

LIFE IN GOD

LIFE IN GOD. Herein alone is the affinity for which we were chosen in Christ. The realization of God in true sonship. "For whoever are being led by God's Spirit, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). And thus led, the outgoings of the heart are ever to Him. We are alive to God, and to all the minute possibilities which life should mean.

But it is life out of death—"for you died, and your life is hid *together with Christ* in God." Let your spirit go out to this great fact of identification with Christ, in death as in life, and you will realize, not only the poignancy of His death, but the empowering virtue of His victory over it (Col. 3:3).

This identification gathers force by the repetition assigned to it in Paul's wonderful interpretation of Calvary. "Baptized into His death...entombed *together with Him* through baptism into death...*planted together* in the likeness of His death...we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was *crucified together with Him*" (Rom. 6:3-7).

"Now if we *died together with Christ*, we believe that we shall be *living together with Him* also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God" (Rom. 6:8-11).

"Be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin,

yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Life out of death. "God...vivifies us *together in Christ*...rouses us *together* and seats us *together* among the celestials, in Christ Jesus." What an infinite privilege this union confers! It spells out conformity to His death, and again, conformity to the image of God's Son in the regnant life, "far above all." (Rom. 6:11; Eph. 2:5, 6).

But what a death! And are we to be just spectators, to flee the impalement, or are we to be *participants*—sharers of His sufferings? Conformity calls for participation. It honors God by a faith which gets life out of death, glory out of shame, thrones and kingdoms out of decay and ruin. The sons of Zebedee desired great things for themselves. But Christ had to say to them, "Not aware are you what you are requesting. Are you able to drink the cup which *I* am drinking, or to be baptized with the baptism with which *I* am being baptized?" And they replied, "We are able." Yet at Calvary all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Nevertheless, the time came, God's time, when they entered, each in His appointed way, the pathway of real abandonment to the will of God (Mark 10:38).

A soul may go years in the self-complacency which springs from the gifts and graces richly dowered by God. And then, God puts something into the life which shakes the soul to its foundations. Disturbed in its equanimity, the soul is made to see the enormity of self even in its beautiful qualities. It is at such a time that the enemy powers, always on the alert, seek occasion to afflict and torture sensitive souls. And nothing avails but the assertion of the triumph of Calvary, and this must be asserted against the aerial sovereignties and authorities. We must stand in the victory He there accomplished, when He stripped them from off Him. "With boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it."

His was a wonderful death. The powers of darkness fell away from Him, nerveless, undone. Faith must grip

the overwhelming grandeur of it all, realizing and maintaining the blessedness of its power. Ours is a hidden life, a life out of death, which the Adversary cannot touch. He and his have nothing to work upon, as such a life, far above all, is steadily maintained. But the self in us, in the manifestations which God will reveal to the receptive, teachable spirit, must go to the death.

He trod the winepress alone! And had not angels ministered unto Him, its agony would have been insupportable. In darkness He died, with no disciples near, no ministering hand or sympathetic eye. And even God withdrew. What a baptism! "All Thy breakers and Thy billows over Me pass!" (Ps. 42:7). The death of the cross.

"Thou knowest the sun by his glory—
Thou knowest the frost by her breath—
Thou knowest the fire by its glowing—
Thou knowest His love by His death."

O that this knowledge may be an experience in the very center of our being! And since He was a Victor in death, passing to the right hand of God, we too, with Him, find our life there. But let us not put this life exclusively in the future. For "the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials" are looking to us *now* for the display of such a life. And as they see the indelible marks of His way with us, they marvel at the measure of His multifarious wisdom. Let us then grip the thought that it is in the deep and tender *now* of present grace that such manifold wisdom is to be made known.

So, then, to live in God as our Possessor, proving His ability to do infinitely beyond all the reaches of our thought and prayer, is to experience that transmutation of His that Job so finely knew. "He knows the way with me. He tests me; as gold will I come forth" (23:10). Stripped of all that is not of and for Him, our selfhood

truly tested in the fire, we come forth cleansed and freed. And, to abide the fire, to let God have all His way with us, is to prove the capacity we have for life as in Him. Our God so wants us to love Him for Himself alone, and to this great end has to wean us from many things.

It may be that we have much light and knowledge. We are clear in thought, well balanced in doctrine, and yet, with all this, we may find ourselves bruised and crushed when crucial awakening comes. It is so possible to live in the realm of the soul, to be absorbed in a routine of life wherein self is unconsciously gratified, that it needs a rude shock to the sensibilities to stir acknowledgment and submission to naked truth.

Think of Peter's denial of his Master. Impulsive, impetuous, he was so sure of his ground. "My soul for Thy sake will I lay down." Yes, but note Christ's questioning reply: "Your soul for My sake you will be laying down? Verily, verily, I am saying to you, Under no circumstances should a cock be crowing till you will be renouncing Me thrice" (John 13:38). But the soulful Peter falls at the word of a woman. What an experience in the revelation of self, and yet, an experience which alone could prepare and fit him for the writing of his epistles. Through anguish and tears, and the death of the self-life was the apostle to the Circumcision led into the greater depths of spiritual understanding.

Life out of death. His death, our death. His life, our life. Impaled on the cross, what had He in common with the world? He was dead to its fascination and charm, even as to its callousness, hatred, and scorn. Do we see Him there, and espouse His side? It means death, but also deliverance. It is a lone way, but so lofty a flight, that it is well worth while as, *together with Him*, we experience both death and life. We must not only die to our *own merits*, but to our *own life*. Not only to *commence* the true life, but to *continue* the life. The axe of inward crucifixion is to be laid unsparingly at the root

of the self-life. So, to this end, God may place us in a situation, there to remain, it may be, a long time, for the express purpose of aiding the process of inward crucifixion. But this inward death is to produce the true life.

Life in God, to the point of "reigning in life." And it is to be a present power and blessing. There is conflict, to be sure, but we stand in the might of the Victor. And in His life at the right hand of God, we should be reigning in a real present sense. It is all "in accord with the purpose of the eons," that the quality of eonian life be apparent here and now to "the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials." The potency of this life is drawn from our great Head in Whom is vested the rulership we are called upon to know, and in spirit to share.

The powers of darkness would have us go under, would keep us in depression and defeat. Knowing so well the power and grip of the self-life, they would keep us in utter submergence. And we may not know. But the clarion call rings out: "*Rise from among the dead, and Christ shall dawn upon you!*" (Eph. 5:14). Then, seated with Him among the celestials, we shall know a life in spirit which is potent indeed. Let us then, recognize *now*, our high estate!

And the secret? Listen to Paul's words in that grounding, energizing epistle of his to the Romans (8:11). "Now if the Spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is *making its home in you*, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His Spirit *making its home in you.*" The spirit in permanent residence. Here is blessedness indeed! And "God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity" (2 Tim. 1:7).

And, where God is, there is as much simplicity as power. There is also supreme peace at the center of our being, however turbulent the circumference may be. The sway of the spirit, continuously, and with such quietness

and confidence as shall abide the fire of testing, the while God is "making the sequel" (1 Cor. 10:13). And let us remember that God would only pour the cup of bitterness into the happiness which we have in anything *out of Himself*.

But the soul life must know the inward crucifixion ere the spirit life can ride in triumph. The severing power of the cross must come in for the momentous circumcision of the heart. Emotions and passions, not of Him, must go, for the "unto death" must precede the "reigning in life." The uncrucified self is always ground for the Adversary, and the powers of darkness. There, in the strong, vigorous soul life, they can lead us off the track. There, in the crucial time of testing, they can torture, with an anguish almost unbearable. But stand in Christ, dead to the things of the soul life, and choosing just God's will in the matter, and triumph is assured. "Even that Sinai," towering so darkly ahead, flows down at the presence of God.

In His own time, and in His own way. God meets His sons' requirements. It may be a long time and a bitter way, but we do pass from Marah to Elim. Yet in what manner? Is the spirit so in control, that we are dead to the siren voice which once so greatly moved the soul? Are our thoughts, reasonings, and reflections in utter captivity to the obedience of Christ? If so, then we live by faith of the Son of God, experiencing its depth of calm, and resting entirely in the will of God.

Thus, as we die to the soulish things, and are crucified to the world, we live most truly in God. Calvary, and all that it means in its varied applications, is the keynote to this life in God—life out of death. For the possession and maintenance of this life, we must be *found in Him*. Then shall we know the power of His resurrection, the authority of the ascended Christ, grasping that for which we are grasped by Christ Jesus. And from out the glory we shall go forth to the measureless delight of the

Resurrection and Ascension

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life in God. To this life are the members of the body of Christ called. And love, God's love, so infinite and enfolding, points the way.

"The depths of love on Calvary,
Was just God's blood-bought way,
To bring us to the heavenlies
In triumph day by day.
He knew the depths of darkness,
The swell of Satan's flood,
So, by the cross He pierced a way
Of victory through His blood."

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