

Life Victor Over Death

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Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

I would have you notice the sublime statement: I am the Resurrection and the life. No mere man could say that without folly and blasphemy. A visitor from some distant planet, coming to ours in mid-winter might imagine nature were dead. The trees with gaunt limbs, squeaking and bare in the wintry winds; the fields brown and gray and bare. But it is only seeming, for soft southern winds will blow, and April showers will fall and flowers will bloom and foliage will break forth and in a little while summer's glory will clothe the landscape, and a larger life will come to vegetation. Life is the stronger.

There is much that is darksome in our world—storms, tempests, sickness and sorrow. The slow-moving funeral procession, the shadows that gather about the tomb, but all these shall lose their terrors, for life will swallow them up. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Not only are the seas and oceans full, they are full of life. Not only are the skies expansive, they are full of light. Fullness everywhere; nature is prodigal of the fullness and fruitfulness. One maple, or oak, or pine will furnish seed enough to produce a forest. Flowers bloom in the waste places, and the horrid gashes men make in the face of nature are soon covered with grass and flowers and trees. Life, abundant life, is God's order; because Jesus said, and said it because it was true, I am the life. As man He bled and suffered and fainted under the load of His cross, but as God, He upheld at the same time the earth and the orderly universe. Not one of the millions of galaxies that soar and burn on their endless journeys, but was upborne and propelled by Him who staggered on His way to Golgotha. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Men thought to slay Him, not knowing that He was the King of life. He said, "No man taketh my life from me, I have power (authority) to take it again," not all the men and armies on earth had power to take His life. He could have called 12 legions of angels, and they could have swept all the nations of earth in a single night with a tempest of destruction. But He gave His life a ransom for many, that death should not triumph, but that life should triumph over death.

Holiness triumphs over sin, and immortality triumphs over the mouldering clod. You cannot kill life, for you would kill God. You can separate yourself from life, because "the soul that sinneth it shall die," "for the wages of sin is death." But life still fills the universe and it is still true, that, "He that believeth on me (said Jesus) though he were dead, yet shall he live." Those who are dead in trespasses and sins, believing on Jesus Christ leap from their prison of spiritual death, as Lazarus leaped from his tomb of putrefaction to have a feast with Jesus as the chief guest in his home. Because He is the resurrection, death, pale and haggard always fled from His presence, whether at Nain, or the Ruler's house or in the village of Bethany. He laid down His life that we might take up life. "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The death of the soul is not possible while we believe on Him. We are united to the Eternal source of life, and no one can sever us from that life, but our own choice. Once born men die twice; twice born men die once. And if we are still here and believing when He comes again, we shall not see death, "we shall be

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caught up to meet the Lord," the overland route to heaven with no funeral expenses nor crepe on the door. The undertaker shall give place to the uppertaker, and a hole in the ground to a hole in the sky. Weeping mourners shall give place to shouts of "welcome" from that cloud of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews, chapter eleven, who are camped on heaven's eternal camping ground waiting for us who shall be heirs of salvation, that together we shall be made perfect in that eternal sense of perfection.

He who is life, submitted to the thrust of death and laid down His life, and the Sun of Righteousness seemed to set to rise no more. It was a time of gloom that Easter-tide in the long ago. The hope of the world and the giver of life, wrapped in linen and spices for burial. His disciples all forsook Him and fled. Where are Peter, and James, and John, the triumvirate who walked in His inner circle? Where is even Mary the mother? Will no one offer to bury His precious body? Is there no loving hand of apostle to straighten out His tortured limbs and fold His precious hands that had been so often lifted in blessing? They all forsook Him and fled, they did not seem to think that even the dead need a sepulchre. But Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathea, two wealthy men (even capitalists) demanded the body of our blessed Lord, and Joseph loaned Him his own new tomb that had never been corrupted by a dead body and they laid Him away there in a garden close by His cross. Neither did that tomb ever see corruption. It was well that they borrowed the tomb, for they did not need it long.

Three days slipped under the curtain of the past. He who slept in Joseph's tomb could not be holden of death, for He was "The Resurrection and the life." He awoke. He reached over His nail pierced hand in the darkness of the tomb and pulled out death's sting, as a hapless honey-bee leaves his sting, only to die himself. So death, that stung with hellish venom the Son of man and the Son of God, lost his sting and Jesus taunted the grave with its impotence and death "Where is thy sting," and slipping out of His grave clothes, and dropping the napkin in the corner of the grave, walked out of the gates of death and took its gates and hinges with Him in triumph, mocked the grave and death as its master, and said, "I am he that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive unto the ages of the ages and have the keys of death, and hell." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and for everlasting assurance to His saints He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." As He is alive forever more, so shall His saints be.

Some good, glad day, He that is the resurrection and the life, must be master of death. Death itself shall die. It will be "sunk without trace." There shall be no more curse and no more death. Life has swallowed it up, as the holy Word declares, "Death is swallowed up in victory." "And he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and on either side of it was the tree of life, for the healing of the nations, and there shall be no more curse and his servants shall serve him and they shall see his face." Rev. 22:1-5.

Life, not death, is the victor. Death shall only be a dark memory from which we shall turn to sunbursts of life and immortality, to bask in the glories of His radiant face unto the ages of the ages. Amen!—American Holiness Journal.

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