

The world is a cosmos of commodities. Daily the planet buzzes with the activity of trading materials of worth. Nations shore up the value of their economies with stockpiles of gold; individuals amass wealth by their clever manipulation of things as common as soybeans. But all this is in vain. Regardless of how many commodities we possess, how much wealth we amass, ultimately our lives fail and we pass away. We are limited by the supply of what is most precious and valuable—life. Life is what is most in demand on this earth, but there is no market for it and no amount of wealth can acquire and keep it. Sadly, the supply of life diminishes for each of us, and each of us on a certain day will die.

God alone gives life. All creation testifies that He is a God of life, and He freely gives life to His creation. However, all forms of life are transitory; everything ultimately succumbs to death. Only God Himself is eternally living, for God's life is eternal. *Eternal* does not merely denote everlasting in time. God's life is eternal in nature, in quality, in quantity, in space, and in time; it is without beginning, without end, and without limitation, as God Himself is. What we need most is this eternal life. No greater gift can there be to man than the eternal life of God. All our wealth, all our possessions, pale in value when we are presented with God's eternal life. The greatest news is that God indeed wants to give His eternal life to man. The Bible, God's inspired record, tells us clearly that the life of God is embodied in Christ the Son and made available through the Spirit to all who believe in Him.

The Father as the Source of Life

The Bible reveals that the true God is triune; that is, He is one God (Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4), yet He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). These three coexist eternally; They are distinct but not separate. There are not three Gods but one Triune God. This is beyond human understanding, as indeed God should be.

In the Godhead, there is an intimation concerning the eternal life of God in that the First is called the Father and the Second is called the Son, both pointing to a life relationship. Even the name of the Third of the Trinity, the Spirit, implies the life of God, for in the original languages of the Bible the words for *Spirit* also mean "breath," which sustains life in God's higher creatures. The names of the Three of the Trinity, therefore, point to Him as the God of life.

Among the three, the First is the Father, and as the Father He is the source of life in the Trinity. As the apostle John says, "The Father has life in Himself" (John 5:26). All life ultimately goes back to the Father, and for that reason He is the Father of everything in creation (Eph. 3:15). In a more personal sense, He is the Father of every human being (Mal. 2:10; Luke 3:38; Acts 17:28). But no creature of His is by nature like Him, for all His creatures die. However, He desires to beget many sons, who will possess His eternal life (John 1:12-13) and partake of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). These are the believers of Christ, and through regeneration God becomes their genuine Father, and they become His genuine sons. Through their receiving of the eternal life of God, God becomes their Father in the most intimate and truest sense.

Christ the Son as Life

The Gospel of John, the fourth account of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, presents this marvelous Person in a wonderful way: It shows that He is God the Son, that is, the Second of the Triune God, coming as life to man. The word *son* expresses a life relationship with a father, and Christ, as the Son of God, fully embodies the life of God the Father. John, referring to Christ the Son, writes, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Christ is the embodiment of the eternal life of God. When Christ became a man, He became the source of the eternal life to man. That eternal life is a life that conquers death; it is a resurrection life. The Lord Jesus once told His disciples, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). He is the indestructible and incorruptible life (Heb. 7:16; 2 Tim. 1:10). This indicates that He Himself is the life of God, not merely the living God, and as the life of God, He is the resurrection that overcomes death. For this reason, after He died for our sins on the cross, He rose from the dead, since it was not possible for Him to be held by death (Acts 2:24). As God, He brought the eternal life to man; and as a man, He was the first to overcome death and enjoy the life of God in resurrection. He opened the way for the rest of mankind to enter into the eternal life.

In another portion of the Gospel of John, Christ tells us in plain words why He became a man and why He came to man: "I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (10:10). Christ certainly came to die for our sins, but this was not the full cause of His coming. His death accomplished the

forgiveness of our sins and our eternal redemption (Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12), but His resurrection regenerates us with the eternal life of God (1 Pet. 1:3). Through His death and resurrection, the life that He is becomes our life. If we believe in Him and accept His salvation, we will enjoy the eternal life of God (John 3:16; 20:31). He as a man was the first to overcome death and enter into the enjoyment of the eternal life. Now He offers man the same victory over death and entry into the eternal life through faith in Him.

The Spirit of Life

It is wonderful that the life of God is embodied in Christ the Son and that He desires that men would have this eternal life. But we should ask how this life can become our life. Christ has risen from the dead, but how can we, who still suffer the woes of fallen mankind, enjoy God's resurrection life?

According to the Bible, in resurrection Christ became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). The life of this life-giving Spirit is Christ as life, the eternal life of God; and when this life is given to man, it is given as the Spirit. The Spirit is the reality of all that Christ is. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the Spirit of reality testifies concerning Him (John 15:26) and guides the believers into all the reality of Him (John 16:13). This means that Christ is made real to us through the Spirit. When the Spirit comes to man, the life of God the Father, embodied in Christ the Son, is made real to man.

Because the life of God embodied in Christ is made available to man by the Spirit, the Spirit is called the Spirit of life in the New Testament (Rom. 8:2). This phrase *the Spirit of life* is unique

in its expression and should be understood in the same way that we understand phrases like *a vessel of gold* or *a table of wood*: the vessel is gold and the table is wood. When we read of the Spirit of life, we should understand that the Spirit is life. This accords with our understanding of the Spirit and of the eternal life. The eternal life is God Himself; and hence, just as Christ is life, so also the Spirit is life. But particularly, the Spirit is life because He is the reality of Christ as the embodiment of the life of God the Father.

The Triune God is the God of life, and through Him as the source of life, the embodiment of life, and the reality of life, we mortal human beings can participate in and enjoy the immortality of God. When we turn from our fallen condition, confess our sinful situation, and believe in Christ as life, we are regenerated with the eternal life of God and enter into immortality as His very sons. His divine and eternal life becomes our greatest treasure and uplifts us to the eternal plane.

The Eternal Life

*Having Its Source
in God the Father;
Embodied in
Christ the Son,
and Made Available
to Man through
the Spirit*

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P.O. Box 2121
Anaheim, CA 92814

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