. You have reason to bless God that you know something of these painful though profitable exercises, and thus find that in proportion as you are delivered unto death, the life of Jesus is made manifest. And that life is for ever—the beginning of eternal bliss; the foretaste of endless glory. He that knows anything of this life of Jesus here will be with Him for ever, and bathe his happy soul in that river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God," and enjoy the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore.