



# CHRIST the RESURRECTION and the LIFE

EBENEZER ERSKINE (1680-1754)

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## THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

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# CHRIST

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life.”*

John 11:25

### Introduction

I hope there are a goodly number reading this who are uttering the very language of those Greeks you were hearing of: “Sir, we would see Jesus” (Joh 12:21). This is the one thing we desire: to behold the beauty of Jesus, and if we miss this, we miss our errand. Well, reader, these words that I have read, I set them up before you as a glass in which you may see Jesus, for every title and name He takes to Himself is a glass in which you may see Him. And if you can but get the eye of faith set to this glass, you will see Jesus, and see Him to your souls’ unspeakable advantage. “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2Co 3:18). What is that glass the apostle speaks of, through which we may see Jesus, Who cannot now be seen with the bodily eye, for “the heavens must contain him until the time of the restitution of all things”? Why, [the glass] is just His own Word and record concerning Himself. And here is a part of it; here is a word, a great word, and a comfortable word. Look through it, and you shall see Him Whose name is Wonderful; He says to you as directly as He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Joh 11:25).

These words are a part of that conference between Christ and Martha concerning the resurrection of her brother, Lazarus, from the dead. Martha, when she heard that Christ was near at hand, ran out of the town to meet Him, and came to Him with this melancholy<sup>1</sup> complaint in her mouth: “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (Joh 11:21). There was weakness in this way of

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<sup>1</sup> **melancholy** – feelings of thoughtful sadness; dejected.

speaking, as if the power of Christ to save her brother from death had been confined to Christ's bodily presence.

Christ can cure in the absence of His human nature, as well as when He is present. We read of a poor woman that had a bloody issue (Mar 5:25 ff.); she wanted to be at Christ, but had a crowd to pass through before she could get a touch of Him; but she went through them all, and she steals a cure from Christ. It is true, we cannot get such a touch as she got of Him with the hand of the body, now that He is ascended; but yet He may be touched by faith, as really as this woman touched the hem of His garment. And what if I should tell you, reader, that Christ is as really present here as to His divine nature, as He was in His human nature when He was upon the earth? Christ tells Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Joh 3:13). And Christ says also in Matthew 18:20 and Exodus 20:24 that wheresoever His name is recorded, He is there. We are writing upon this occasion to record the name of Christ, and He is as really present with us now as He was with Martha.

Do not, then, fall into the same mistake that Martha did, who thought that Christ could not save her brother unless His human nature was present. Our Jesus, Who is now in heaven at the right hand of God, is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). Christ drops a word for the encouragement of Martha's faith: He says, "Thy brother shall rise again," without telling her when. A promise from Christ is the fuel of faith; as fire cannot burn without fuel, so no more can faith live or act without a promise. Martha confesses her faith as to the general resurrection at the last day; she says, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (Joh 11:24). Well, Christ, from that general truth, leads her faith to fix upon Himself as the fountain-cause<sup>2</sup> of the resurrection of the dead in general, and of her brother Lazarus in particular:

*"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me,  
though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

Briefly, we have these three things:

1. *"I am the resurrection, and the life."* We have one of the glorious titles of Christ that should recommend Him to dead sinners.

2. To *"believe in him."* We have this duty pressed upon all who would have benefit by Christ, Who is "the resurrection and the life."

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<sup>2</sup> **fountain-cause** – source, as a spring bubbling up from the earth is the source of the stream that flows from it.



3. “*Though he were dead, yet shall he live.*” We have the glorious advantage that shall overflow to all who shall believe in Him.

As to the first of these, there is a twofold title by which Christ reveals Himself to Martha: first the *resurrection*, and then the *life*. But they are so related to one another that it is impossible to form a just idea of the first without the last, for what is resurrection but a recovery of the person back from the state of the dead to the state of the living?—so that “the resurrection” and “the life” are but one complex title.

And it is comfortable to think that this title has a glorious relation to us dead sinners of Adam’s family. All the names and offices of Christ are relative:<sup>3</sup> He is a Prophet to us; He is a Priest to us, and He is a King to us. He “of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1Co 1:30). So when He is said to be the resurrection and the life, He is that *to us*; for unto us this Son is given, unto us this Child is born (Isa 9:6), Whose name is “the resurrection and the life.” Therefore, readers, let us see if we can fasten the hand of an applying faith upon Christ to ourselves, seeing He is so related to us, and His very name points to every man and woman in this company. “I am the resurrection and the life”: the words themselves are the doctrine.

## 1. Implied in This Title

What is implied and imported in this title and designation, by which Christ reveals Himself to you and me?

### A. Christ: the true resurrection

1. It plainly supposes that all Adam’s race are dead men and women. Reader, no sooner did we take the draught of deadly poison in paradise, but that moment the contagion ran through our first parents’ souls,<sup>4</sup> and has run through all of us, their posterity, ever since. We are legally dead: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze 18:20). We are spiritually dead, under the power and dominion of sin, separated from God—Who is the very fountain of life—and liable every moment both to temporal and eternal death. Reader, death has reigned over all Adam’s family; and what a clean sweep has death made of all the generations before us! It has hurled one generation after another to the grave, and hurled the souls of innu-

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<sup>3</sup> **relative** – bearing relationship between one person and another.

<sup>4</sup> **take the draught...first parents’ souls** – we were “in Adam” when he fell into sin in the Garden, and therefore we have all inherited a fallen nature from him (Rom 5:12-19; 1Co 15:21-22).

merable multitudes into hell. That same sweep of death which swept away the generation before us, will surely sweep us away in a short time. Reader, where will you and I be in a little time? Alas! The great reason why people do not consider this is because they are sleeping, and do not consider whether their landing shall be with glorified angels, or reprobate devils and damned spirits—where the worm of conscience never dies and the fire is not quenched. Death is executing his office on every one of us. Soul-death<sup>5</sup> has seized us in separating us from God, and bodily death will shortly separate between soul and body.

2. Christ being “the resurrection and the life” plainly implies that the Son of God was sent into this lower world to give life to the dead. He got His commission as Mediator<sup>6</sup> from the Father to quicken the dead. He said to the Son from eternity, Go and give life to these dead sinners. Accordingly, the Son of God, having gotten His commission, pays them a visit, and says to them, “Life.” He had power to do it: “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Joh 17:2). And I conceive it was with a view to this that Christ says, “As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (Joh 5:26). There is a twofold life the Son of God has. There is His essential life, considered as God, for He has this essentially from eternity; but then He has a mediatorial life, gifted and bestowed upon Him as a second Adam; and [in] that life He has a commission to give to dead sinners of Adam’s family. He has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious (Psa 68:18); and this was the leading gift He was to bestow: even everlasting life, and all the benefits of it.

3. “I am the resurrection, and the life,” I think plainly implies that our Lord Jesus Christ has abrogated<sup>7</sup> the sentence of the Law by which we were to die. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23): there was the hand-writing that was against us and was contrary to us. Well, Christ came, and as it were, by nailing it to His cross, He tears [up] this hand-writing, that it might not stand against us before the tribunal of God.

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<sup>5</sup> **soul-death** – spiritual death.

<sup>6</sup> **Mediator** – a go-between; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto whom He did from all Eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (1689 London Baptist Confession 8.1; see also *Free Grace Broadcaster* 183 “Christ the Mediator”; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

<sup>7</sup> **abrogated** – done away with; abolished.

4. I think it likewise implies that our Lord Jesus Christ has recovered all that was lost by the first Adam. The first Adam, by his sin and apostasy, became the fountain of woe, death, and misery to all his posterity. That is the heritage we have by our first father Adam. But Christ came and recovered all that we lost in the first Adam; hence there is a comparison made in Romans 5 between the first Adam and his natural seed; and Christ, the second Adam, and His spiritual seed, by Whom they are made alive.

5. I think it implies that Christ Himself is risen from the dead, and has carried the keys of hell and of death away with Him, by which He is become victorious over hell and death: “Fear not...I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev 1:17-18).

6. In the last place, I think it plainly implies that the life of the whole mystical body is in Christ. Reader, matters are quite otherwise laid in the second covenant than they were in the first. In the first covenant, man’s life was in his hand,<sup>8</sup> but now his life is in his Head: man got his life in his hand, and so came of it;<sup>9</sup> He was a mutable<sup>10</sup> creature, though perfectly holy. But blessed be God that matters are otherwise in the new covenant:<sup>11</sup> God will not give it into our hand, but He has laid it up in the hand of Christ—and there lies the life of the whole mystical body. It may be there are some here complaining and saying, “O, I am dead, I am a dry withered tree; my life is gone, and there is no sap nor life in me; I cannot win to that liveliness in duty I had in some months past.” O beware, lest in this complaint there be not something of a tang<sup>12</sup> of the covenant of works,<sup>13</sup> beware that there be not a legal spirit here. You are dissatisfied, perhaps, that your life is not in your own hand, as in Adam’s before he fell; but you would do well to remember that, since the fall, God puts no trust in man—no, not in His dearest saints, He will not trust them with their own life—but has assured us by a solemn record that “this life is in his Son.” The believer himself will acquiesce<sup>14</sup> that his life is

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<sup>8</sup> **in his hand** – God gave Adam’s future into his own hand when He gave him the privilege of maintaining his life by obedience to the one law.

<sup>9</sup> **so came of it** – man lost his spiritual life with God when he disobeyed the one law.

<sup>10</sup> **mutable** – changeable; the ability to make decisions and change course.

<sup>11</sup> **new covenant** – See Jer 31:31-34; Mat 26:27, 28; Heb 8:6-13; 10:12-20; 12:22-24.

<sup>12</sup> **tang** – tinge; hint; trace.

<sup>13</sup> **covenant of works** – attempt to save oneself by doing good works; reference to the agreement God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man’s obligation to obey God, with the blessing of life for obedience, and the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17); cf. *The Covenants of Works and of Grace* by Walt Chantry, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>14</sup> **acquiesce** – submit; agree.



laid up in the hand of Christ, and say, “Lord, I am content that my life be ‘hid with Christ in God’ (Col 3:3), although I should have nothing of it in mine own hand.”

Reader, it is a weighty truth, and it is a truth attested by the most famous witnesses: the “three that bear record in heaven” (1Jo 5:7), God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Therefore we are to set our seal to what they say, that it is true, or else we “make him a liar” (1Jo 1:10). What is the record of God? “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life” (1Jo 5:11), to us who were lost, ruined, and condemned; “given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” If you would have life, you must be content with what life He lets out to you: He is the great Steward, and all the children of the family must depend upon Him, great and small. “They shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons” (Isa 22:24)—they just hang their happiness where God has hung it. And if this be your way, you will make a noble hand of it; but if you are discontented that Christ is the Steward unless you get according to your will, depend upon it, you will get a rebuke. Go to Him Who has your life in His hand, go ask Him whatever He has promised in His Word. Beware of limiting Him: He will give the children of the family what He sees they need. He will not embezzle the goods or bread of the children; no, no, He gives them all their bread in due season—and it well becomes all the younger children to depend upon their Elder Brother.

## **B. Partakers of the first resurrection**

And now, before I move to my second point, I exhort you to examine yourselves as to whether you were ever partaker of the first resurrection? whether Christ be the resurrection and the life to you? I shall not multiply points; only I shall say, if ever He was the resurrection and the life to your souls, there will be a sweet similitude<sup>15</sup> between Christ’s resurrection and your resurrection. And no wonder there be a similitude between them, for Christ rose as the mystical head: when He revived, we revived. The prophet Hosea, when speaking of the resurrection of the head and members, says: “After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and *we* shall live in his sight” (Hos 6:2); not *he*, but *we*: all the mystical members of Christ rose representatively with Him. If ye be really risen with Him, there will be a similitude between your resurrection and His resurrection on the third day. This is shown in the following points.

1. You know Christ rose by His own power, by the power of His own divine nature; He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of

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<sup>15</sup> **similitude** – likeness; resemblance.

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom1:4). Just so, if ever you were quickened spiritually by Him, if you be partakers of His resurrection, if He be the resurrection and the life to you, I am sure you have felt something of “the power of his resurrection” (Phi 3:10)—for it is that very power that must raise you, and make you believe that God raised Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19). I doubt not of it, yea, I am persuaded, whenever a man is partaker of Christ, “the resurrection and the life,” he is cured of Arminianism.<sup>16</sup> He will not say, I have a power to repent and to believe; he will acknowledge it is not owing to the power of his own will, but to the power of free, sovereign grace that has brought him from death to life.

2. Christ, by His resurrection, was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness” (Rom 1:4). God the Father, speaking of His resurrection from the dead, says, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Act 13:33). Not as if the generation of the Son commenced at His resurrection; no. “Who shall declare his generation?” (Isa 53:8; Act 8:33): it was from all eternity; an everlasting Father must have an everlasting Son—it is meant of His essential deity. But His resurrection from the dead “declared him to be the Son of God with power.” If ever you have been raised from the dead, your sonship has, in some measure, been declared to you. That moment the new creature is formed, and the babe of grace begins to live, it endeavours to cry, “Abba, Father,” to “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 8:15; 2Co 11:31). However it is suppressed and smothered with prevailing unbelief, yet whenever faith begins to lift up its head, the language of the new creature is, “Doubtless thou art our Father... thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting” (Isa 63:16).

3. You know when Christ rose from the dead, He entered into His rest; He rested from the toilsome work of man’s redemption. The Sabbath was a day of rest because Christ rested from His great work of redemption. So, reader, if ever you have been partakers of His resurrection, you have been made to rest in Christ. Rest your wearied, burdened souls in Him, upon the foundation God hath laid in Zion (Isa 28:16). You have been wearying yourselves “in the greatness of thy way” (Isa 57:10), to find rest in the works of the Law and other lying refuges, and could never find it; but whenever God’s rest was discovered to you, you said, “This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psa 132:14).

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<sup>16</sup> **Arminianism** – the system of theology begun by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, The Netherlands. He rejected the Reformers’ understanding of predestination, teaching instead that God’s predestination of individuals was based on His foreknowledge of their accepting or rejecting Christ by their own free will.

4. You know when Christ rose from the dead, He left His grave-clothes behind Him. Christ, when He came out of the grave, left His grave-clothes there, because He was never to die again. Lazarus, when he was raised from the dead, and came out of the grave, he brought his grave-clothes with him, because he was to die again. So, if you be partakers of Christ's resurrection, you have been raised out of the grave of sin and of a natural state, and you have put off the dead garments and the vile clothing of sin. You have been made to deny all "ungodliness and worldly lusts," living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Ti 2:12)). "What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos 14:8) is the language of the soul that has the life of Christ in it.

5. When Christ rose from the dead, He conversed no more with the graceless Jews. He spent His life with them, and He never owned them after. But perhaps some may ask me, Why Christ did not show Himself to the Jewish Sanhedrim after His resurrection? Why, He had given them a sufficient evidence of His divine mission in His life; but they rejected Him, calling Him a devil and "a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Mat 11:19), and then crucified Him as an impostor. Therefore, when He rose again, He appeared only to His friends, "he was seen of five hundred of them at once" (1Co 15:6). So, those that are partakers of Christ's resurrection, will not frequent the society of the enemies of Christ, a wicked world, but will keep company with the saints, these excellent ones of the earth (Psa 16:3). They that are living do not desire to converse with the dead; so they that are spiritually alive do not love to converse with them that are spiritually dead—unless it be to tell them their hazard and danger, to "flee from the wrath to come" (Mat 3:7). You that love the company of swearers and cursers, and plots of wicked and profane persons, and take pleasure in them: you are dead, otherwise you could not stay in such company—for the society of the dead is a nuisance to the living.

6. Christ, when He rose from the dead, was, I say, on the wing to ascend to heaven; so He says to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (Joh 20:17). So, "if ye be risen with Christ," you will not be going down the wilderness, but going upward. You will be setting "your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col 3:1-2).

I conclude this point with a word of exhortation to dead sinners. O dead sinners! will you come to Christ, "the resurrection and the life"? "If we be dead," you may say, "to what purpose do you speak to us? can the dead raise themselves to life?" I answer, There is a difference between a person's being morally dead and naturally dead: if ye were naturally dead, our commission were done with you; we do not preach the gospel to those who are naturally dead. It is true, the sinner, dead in sin, is as much unfit for spiritual action, as the man that is naturally dead

is incapable of action with the living. But I have a commission to you from God, to cry to the dead to “hear that their souls may live,” and upon hearing they shall live (Isa 55:3). “The hour is coming, and now is,” says Christ, “when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man: and they shall live” (Joh 5:25). And therefore I cast in this name of Christ among you; I proclaim that He is the resurrection and the life, that dead sinners may hear and live—for in hearing of it by faith, you shall have life. For, says Christ in the latter part of the verse, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Joh 11:25).

## 2. To Whom Is Christ the Life?

To whom or of whom is Christ the resurrection and the life?

1. Christ is not the resurrection and the life of the fallen angels, but He is the resurrection and the life of ***fallen and slain sinners*** of Adam’s family: “He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16). Reader, when man complied with the tempter in paradise and ate of the forbidden fruit, the curse and wrath of God was about to sweep Adam and all his posterity into the same state of condemnation and misery with the angels that fell. But what method does God take to prevent this? Why, He joins a piece of the human nature to the Person of His eternal Son and, by that bit of the human nature, He brings back fallen man from ruin. This is what is intimated, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16). He gave Him to be man, and He gave Him to die: He “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom 8:32). He gave Him to the world, that is to say, He gave Him not to angel-kind, but unto man-kind sinners. Reader, here is matter of great joy and triumph: that Christ has taken hold of our nature, and let [those of] the angelic nature drop, at least an innumerable multitude of them.

2. Christ is not only the resurrection and the life of the Jewish nation, but of the ***Gentile nations*** that were afar off. The Jews imagined that the Messiah was to confine His blessings only to their nation; they imagined He was to be only their Saviour and their Redeemer. Therefore we find, after the resurrection of Christ, when the apostles began to preach to the Gentiles, great offence was taken at it by the Jews. Christ “preached unto the Gentiles,” is a branch of the great “mystery of godliness” (1Ti 3:16). Well, reader, Christ is given as the resurrection and the life to the Gentile nations, as well as to the Jews. There is a prophecy to this purpose in the prophecies of Isaiah, says Jehovah, in the person of the Father to our Redeemer, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the

tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (49:6)... The apostle John, I remember, has a word that points this way also: “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation<sup>17</sup> for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1Jo 2:1-2)—that is, not only for us who are Jews, but also for the sins of the poor Gentiles; they have an interest in the redemption that the Son of God hath purchased.

3. Christ is the resurrection of *all the churches*; He is the resurrection of the Church,<sup>18</sup> both universal and particular. There had never been a Church in Adam’s family, if Christ had not gathered it. He began to raise a Church in paradise, and the foundation of the Church was laid in the first promise, “it [i.e., the seed of the woman, Christ] shall bruise thy head [i.e., the serpent, the devil], and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). The Church is God’s family upon earth, and it is Christ that builds the family and the house of mercy in which the family dwells. He received from His Father to build a new family among the tribes of Adam: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also”; for what end? “That the Lord God might dwell among them” (Psa 68:18). So that He is the resurrection and the builder of the churches.

The Jewish Church received its very being from Him, and He raised them up out of nothing, out of the dunghill, when they were among the Amorites and the Hittites. Why, He gathers them as in Ezekiel 16:3-6: “Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.” (Eze 16:3-6). It was He that raised them up out of the house of bondage, as He tells them in the preface to the Ten

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<sup>17</sup> **propitiation** – “Propitiation has reference to the wrath or displeasure of God. To propitiate is to satisfy the divine justice and thus to appease His wrath. In the biblical usage of the term, the justice of God is satisfied by the propitiatory sacrifice.” (Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 382.)

<sup>18</sup> **Church** – the spiritual “invisible Church” universal, which includes all true believers throughout the world and throughout all of time, as differentiated from the “particular” visible church: local assemblies of professing Christians.

Commandments (Exo 20:2). It was He that raised them out of Babylon. It was just like a grave to them, and it seemed as impracticable to bring them back to their own land again, as to bring up one lying in the grave to life. Yet the Lord raises them out of their Babylonish grave, and plants and waters them there.

4. Christ is the resurrection and the life of *every sinner who belongs to Him*, in a day of conversion and regeneration: “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). Reader, in a day of power, the Lord comes to the grave in which we lie buried, the grave of sin and misery, just as He came to Lazarus’ grave; and He says, Sinner, come forth (Joh 11:43), and immediately he gets life—the Spirit of Jesus enters into him, then the fetters<sup>19</sup> of his spiritual captivity drop off.

5. Christ is the resurrection and the life of *languishing believers*. Many times the real believer that is quickened by the Spirit of the Lord, falls back, in a great measure, into spiritual death to his sense and feeling; he is “free among the dead,” as Heman says of himself (Psa 88:5)—that is to say, I am one among the generation of the dead. My life is gone, as the eunuch, “Behold, I am a dry tree” (Isa 56:3)—my life is gone, there is no sap in me, there is no life in me. Well, I am ready to apprehend [that] there may be many of the Lord’s people reading this, up and down the land, that have this complaint in their mouth. But Christ is “the resurrection and the life”; He lets out new streams of life to languishing souls, to restore them again, as David says: “He restoreth my soul [to life again]” (Psa 23:3). What way does He that? He makes the dew of His life-giving Spirit descend, and then the man revives as the corn, grows as the vine, and his scent is as the wine of Lebanon (Hos 14:7). And thus you see an answer to the second question, Of whom is Christ the resurrection and the life?

### 3. Of What Is Christ the Resurrection?

Of what is Christ “the resurrection and the life”?

#### A. The declarative glory of God

Christ is the resurrection of the declarative glory of God in this lower world. Reader, God’s declarative glory was marred by man’s sin. His essential glory cannot be marred by men nor devils, let them do their utmost; but, I say, His declarative glory was marred. When man sinned, he threw off God as his Sovereign: he, upon the matter, said with proud Pharaoh, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?” (Exo 5:2). He swore allegiance to hell—in opposition to God, the glory

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<sup>19</sup> **fetters** – chains for binding prisoners.



of His justice and holiness, and all His perfections, particularly His truth. All these perfections of God were sullied and stained; there was a blot cast upon them, as far as man was able. But Christ came to wipe away the dust that was cast upon them by man; and accordingly, He raises them to a greater splendour than if man had not sinned. Hence He is called, “The brightness of [the Father’s] glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3). Father, says He, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Joh 17:4-5).

## **B. The holy Law of God**

Christ is the resurrection of the holy Law of God. The holy Law of God was violated, broken, and trampled under foot; man had broken God’s bands, and cast His cords from him. The authority of God’s Law was despised and disregarded. But God will not let His Law lie trampled under the feet of man. Christ comes and repairs the honour of the Law more than if it had never been broken, that it might not be a bar to our salvation: “He will magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isa 42:21). He is the resurrection of the holy Law: He vindicates the honour of the Law, and puts a greater luster and beauty upon it than if man had continued in his primitive integrity.<sup>20</sup> Yea, greater honour is done the Law, than if all the angels in heaven had died—for though all the angels in heaven had obeyed its precepts and endured its penalty in our room, they could never have done so much honour to it as Christ did, because He was the great Lawgiver and was not a debtor to it like other men: “When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal 4:4). Here is a wonder, a wonder that will be matter of astonishment to all eternity: that He Who gave the Law was made under the Law, to redeem us that were under it. So He is the resurrection of the Law: “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3).

## **C. Our human nature**

Christ is the resurrection of the primitive integrity, purity, and beauty of the human nature. Reader, the nature of man was marred, the beauty of it was spoiled by the Fall; yea, the nature of man was so polluted and so ugly by the Fall, that it was sunk, as it were, below the very inferior creatures—but Christ is the resurrection of the human nature. By uniting our nature to Himself, He raised it to a higher degree of honour than ever it had when it stood in the first Adam. Yea,

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<sup>20</sup> continued in his primitive integrity – never had fallen into sin.

reader, the nature of man is advanced to a great honour by being united to the Son of God, than ever was put upon the angelic nature. The angelic nature was never brought so near to God as the human nature. The angels are nigh His face and happy in the enjoyment of God, but there are none of the angels that are united to any of the Persons of the Trinity. The nature of man is so closely united to the Person of the Son, as that it becomes one person with Him. O come see what God hath wrought, to what God hath advanced us: “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” (Heb 1:5). Christ is called “the glory of [His people] Israel” (Mic 1:15), and all His people are called to glory in Him—and well may they, for He is the ornament of the family, He is the credit of the family. The crown fell from our heads when we sinned against God, but by the incarnation of the Son of God, the crown is set upon the head of the human nature. Whenever we look to Christ, we should call Him our crown, our ornament, our honour, and our beauty. Reader, when people have a great man for their relation, they are very ready to say, “Such a great man is my friend.” However, let not your boasting be in human things, but let your boasting be that your very nature is joined to the Person of God’s eternal Son. I wish I could be instrumental to bring people to right notions of the Person of Christ; ignorance of Christ’s Person is the loss of all. What is Christ but God wearing man’s nature: coming, dying, rising again, ascending up into heaven, and wearing our nature forever as a pledge of His love to us? God in our nature is a God to be believed in, trusted in, and rejoiced in. Is not this God an object of the highest delight, triumph, and obedience? So then, I say, He is the resurrection of the human nature.

#### **D. Our knowledge of God**

Christ is the resurrection of our knowledge of God and acquaintance with God. Reader, immediately upon the Fall of man, he fell out of acquaintance with God and lost all saving views of God. It was the happiness of man before the Fall [that] he saw God’s glory in the whole creation around him. He never looked upon a creature in it, but he saw the glory of God sparkling in that creature. But when we fell, Satan did with us just as the Philistines did with Samson: he put out our eyes. Man by nature is born blind, but Christ is the recovery of our sight; Christ came to bring light and sight together to us. Christ is called “the Sun of righteousness,” “the bright and morning star” (Mal 4:2; Rev 22:16). Why? Because He brings the knowledge of God back to the fallen tribe of Adam. He came to discover the glory of His Father to the world: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (Joh 1:18). Reader, it is the beginnings of everlasting life in the soul, when the soul begins to know God in Christ, and takes up that discovery of God in the

Word. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Joh 17:3). He is the resurrection of our knowledge that we lost in the first Adam.

### **E. Our righteousness before God**

Christ is the resurrection of our righteousness, and of our justification and acceptance before God. Immediately upon the Fall of Adam, man lost his original righteousness, and righteousness was quite out of Adam’s family: “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom 3:10). But Christ is the righteousness of man; we are told He brings “in an everlasting righteousness” (Dan 9:24). Notice the expression: He brings it *in*; it was out of Adam’s family, out of the earth, and Christ brings it in. He does it by His obedience “unto death” (Phi 2:8); hence is that blessed name He bears: “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS [Jehovah-Tsidke-Nu]” (Jer 23:6). “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness” (Isa 45:24): notice, it is in *the Lord*; it is not in ourselves, but in the Lord. He is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:4). And, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2Co 5:21). Does not that say, He is “the resurrection and the life” of our righteousness and acceptance before the infinite Lord, Who had passed the sentence of condemnation upon us for our unrighteousness? O reader! take care that you be under that covering of Christ’s righteousness. You had need to wrap your souls in that garb, for there is no standing before God without it.

### **F. Our holiness**

He is the resurrection of our holiness. That was another part of God’s image we lost, for you know it consists in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Immediately after man’s sin, he became blackened [by sin] and spotted like a leopard. Well, Christ comes and begins His work of holiness here, and perfects it at death; hence we are told, He is “of God made unto us...sanctification” (1Co 1:30). I do not understand that holiness which is without Christ. Some pretend to make themselves holy by their own power: they put heathenish morality in the room of gospel-holiness. But that is not holiness, “for,” says Christ, “without me ye can do nothing” (Joh 15:5)—you cannot bring forth the fruits of holiness. Unless you be joined to the Lord, you cannot be holy; it is “the beauty of the Lord” upon His people that makes them holy. Therefore, He is the resurrection of our holiness, if ever we were made holy.

## **G. Our peace with God**

Christ is the resurrection of our peace with God. By the entry of sin, our peace with God was broken and man became an enemy to God. Ever since he is filled with “enmity against God” (Rom 8:7), and God becomes an enemy to man, for He is “angry with the wicked every day” (Psa 7:11). Well, Christ came to recover the ancient friendship between God and man. And by Him it is effectually done, for He “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20)—by the satisfaction of justice, and by abolishing the penalty of the Law. The peace He makes between God and the soul is a lasting peace, because it stands on a lasting foundation. There are some that make a mighty cry for “Peace, peace; O let us have peace at any rate,” though it should be at the expense of truth, though the truth should suffer by it. But it is folly for any to think that peace can be, unless it stand upon righteousness and truth. No, the peace that Christ hath raised up stands upon the solid bottom of a law-magnifying righteousness. He is the resurrection of our peace.

## **H. Our fellowship with God**

He is the resurrection not only of peace, but of fellowship and communion between God and man. When man sinned, you know he was banished by God. He was turned out of paradise, and the cherubims were set to guard the way to “the tree of life.” There was no access for man to God, and God would have no correspondence with him—what correspondence can there be between heaven and hell, guiltiness and righteousness? Well, Christ recovers this, for He Himself is the way to it: for He tells us: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me” (Joh 14:6). And, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Joh 10:9); that is to say, they shall have free access to God, and his soul shall be filled with the fatness of God’s house of mercy. Reader, there are a good many of you designing for a communion-table; see that you go in by the right door. It is easy to get man’s door, to get a token from men; but, depend upon it, you will infallibly eat and drink damnation to your own souls if you do not enter by the door of Christ Jesus. It is impossible that we can take up the human nature, as the medium of communication to the divine nature, unless we see light in the Lord’s light (Psa 36:9). However, it is in this way that we come to have communion and fellowship with God. He is the resurrection of our fellowship and communion with God: “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1Pe 3:18). Christ is God’s way to us and our way to God.

## I. All the graces of the Spirit

Christ is the resurrection of all the graces of the Spirit. Adam lost his faith, he lost his love, he lost his hope, he lost his repentance, and he lost his obedience by the Fall. But now, Christ is the resurrection of every one of these.

1. He is the resurrection of our **faith**, trust, and confidence in God. As a reconciled God in Christ, He reveals Himself to us to be a God of love. Whenever the man sees this, it begets in him faith towards God: "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Psa 36:7). Christ is called "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2). Reader, if ever you got faith, it was just Christ that, by His word and Spirit, begot it in you: "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

2. Then He is the resurrection, not only of our faith, but of our **love**. Have you any spark of love to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Why, that spark of celestial fire comes from the heart of Christ. The Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us: He takes a coal of love from the heart of Christ, and throws it into our hearts and kindles it; and when He has kindled it, He preserves it by the continual breathings of the wind of His Spirit upon it. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (Isa 42:3).

3. Then He is the resurrection of our **hope** in God: He died and rose again "that your faith and hope might be in God" (1Pe 1:21). Says the apostle Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again *unto a lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1Pe 1:3). Immediately upon his fall, Adam lost his hope and fled into the thickets of paradise, for God was a terror to him. When the sinner is out of Christ, if he saw his case, he would be a "a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends" (Jer 20:4). "But thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jer 2:25). But whenever a sinner is "begotten again," he is begotten "unto a lively hope": he complies with that command, "Let Israel hope in the Lord" (Psa 130:7). Christ is the resurrection of our hope.

4. And then, Christ is the resurrection of our **repentance** and remission of sins: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Act 5:31).

5. And He is the resurrection of our new **obedience**. Man, upon the Fall, as I was hinting already, threw off his obedience to God; but Christ brings him back again. He writes His Law upon his heart, and causes him "to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Eze 36:27). Christ is the com-

mander of our obedience. The Law is delivered to us in the hand of a Mediator; we are “not without law to God, but under the law to Christ” (1Co 9:21). Because the Law is in the hand of Christ, therefore the Law is called His Law and His commandment; it was He that was in the midst of the angels when the Law was delivered.

Then He is not only the commander of our obedience, but the pattern of it; He not only gives the Law, but casts a copy of new obedience to us. He fulfils the Law to bring in everlasting righteousness for our justification; and He obeys it as a rule, that so we may be encouraged to walk after His example. “Learn of me,” says Christ, “for I am meek and lowly...take my yoke upon you” (Mat 11:29); that is to say, the yoke of My Law, a yoke that was never worn [and] is ready to gall the necks of beasts; but Christ wore this yoke and made it easy to us, fulfilling it as a covenant, and obeying it as a rule and pattern. And then it is in Him that all our obedience is accepted of the Lord. You must not think any thing is accepted as it comes from you, or done by you. No, our persons are accepted in Christ, and our obedience is rewarded in Him; our obedience, as it is a fruit of His own Spirit and of His love and satisfaction, is accepted and rewarded of the Lord. It is a remarkable expression you have: “Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain *in the Lord*” (1Co 15:58). There is a little word that is little looked to, but the very hinge of religion lies in it: Are you “in the Lord” when you obey? Are you in Him as “the true God, and eternal life” (1Jo 5:20)? Does all your obedience flow from being in Him? Is all your strength and holiness derived from Him? When you look for a reward of your obedience as done in your own persons, [do] you just run back to the covenant of works and quit the covenant of grace? Depend upon it, it will never be rewarded in yourselves, but in the Lord, in the Redeemer. Take care, then, and see that ye be in Him, or else you and your obedience will be found worth nothing in the end of the day.

6. I might tell you that Christ is the resurrection...of the **soul**, that noble part of man: “The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever” as to any ransom man could give for his soul (Psa 49:8). O reader! Christ is the resurrection of the soul because He is the Redeemer of the soul. He hath redeemed it by a great ransom: “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1Pe 1:18-19). And then He is not only the resurrection of the soul, by paying a price for it, but by application of that price in a day of power. Why, we are raised up by virtue of His resurrection. When our souls are raised up to a life of fellowship and communion with God, it is “the Spirit of Christ” that does it.



7. Then He is not only the resurrection of the soul, but also of the **body**. There is a word you have to this purpose: “Thy dead men [i.e., bodies] shall live, together with my dead men shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa 26:19). Reader, they that die in Jesus, and sleep in Jesus, are said to be His “dead,” “Thy dead men shall live”—they are His dead body. Yet they shall arise and sing, they that dwell in the dust. What way is it He will bring them up from the grave? Whenever He comes from heaven, He will let down His dew, then they will spring up as flowers in the spring; “for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa 26:19)

It has sometimes been pleasant to me to think of the difference between the resurrection of the godly and the wicked. The wicked will be raised by a word of power. They have no connection with Christ: they are the devil’s prisoners in the grave—and the devil, as God’s executioner, drags their souls immediately to hell. But the saints, when they die, they do not die in consequence of the penalty of the Law, but because it is the pleasure of their glorious Head—that so He may bring them through death, the road He traveled before them, to the immediate enjoyment of Himself. He lets them drop for a while into the grave; but at the resurrection, the dew of His Spirit will fall upon them like a warm shower. Then they will spring up like the corn after a warm shower; then they shall sing in that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa 25:9).

I shall only add this: that the very same Spirit of Christ that quickened thee at conversion, will quicken thee at the last day. I will give you a word for this, which you have in Romans 8:11: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Your mortal bodies shall be quickened by that self-same Spirit Who quickened you in conversion and holds you in life, and keeps you from returning to the generation of the dead.

## **J. A broken creation**

Christ is the resurrection of a shattered and broken creation. No sooner had sin entered into the world, but the wrath of God came down, and the creation began to groan under the weight of wrath that sin had brought upon it. We read of the whole creation groaning on the account of sin: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake” (Gen 3:17), says God to Adam. That curse is a dead weight upon the earth; it either has been reduced to its primitive nothing, or to its original chaos out of which it was at first formed. The eternal Son of God, seeing the wrath of His Fa-

ther coming down upon this lower world, steps in and offers a ransom for it, saying,

O Father, give Me a remnant of the lost race of Adam for a possession: let the earth, and all that is in it, be Mine. And upon the granting it to Me, I promise to satisfy Thy justice, to repair the honour of Thy Law and sovereignty, and to restore the disjointed creation to its primitive beauty and order.

Upon this parole and promise, God the Father makes a gift of the whole creation to Him: “all power...in heaven and earth” is devolved upon Him (Mat 28:18). He gives Him “the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa 2:8). He gives Him “power over all flesh” (Joh 17:2), and “gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body” (Eph 1:22-23). He has “a [human] body...prepared” for Him (Heb 10:5), that He might be “the man of thy right hand” (Psa 80:17). In the fullness of time, Christ—having put on the human nature and with the ransom of His blood—buys the visible creation: He buys the elect as a seed to serve Him; He buys this earth as a theatre; He buys the wicked world as tools to serve His purpose of grace with respect to an elect world—and, when He has served Himself of the wicked, He casts them away into the fire of hell. Thus Christ is the resurrection and the life of a shattered creation. If it were not kept up by His power, it would sink to nothing, or sink down into hell under the load of God’s wrath (Heb 1:3). Whenever Christ has finished what He designed, He will take it and purge it from sin that had defiled it. Then He will erect “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2Pe 3:13).

## 4. To What Life Are We Raised by Christ?

To what life is it we are raised up by Him Who is “the resurrection and the life”? In answer to this, I give you the following properties of that life.

1. It is a **soul-life**, it is a spiritual life. Alas for it, reader! there are many dead souls among us in living bodies. Many have the appearance of life, but their souls are dead; they are walking up and down the world as so many statues, “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). But that moment the soul comes to Jesus, the soul comes to life: “Hear, and your soul shall live” (Isa 55:3). What a valuable life is the life of the soul in comparison of the body! Indeed, the generality make a greater account of their bodies than they do of their souls; they sell their souls to the devil in pampering their bodies, which will shortly moulder down to the dust. “What is a man profited,” says our Saviour, “if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat 16:26). O what a valuable thing is the soul! O come to Him Who is the resurrection and the life: “Hear, and your souls shall live.”

2. It is a **righteous life**, even in the eye of the Law of God, that is bestowed by Him Who is the resurrection and the life. In some sense it may be called a legal life, a law-life in [which] there is no injury done to the Law in bestowing this life upon the dead sinner. As you heard, the Son of God became the resurrection and the life by magnifying “the law, and making it honourable” (Isa 42:21). The believer, who is made alive by Christ, can stand the trial of the Law, and look it in the face and say, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom 8:33-34).

3. It is a **holy life** that springs from Him Who is the resurrection and the life. Christ Himself is holy, the holy One; and whenever He takes [hold] of the sinner, He makes him “free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2). He makes the creature that was lying “among the pots...[to] be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold” (Psa 68:13). And then the beauty of holiness is upon that soul.

4. It is a very humble and **self-denied life** they have from Christ. They live, but they will not venture to say they live. “I live,” says the apostle, “yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me” (Gal 2:20); “not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1Co 15:10).

5. It is a **life of faith**; for when a man gets the life of grace, he does not live upon that life—it is but like a drop of water cast into a vessel, it is soon spent—but he lives upon the fountain of grace. Believer, the fountain of life is not within thee: it is above thee and without thee—it is in Christ Jesus. “Your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col 3:3), for, says Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20). And what follows? “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith* of the Son of God.” Faith does not glory in any thing the man has received. No; faith, as it were, forgets what it received—but it reaches forward, and it always comes back to the fountain of life to draw water there: “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3). So that, I say, it is a life of faith.

6. It is a **life of love**. Whenever life enters into the sinner, he begins to love the Lord and His Word: “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psa 119:97). And as the sparks fly upward, so this love is ever casting its sparks toward

heaven: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1Pe 1:8).

7. A **life of joy** and pleasure: “Whom, having not seen, ye love”; “believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Some who are unacquainted with religion have a notion that it is a dull and melancholy life, and therefore they stand aloof from it—and I wish believers may not give them too much occasion. If you see any of the saints dull and melancholy, it is not a part of their religion, but it is rather their irreligion and their unacquaintedness with the Lord; it is their failing and infirmity. But when faith is set at work, it has a “joy no man taketh from you” (Joh 16:22). You that have joy and know nothing of this, your joy is like “the crackling of thorns under a pot” (Ecc 7:6); like a bundle of straw, which makes a blaze that soon goes out. But this is a joy that never totally nor finally perishes; “many waters cannot quench” it (Song 8:7). Every blink of the Lord’s countenance makes the heart so glad, that corn and wine are but dregs and sand in comparison of it. O it is a joyful life!

8. The life we have from Him that is the resurrection and the life, it is a **royal life**, a princely life. He does not creep, as do the men of the world, to whom the serpent’s curse cleaves. By nature the seed of the serpent lie groveling in the dust: when they see a man attending on fast-days and feast-days, they will laugh at him, as if they were the only happy men in the world—while in the mean time they “feedeth on ashes” (Isa 44:20), and are dancing about the mouth of the pit. This life is a royal and princely life, and it is a life that makes the man live like [Christ]; he hath a princely life when he lives by faith on the Son of God—he lives on the hidden manna that most are strangers to. He makes them kings and priests to God and His Father. He provides them with royal food; He provides for them a royal crown, kingdom, and scepter to “rule the nations,” as the expression is (Rev 2:27).

9. To crown all, the life we have from Him is an **everlasting life**. Reader, Adam’s life was but short-lived; and our own lives, what are they but a vapour and a shadow? Ere long, you and I will disappear; and our posterity, springing up, will say in a little time, Where are they? But this life we have from Him that is “the resurrection and the life,” it is a perpetual life and a durable life. It is an everlasting life: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (Joh 3:36). And when the life of grace resolves into glory, the soul comes to the communion of likeness and of everlasting pleasure with the Lord: “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psa 16:11).

## 5. How Does Christ Come to Be the Life?

How does this come about? How does Christ come to be the resurrection and the life to dead sinners?

1. It comes about **by the ordination of His Father's appointment**; for He “was set up from...the beginning” to be our resurrection and our life (Pro 8:23). He was fore-ordained to it “before the foundation of the world” was laid (1Pe 1:20).

2. It comes about **by His own voluntary submission** and undertaking in the council of peace: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psa 40:7-8). As if the Father had said to the Son, Yonder are a company, a lost company, of sinners of Adam's family; I will make a present of them to thee, providing Thou wilt undertake to lay down Thy life for them. Content, the Son says, Father, I put My name in the volume of Thy book; I am willing this My engagement be registered: My blood shall go for theirs. And thereupon He becomes the resurrection and the life to us.

3. He is the resurrection and the life **by His incarnation**; He links our nature as it were to His own. He became one of our tribe, for He was none of ours originally. He took upon Him the human nature, so that He might be in a capacity to bear the curse of the Law, and to satisfy justice for us. Of necessity it behooved Him to be our near Kinsman, or else He could not be our Redeemer. As under the Law, He that was the avenger of our blood, and He that was to redeem the mortgaged inheritance, behooved to be the nearest of kin; so Christ, before He could be the Avenger of our blood and bruise the head of the enemy, and before He could relieve the mortgaged inheritance of everlasting life, behooved to become our Kinsman. Let us pride ourselves in this Kinsman, in this Lord Immanuel alone.

4. He becomes the resurrection and the life to us **by His death** and satisfaction. Reader, our life springs out of the very death and blood of the Son of God; His humiliation is the root of our exaltation: “By his stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5). He was accounted among the “number of transgressors,” so that we might be accounted righteous in the sight of God through Him. He was wounded that we might be healed; He was smitten that we might escape.

5. He becomes the resurrection and the life **by His own personal resurrection** from the dead. He goes down to the grave, that He might conquer the king of terrors within his own territories. Reader, what was the great plot the devil had in tempting man to sin? Why, he knew sin would usher in death, and he knew that would usher in hell—for death is the very mouth of hell to all mankind. Well,

when death is brought in, when the penalty of the Law is incurred, and the faithfulness of God is engaged for man's destruction, what way must he be delivered? What, says the Son of God, let their curse be upon Me; let Me go down to the grave for them. I will wring the keys of death and hell out of the devil's hand; and thus I will make death the gate of heaven instead of hell. By His resurrection, we are begotten "unto a lively hope" (1Pe 1:3).

6. He becomes the resurrection and the life to us **by His representation** of us in heaven, and by negotiating our affairs in that high court. Reader, all our concerns are transacted in the high court of heaven; our affairs of death or life are all negotiated above. Well, Christ takes on our nature; He dies; He goes down to the grave, rises again, and ascends into heaven. And He goes there to transact our affairs, to see that nothing be done against us; we are "raised up together, and...sit together in heavenly places" with Christ (Eph 2:6). By virtue of Christ's sitting in heaven, believers, you are sitting there in Him—just as subjects sit in parliament "in" their representatives. He is our living head, which is more than a bare representative.

7. He is the resurrection and the life **by the power and efficacy of His Word**. The Word is sometimes called "the rod of the Mediator's strength"; when He sends it forth, He makes a living and a willing people in a day of power. He utters a word like that to Lazarus when lying in the grave, "Come forth": then the bands and fetters of spiritual death drop off. Thus He is "the resurrection and the life" by the power of His Word, for His Word is a word of life—to preach all the words of this life, says the Lord to the apostles when they were brought out of prison: "The hour is coming," says Christ, "and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Joh 5:25).

8. He is the resurrection **by the efficacy of His Spirit**: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," says the apostle (Rom 8:2).

## 6. Why Did Christ Become Life to Us?

Why did Christ become the resurrection and the life to us?

1. He became our resurrection and our life because **He loved us**. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," that He might be our resurrection and life (Eph 5:2).

2. He becomes "the resurrection and the life" to us, because **we were gifted of the Father to Him**. He hath such a regard to the Father's gift, that He will die before He lose it.



3. He does it *for the manifestation of His own and His Father's glory*, that He might bring men back to their chief end for which they were created: "man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever."<sup>21</sup> Man, when he fell, dishonoured God instead of glorifying Him. Well, Christ's design is to bring man back to God, to answer the end for which he had a being. And until Christ bestow this spiritual life upon him, he can neither glorify God here, nor enjoy Him hereafter. But the believer begins even here to aspire after it with the psalmist; "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psa 73:25).

## **7. The Applications**

### **A. Remember from where you came**

From this doctrine, believers are led back to their first original, and have it discovered to them from whence they sprung. Why, believers, you were among the generation of the dead, before He that is "the resurrection and the life" paid you a visit. It were much for the advantage of believers to be recollecting, and looking back to the state from whence they sprung. I remember [that] God taught Israel to sing in the wilderness, when they came to offer up their first-fruits to Him: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous" (Deu 26:5). And God by Ezekiel tells them what they were before He visited them: "As for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born" (Eze 16:4-5). Remember, believers, what you were and what you are. And remember, it is only Him that is "the resurrection and the life" that brought you to any thing you are.

### **B. Christ blesses those who were dead**

From this doctrine, we may see what a blessing Christ is to a lost world, to a world of mankind sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins." Christ is become the resurrection and the life to them: "I have laid help," says the Lord, "upon one that is mighty" (Psa 89:19). "Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him

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<sup>21</sup> Question 1 in the Westminster Larger Catechism, written by the Westminster Assembly after it finished its work on the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), in order to assist pastors in teaching sound doctrine to their congregations.

blessed” (Psa 72:17). O what a wretched condition had we been in this day, if Christ had not come into the world to save us! We had continued among the generation of the dead, if He had not paid us a visit: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help” (Hos 13:9).

### **C. The blessedness of one who is alive**

We may see what dignified, what happy and excellent persons believers are. I remember Solomon says that “a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecc 9:4). As one living man is better than all the race of men lying in the grave, so one living saint, who has got life from Him that is the resurrection and the life, is better than a whole nation of dead men and women lying under the curse of God. O to what a sad pass are we come in the courts of the Church of Scotland, when there is no difference made between the dead and the living! A dead man, if he have a gold ring, will have more influence in the election of a minister, than a living saint, because [the minister desires] earthly heritage; it is an earthly church when it is so. Alas! a church is come to a sad pass when we judge of persons, not according to their relation to Christ, but according to their earthly possessions. Christ says that His “kingdom is not of this world” (Joh 18:36), but the courts will have it to be of this world. Christ has “chosen the poor of this world” (Jam 2:5), but they choose the rich of this world to be heirs of His kingdom. Do such courts deserve the name of being the courts of Christ?

### **D. Difference between the first and second Adam**

We may see the difference between the first and the second Adam. The first Adam is the spring of death to all his posterity; the second Adam is a spring of life to all His posterity. The first Adam was the head of the covenant of works; the second is the head of the covenant of grace. The first Adam represented all his natural posterity; the second Adam represents all His spiritual posterity. The first Adam sends the curse of the Law to them, and the curse of God along with it; and the second Adam sends all spiritual blessings and mercies to His posterity for evermore. O what a difference is there between these two! The first Adam was a creature, but the second Adam is the God-man, God manifested in the flesh.

### **E. Intimacy of Christ and His people**

From this doctrine we may see the intimacy and closeness of the union between Christ and His members; this is implied in the expression, “I am the resurrection and the life.” One would think He is taking in only Himself, but He takes in all believers. It is a relative word, it has a relation to those that are dead in trespasses and sins: “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1)—that is, all that believe in Christ, “He that hath the Son hath life” (1Jo 5:12). That connection between Christ and His members is very close; there is a

blessed oneness between Him and them. He and they have but one Father: He is the Son by eternal generation, and they are sons by regeneration. He and they are under one decree: He as Head of the election, and they elected in Him before the world began. He and they are included in one bond: they have one and the same Spirit; the same Spirit that is in the head is in all the members. O what a blessed oneness is between Christ and them! “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one” (Heb 2:11); they are one in nature, they are one in law, and they are comprised in one marriage-covenant: “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1Co 6:17),

### **F. Why believers are like Christ**

We may see the reason of that similitude and likeness that believers bear to Christ. They are more like Christ than all the rest of mankind; they are His living pictures and representatives upon earth. They carry His name upon their foreheads, so as every one may know Him in them. What is the reason of this similitude and resemblance? Why, the reason is, He is their resurrection and life. The same life that is in the Head is in the members; the same sap that is in the root is in the branches and little twigs. The same Spirit of life that is in Christ goes through all the members of His mystical body; that is the reason of the similitude between Him and them.

### **G. The reason for perseverance**

From this doctrine, we may likewise see the ground and reason of the perseverance of the saints, and the recovery of believers from their dismal fits of unbelief they fall under. What is it that makes the righteous grow stronger and stronger? What is it that recovers the believer from those desperate fits of unbelief, which make him to cry, “I am cast out of thy sight, I am free among the dead; my bones are withered, my life is gone”—yet he reverts always. What is it that brings him back and restores his soul? Why, Christ is “the resurrection and the life,” a new stream of life comes from his glorious Head, and then he begins to “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon” (Hos 14:7). They that dwell under His shadow, Who is the resurrection and the life, they shall “revive as the corn.”

### **H. The answer for a dying church**

From this doctrine, we may see where our eyes should be turned in such a day as this, in order to the resurrection of a dying church. There is a melancholy complaint at this day through the land, of dead ministers and dead people, dead

ordinances, dead hearing, dead reading, dead praying, and dead sacraments<sup>22</sup>—where shall we go for help? Let us look to Him Who is “the resurrection and the life.” It is He only that is the resurrection of ministers, the resurrection of judicatories, the resurrection of doctrine, the resurrection of discipline, and the resurrection of government—He is the resurrection and the life of them all. If He would come back, we would “looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (Song 6:10).

I remember Jehoshaphat, in a perplexing time when he was troubled and knew not what to do, turns his eyes to the Lord and cries, “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee” (2Ch 20:12). Well, reader, when all things are likely to turn to wreck and confusion, let us look to Him Who is “the resurrection and the life,” that He may raise us from the grave of apostasy and backsliding to which we are fallen. By the very breath of His mouth, He will make them live; and if He but say to ministers, Go prophesy upon these dead and dry bones (Eze 37:4)—when ministers are saying, O! how can these dry bones live?—immediately joint comes to joint, and sinew to sinew, and life enters into them, and a great army will stand up for the Lord. In the mean time, until He be pleased to come, let us ply the oar of duty at His command. Let us put up the request of the Church in a day like this: “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psa 85:6). “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out” (Song 4:16).

## **I. Regret for dead sinners**

### ***1) Many dead sinners***

If it be so that Christ is “the resurrection and the life,” then certainly it is matter of sad regret and lamentation that there should be so many dead sinners, when Christ is presented to them in the everlasting gospel. Indeed, it is to be regretted—though the words of life be proclaimed, though the words of the Spirit of life are scattered—so few are quickened by them. What way does that appear? say you. I answer: it appears by many things that there are a great multitude of dead sinners among us. It appears from the want<sup>23</sup> of a right colour. O reader, the pale and wan colour of death is staring out of countenance and conversation of the greatest part. There is little or nothing of the lively colour of true holiness among us, and the want of it is a sign of death.

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<sup>22</sup> **sacraments** – ordinances instituted by Christ for His Church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

<sup>23</sup> **want** – lack.

The want of appetite after food is another symptom of death. The bread of life, the everlasting gospel of Christ, is nauseated and loathed as the manna was by Israel. The preaching of a crucified Christ is foolishness to some and a stumbling-block to the worldly wise. Whatever reckoning such may make of themselves, God reckons them fools and dead men. God's wisdom is folly to them, and their wisdom is folly to the Lord.

And then the want of motion is another sign of death. Indeed, the dead may be moved from without, by external force, but not from within. There is something of motion they may seem to have in attending upon ordinances; but, O reader, is it from a principle of spiritual life you attend upon these ordinances? Is it from a desire to see Him Who is the resurrection and the life?

O let us lament over the misery of the dead in the valley of vision. If [only] it were possible to sound an alarm, and startle and awaken the dead that are before me. [Yet] this, indeed, is God's work, Who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom 4:17). However, by His appointment, we must use the means.<sup>24</sup>

## **2) Words for dead sinners**

There are these few words I would say to the dead, if they would give ear and hear.

a) The dead are *loathsome* to the living. You know whenever the soul departs from the body, it becomes loathsome: it corrupts, it stinks. Hence Abraham says concerning Sarah when she was dead, "Bury my dead out of my sight" (Gen 23:4), though he loved her well when she was alive. Reader, you are loathsome—you are abhorred of the living God while out of Christ, and abhorred by all living saints: "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united" (Gen 49:6).

b) As they are loathsome, so they are *frightful*. People are affrighted at seeing the dead; so, believers are affrighted when in the society of the wicked, lest they be corrupted with their contagion. Indeed, it is hard to be amongst the dead and not be infected by them, and not in some way partake of their sin. Then, the dead must be buried and cast into the grave; so, dead sinners, you must be buried. Where will you be buried? Your bodies will go to the worms, but your souls to hell. The Hebrew word *Sheol* signifies both the grave and hell, because the grave is the very mouth of hell to the wicked. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa 9:17). Consider this, O dead sinners; let this

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<sup>24</sup> **means** – instruments through which God works to communicate to the hearts of men; in this case, preaching.

engage you to improve<sup>25</sup> Him that is the resurrection and the life. And this leads me to another inference, or use from the doctrine.

## **J. Life to the dead**

If it be so that Christ is the resurrection and the life of a lost world “dead in sin,” then in the name of this great Lord, as one of His meanest<sup>26</sup> heralds, I proclaim *life to the dead*. It would be in vain to speak to the dead, if it were not by order from Him Who “quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom 4:17). Can the dead praise Him? If God were giving me a commission to speak to the very stones in the field, I would do it, believing that the stones would live and praise Him. When the Jews were forbidding the people to praise Christ, He says, “if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luk 19:40)—for out of the stones God can raise up children to Abraham (Mat 3:9). Reader, you are not yet naturally dead, you are not eternally dead; therefore there is hope. O here is a living Saviour; here is the fountain of life among you. I cry, “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”; “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord” (Rev 22:17; Jer 22:29). Comply with the word of the King eternal and immortal; it is His voice coming through an earthen trumpet, “that the excellency of the power” may be of Him (2Co 4:7). O that this may be the hour “when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Joh 5:25).

O reader, you are reasonable men and women, you have rational faculties; will you consider [the following.]

### **1) The sinner can call upon Christ**

[Consider] that this very name of Christ invites you to come to Him. Why has He taken this name to Himself, “the resurrection and the life,” if there were not dead sinners to quicken? Why has He registered it in His Word, but that the dead sinner may lay his finger on that name, and carry it to a throne of grace, saying, O let Him be the resurrection and the life to me? O let the Spirit of Him that is the resurrection and the life quicken me, and make me “free from the law of sin and death!”

### **2) Christ is yours**

Consider: He Who is “the resurrection and the life” is given to you in the dispensation<sup>27</sup> and grant of the everlasting gospel: the life that is in Him is yours. Now, I scarce think you will believe me; I affirm it, He is yours in the revelation: He is yours as He is held out in the Bible, the book of God. He is yours as He

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<sup>25</sup> **improve** – make use of; apply to one’s life for profit.

<sup>26</sup> **meanest** – common, average, not exceptional, lowly.

<sup>27</sup> **dispensation** – divine act or dealing.



stands in this gospel, and He is yours in the gift and grant made by Himself in the Word. There is an authentic grant made by the Father of Christ in this Bible, and this is the ground of the commission we have to preach to every creature. All mankind, every creature come of Adam, is dead in sin; and yet we are commissioned to go and preach and prophesy to these dead and dry bones.

Now, upon what ground does this commission go? Why, you will see from 1 John 5:11, that it goes upon a gift or grant of life that God has made to mankind-sinners, in a second Adam, a new covenant head: "this is the record, that God hath given to us [i.e., sinners of Adam's race] eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Our preaching the gospel is just a publication of this authentic grant of life to the dead, made by God in the Word; when the dead hear this, their souls live (Isa 55:3). I remember in John 6, Christ, the resurrection and the life, is there preaching to dead sinners; because He had fed them with loaves, they had a hankering after Him. They all forsook Him when He began to preach faith in His blood to them, yet what says He: "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (Joh 6:32). Well, says Christ, "I am the bread of life," the true manna. I am given by My Father, [so] that whosoever calleth Me, may live by Me. The gift or grant of Christ in the Word is just the very foundation that faith goes upon.

Why, we durst not bid you meddle with Him unless He were given; it is theft and robbery to meddle with that which does not belong to us. Our offer of Christ, and the call to receive Him, certainly suppose He is given, or else we durst not bid you meddle with Him. Unbelief is the great sin of the hearers of the gospel that the Lord threatens most to resent; but unbelief would not be your sin if Christ were not given. Now, believe this, that Christ *is* given, offered, and presented in this gospel, even to you who are rotting in the grave of sin, that He may, through faith of God's operation, be the resurrection and the life to your souls in particular.

### ***3) Christ is willing; the sinner often is not***

#### ***a) Christ is willing***

Consider that Christ, the resurrection and the life, is willing to give the life that is in Him to you; He willingly died, He willingly came into this world, and He willingly went about the work His Father sent Him to do. What way does that appear? say you. Answer: It appears from His solemn and repeated calls, "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isa 55:3). He offers and bodes Himself upon the dead, and complains that the dead will not come to Him for life: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"; "How often would I have gathered thy children together," says Christ, "even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Joh 5:40).

*b) The sinner is not willing*

So then, remember, reader, it is not your impotency that will excuse you. Some people fancy that it will excuse them because they are dead; remember, reader, that God will not condemn you so much for your impotency, as for your unwillingness to come to Christ. If you had willingness, you would find the Spirit of life entering into you and quickening you; He is so willing, that He complains of the folly and distraction of sinners. He appeals to the heavens and the earth to judge between Him and them for their madness: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer 2:12-13).

*c) The sinner's response*

Now, let these things be pondered by you that are dead; the Lord is willing to give life to you, and will you not be willing to take such an unspeakable blessing of His hand? For the Lord's sake consider what will follow if you do not embrace the Son of God: out of one death you will go to another, out of the grave of sin you will be tumbled into the grave of hell ere it be long. It is only those that "hear the voice of the Son of God" that "shall live" (Joh 5:25).

O, say you, will you give the dead your best advice what to do?

1) Be convinced that you are dead in trespasses and sins. Alas! there lies the great difficulty, sinners cannot be persuaded but they have life already, at least as much of it as will bring them into heaven. We cannot get people beat out of this delusion.

2) Another advice I would give you is, Be persuaded there is no life in and by the works of the Law for you: "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16).

3) And then you must be persuaded that there is life in Christ for you, and that you in particular are warranted to come to Him for life. Harken to the words that come from Him, listen to His words of life, for in hearing you shall live. I would advise you to pray much. Let the dead go to a living Christ; cry, "Spring up, O well of living water, and enter into my soul." Then let those that are dead [frequent] the company of living Christians, for this is one way to get life—and to keep it in when got. As you know, when dead coals are put in among the living coals, they will soon be kindled by them; so, by conversing with lively Christians, the Spirit of life may enter into you.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The author is not suggesting that we can be saved by conversing with Christians. No; salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. The author is stating again the principle that

## **K. To the living**

The last inference I make is to the living. Is it so, that Christ is “the resurrection and the life”? Then you who are raised by His death and resurrection, take the following advice, and I will be finished.

### ***1) Bless the Lord***

My advice to you that are partakers of the life of Christ, is to bless the Lord that ever He crowned you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Admire the freedom of the grace of God in quickening you when “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), when He left others dead in the grave of sin. The Lord comes to the quarry of nature, He sees so many stones lying there, and He pitches on whom He pleases. Have you not reason, then, to bless the Lord, that He picked you out, and left many of brighter natural qualifications than you? O man, what is the difference between them and you? It is nothing but sovereign, free, and victorious grace! Let grace have all the glory.

### ***2) Live by faith in Him***

Another advice I would give you that have shared of life from Him Who is “the resurrection and the life,” is this: Has He quickened you? [Then] let the life you live be “by the faith of the Son of God,” Who loved you, and gave himself for you (Gal 2:20). Remember what I said before: you are not to live on grace received, but on the life that is in Him: The life I live, says the apostle, is by faith upon the Son of God, “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” And then, as you live upon Him and by Him, so study to live to His glory: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat 5:16).

### ***3) Witness of Christ***

Another advice I would give to the living, is, Study not only to believe in Him with the heart, but to confess Him with the mouth to salvation, as the expression is: “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:10). It is not enough to believe in Christ, unless we likewise own and avow Him, unless we honour and glorify Him before the world. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men” (Mat 10:32), saith Christ, “I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev 3:5); “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 10:33).

I remember Isaiah 43:10 and 44:8; Christians are called the Lord’s “witnesses.” Why do they get that name? Because they confess His truths, they confess His

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God uses instruments in accomplishing His purposes, and one of these instruments is fellowship with the people of God.

cause, they confess His members, they confess His ministers—and everything that belongs to Him. It is not a private owning of Him that will do in such a day as this: He is publicly affronted, the crown is publicly taken off His head. He is injured by civil and ecclesiastical courts; He is injured in His doctrine, worship, discipline, and government. He is injured in His members. He is injured in His supreme deity; He is injured in His headship and sovereignty over His Church.

Now, I say, when He is thus publicly injured, He ought also to be publicly confessed. A public testimony has been emitted in a judicial way by a handful of ministers, who, by the peculiar providence of God, have been brought into a particular situation. That testimony has come abroad, and it torments the men that dwell upon the earth, who attempt to bury His testimony and His witnesses. A cry is come abroad of a dangerous schism in the Church, and of schismatics rending the seamless coat of Christ. This is just the old cant of the Papists,<sup>29</sup> when the Protestants came off from them, saying, O, by your doing so, you cause divisions in the church, and rend Christ's seamless coat. I would ask such: Who are the causes of it? they that endeavour to maintain and contend for the truths of Christ, or those that tread His truths under their feet? whether they that endeavour to maintain "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal 5:1), or those that are trampling the sacred privileges of the Church of Christ under their feet?

All that is demanded by us is that they return to the Lord, and that they rectify these things that are wrong in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government. This is what God requires: He "commandeth all men every where to repent" (Act 17:30). What is the reason that men, in a judicial capacity, do not purge out the leaven of error or scandals in the Church? what is the reason? It is either because they will not, or they cannot. If they will not, by this they proclaim to the world that they are a set of wicked men. Or it is because they cannot: it says the Master has taken away the keys from them—and what a ridiculous thing would it be to accede<sup>30</sup> to them, from whom the keys of the house are taken away by the Master of the house?

It is easy, then, to know what course to steer. If the rights of Christ as King in His holy hill of Zion, be maintained in the judicatories of the establishment, then it is a sin to withdraw from them. But if they be trampling under foot the authority of the Son of God by enacting laws in His house which are inconsistent with His laws, and with the liberties wherewith He has made His people free; if they be worming out a faithful ministry, screening the erroneous, casting ministers out

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<sup>29</sup> **Papists** – those loyal to the Pope; Roman Catholics.

<sup>30</sup> **accede** – to give consent; agree; yield.

of their communion for faithfully witnessing against errors and corruptions—then we ought not to continue with them, especially when a public testimony is lifted up. Wherever His cause is displayed, and His truths are maintained by doctrine, worship, or discipline, there should the accession be; for the “gathering of the people” should be there (Gen 49:10). If it be within the camp, stand there; if it be found in the fields and city of the wood, it concerns us to follow Him there, though reproach and persecution should follow. Says the apostle: “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb 13:13).

When the Christian Church was first erected by the apostles, and the Jewish Church was unhinged, a cry was raised after them: that they were schismatics and rending the true and only Church of God. Says the apostle, He has been reproached for us, and it is good in common to go without the camp to Him, bearing His reproach. However you may fear reproach for Christ, Moses was of another opinion, for he accounted “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Heb 11:26). What is the hazard, though reproach should follow? Cleave to Him! Let us study to confess Him and follow Him on all hazards: “He that loseth his life for my sake,” says Christ, “shall find it” (Mat 10:39)—he that loses a good name for Christ, will find it again. There will be a resurrection of names, as well as of persons, ere all be done.

#### **4) Beware of hindrances**

Another advice is: I would have you beware of those things that are a prejudice to the life of your souls.

a) Beware of being lazy in life. Nothing does more hurt a person’s life than this. It is very prejudicial to the body, but O, beware of *spiritual* sloth. Be “not slothful in business; *fervent in spirit*; serving the Lord” (Rom 12:11).

b) Beware of indulging and glutting yourselves with the pleasures of sense; that also is a prejudice to the life of the soul. “Take heed,” says our Saviour, “lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting,<sup>31</sup> and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luk 21:34). No sooner did Samson stoop into the lap of Delilah, than his locks were cut (Jdg 16:18). Then,

c) Beware of unwholesome food; why, it is pernicious to the life: [in the same way,] beware of unsound doctrines. Many errors are abounding in our day.

d) O, beware of dead ministers, for dead ministers make a dead people and dead hearers. Where there is nothing but dead hearing, O, will ever the voice of dead men make a living people? O beware of putting your souls under the inspec-

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<sup>31</sup> **surfeiting** – gluttonous indulgence in eating or drinking.

tion of a dead, ignorant, and erroneous ministry. Beware of them: says Christ, “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Mat 15:14). Beware of dumb<sup>32</sup> ministers that have not a mouth to open for Christ. Beware of them that, instead of barking at the wolves, are barking at the sheep. If you would keep life in your souls, study to keep under a lively ministry, where you can find it.

e) Then, beware of a deadening society,<sup>33</sup> for it is very prejudicial to the soul: “Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God” (Psa 119:115).

f) Beware of grieving the Spirit of the Lord; if you grieve Him, He will [withdraw, and then your communion will be broken]. Beware of resisting His motions and operations. Beware of turning a deaf ear to His Word; if it be disregarded, His Spirit will [convict] you: “So,” says the Lord, “I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels” (Psa 81:12).

g) Beware of sinning presumptuously, for that kills and deadens the life of the gracious soul. Put up that prayer of David’s: “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression” (Psa 19:13).

h) Beware of security and barrenness under the means of grace.<sup>34</sup> When you get influences from the Lord, O improve them for the end you got them—for when God’s vineyard does not bring forth fruit at the watering of it, the Lord forbids the watering of it any more.

The Lord bless His Word.



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<sup>32</sup> **dumb** – physically unable to speak; here used symbolically of those who speak not truth.

<sup>33</sup> **society** – a person’s circle of friends.

<sup>34</sup> **means of grace** – instruments that God is pleased to use in order to accomplish salvation and sanctification in the hearts of men: the preaching of the Word, Bible reading and study, prayer, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, family worship, singing, and godly fellowship with believers.