

## SERMON IV.

### LIFE AND DEATH.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—*Phil., Chap. 1st, 21st ver.*

**I**T is pleasing to see the calmness and self-possession with which the Christian meets the afflictions and storms of life. Rising in the consciousness of mental or moral heroism, he grasps a higher reality and pours out his soul in the conquests of faith. Such, precisely, was the experience of Paul. There appears no sense of bondage in his soul, although at this time he was a prisoner. He possessed a freedom which dungeons cannot crush,—that inner freedom which is as chainless as the air we breathe, living in the experience of a far-sighted trust and a sublime faith. A very tender relationship existed between Paul and the Philippian Church. They had sent Epaphroditus to visit him in the prison at Rome, and to administer of their liberality to his need, and in return for their kindness and as a token of his affection he addressed to them this Epistle. It is remarkable that it contains no solitary word of rebuke. It recognizes in them the existence of a grateful and earnest piety, and aims at their consolation and confirmation. The spirit of the Apostle was also well calculated to produce the same result. It would have been very pardonable if, under the circumstances, he had betrayed bitterness, or at least