

he could not but have spoken of his yielding up the Ghost, and lying in the grave three days, in a different way. Death to us is the separation of the soul from the body, and such a separation did actually occur in his case. But there was a mystery about his person which placed him beyond and above the operation of merely human laws. He was the Son of God as well as the Son of Man; and death when it severed soul and body did not sever *either of them* from the divine nature to which they were united. In plain terms, when the body of Jesus rested in Joseph's sepulchre, and his soul was in the state of the dead—*both* were still in vital connection with the Only Begotten of the Father; and during that period no less than during his earthly ministry, or his subsequent glorification, the Mediator was in an unspeakably important sense living, and carrying on without intermission the work that had been given him to do.

Many entirely fail to realize this fundamental point in Christian doctrine. Some actually appear to suppose that Christ's death resulted, for the time being, in a complete dismemberment of his person—while others take it for granted that, during the three days he lay in the grave, there was a complete suspension of his mediatorial work. Both are errors of the most serious character. In the womb of the Virgin, the eternal Son of God took to himself a living body and a reasonable soul—and the union thus formed *was never suspended*, not even by the death of the cross. And as for the Work of Christ, so far is his descending into the state of the dead to be taken as proof that then, at least, it was for three days intermitted, *that every act formed part of the work itself*.

You will see, therefore, in this light, what an emphasis and significance there was in Jesus saying to his disciples, less than four and twenty hours before his crucifixion, *I live*, and because I live with a life that death cannot touch, ye shall live also. What did it teach them? and what does it teach us?

1. It proclaims the fact that Christ is the source of the believer's life. This truth is set forth, not here alone, but in many other parts of Scripture. The testimony of Jesus himself on the subject is peculiarly explicit. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." If then, my reader has been awakened out of the sleep of sin and death, and has undergone a saving change of heart and nature, it is because he has been so grafted into the living *Vine* as to have become a partaker of its life; and if, on

the contrary, he is still dead in trespasses and sins, it is because that all essential union between his soul and Christ has never been formed. Why do I *live*? in the highest sense of the word. It is for this and no other reason, because Christ *lives* and I am *in Him*.

II. The declaration, 'Because I live ye shall live also,' proclaims the security of the believer's life. It cannot be destroyed by any agency whatever. Various things threaten our spiritual existence—such for example as the suspension of those gracious influences which are to it what fuel is to fire, and the operation of hostile influences which tell upon it as floods of water poured upon flame. But the union of the believer to Christ guarantees him against his being overcome with either evil. Being in vital communication with a spring which is ever flowing, he need never fear withering or death through the arresting of his supplies of grace, and having the strong arm of an Almighty Saviour to shield him, Sin, Satan, Death, and the Law will be all equally powerless to reach his life. 'Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou art with me*.'

III. The assurance equally implies that the believer's life shall be *everlasting*. Death no more interrupts the spiritual life in a Christian than it interrupted the Divine life in the Person of the Mediator.

"Whoever liveth and believeth on me," says Jesus himself, "SHALL NEVER DIE!" A believer in this sense is immortal—immortal, because although, at the period of his dissolution, his body and soul are separated *from one another*, neither is for one moment separated from Christ. "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies BEING STILL UNITED TO CHRIST do rest in their graves till the resurrection." And if even through the crisis of Death itself, believers live because Christ lives, what shall we say of the better land beyond. There the life of the risen Saviour cannot be touched even in appearance, and while the Vine shall thus bloom, for ever green and unfading in the Paradise of God, what may we expect of the branches? Aged reader! you are now drawing near to your journey's end in this world; can you look forward to the close without anxiety, because, seeing light in the grave and beyond it, you can say, "Because Christ lives, I shall live also."—*Happy Home*

The great comfort of a believer, on his death-bed, is faith in Christ, hope in the promise, and an interest in the covenant.