

THE DIVINE LIFE

One of the most foundational realities that we know about our Father is that, in addition to being Love, He is also Life. This theme of Life is beautifully embedded and wonderfully revealed throughout the scriptures, detailing how impossible it is for Death to withstand Life, and why, as a matter of course, this Life spread to all men once sin was judged at the cross, and how this Life must utterly swallow up Death, even as light chases away darkness.

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:18-20)

This Life was made manifest to a dark world by the only begotten, Jesus Christ, who, being displayed as the Son of God, had the Life of the Father dwelling in Himself without measure, that the Father might be seen in the Son to the utmost:

For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. (John 3:33-34)

Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷ and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. (John 5:25-27)

Concerning this Life of God in Christ, we see the scriptures relate it to many other aspects of God, all of which are manifestations of Jesus Christ even as Christ is a manifestation of the Father. For this Life acts as a light, shining the truth in the face of Jesus Christ:

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

This Life is also the true bread, our spiritual sustenance, which of course is also Christ:

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:32-35)

This Life is true spiritual water, a wellspring of joy bounding up from the deep reality of the divine nature:

Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:13-14)

This Life is the very Love of God, and the essence of His nature:

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. (1 John 3:14)

Indeed, all of these aspects of Life are summed up in Jesus Christ Himself, who, even He is the true light, bread, water and love, is also the fullness of true Life:

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:23-26)

VICTORY OVER DEATH

Peter tells us in his Pentecost speech that it was impossible for Christ to be held by death (Acts 2:24). For surely this Life must triumph fully over death. How could death possibly hold one who is the author of Life? For indeed, Jesus overcame death itself with His obedience on the cross and the power of His resurrection:

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,¹⁰ but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:8-10)

This shows that Jesus Christ has overcome death completely, and from now on we will see that victory play out in all of God’s creation, as the creatures are set free from the bondage of corruption and sin. This is why Paul exults in his letter to Corinth:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”^[g]

⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting?^[h]
O Hades, where is your victory?"^[i]

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But *thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Corinthians 15:50-57)

I sometimes wonder if the victory of God through Christ is understood very well at all among His people. I say this because, even as we have all had to unlearn much carnal thought as we struggle with imposing temporal limits on spiritual realities, so it can be harder to perceive total triumph in its true spiritual application. For indeed on earth, every victory we have ever seen is partial, pyrrhic, or temporary. Every war leads to more war, and even a war against an undeniably great evil like World War Two does not prevent the onward march of man's carnal nature, and the same tides of evil still rise in seemingly endless cycles.

Another pertinent earthly example of limited victory is in sports, where teams win their 'ultimate triumph' at the end of the season, but with nothing lasting achieved, must start the same cycle again after a short rest. There is a pronounced sense of anticlimax, as the very moment of overcoming is met by the onrushing inevitability of starting again.

With these temporal examples, it may be that the subconscious of the believer is a little conditioned to see victory in these earthly terms, and therefore be hindered from the revelation of what the total triumph of Christ means. If every believer understood what true, everlasting triumph entails, how could any thought of eternal torment exist even for a moment? For indeed, as the passage above says, Death is "swallowed up" in victory. God's victory in Christ is so complete, that the dread law of sin and death has no sting, has no power, and has no place to stand against the mighty waves of Christ's overarching triumph! Amen!

JESUS CHRIST AS OUR LIFE

Knowing that Christ has triumphed so completely over death, and all that relates to that dread realm and state of being, we can begin to perceive the beautiful reality that He Himself is our Life!

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Indeed, the whole totality of the scriptures were given to mankind to point to Christ Himself, that we might receive Him as our Life, and He Himself spoke of this reality when rebuking His opponents for their misguided apprehension of the purpose of holy writ:

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. (John 5:39-40)

We have become conditioned to seeing life as the life of the flesh – the breathing in and out of oxygen and the beating of the heart. But brethren, this is nothing more than a natural, temporal symbol for what Life truly is!

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should^[a] give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:1-3)

When Jesus Himself defines life, we must take heed. And our Lord says that true Life is to know the Father and the Son! This is the very essence, the very nature, of what Life is.

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,^[d] and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:10-13)

Life is not found anywhere else! Life is not a possession that we are given upon resurrection, as a kind of eternal improvement upon our lung-and-heart based fleshly life, but rather Christ Himself in us, even as the Father is in the Son. For this reason, we are truly alive even now, and do not need to wait for the ages to come to apprehend what this Life is. Indeed, there shall be greater and greater manifestations of this Life, even as Christ is manifest more and more, but we already have this Life dwelling within us, the earnest of the Spirit that holds such a promise of the things to come:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 5:4-5)

Our ongoing spiritual sojourn involves a greater and greater awareness of eternal truths and spiritual realities, and as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, we come to comprehend that He is both the center and circumference of our being, and that the fullness of Life is in reality the fullness of the Lord!

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

Amen!