

A Living in Resurrection

- 1 Life out of death—dear Master, is it spoken
Of the life here, or in the better land?
Nay, wherefore wait? The vessel marred and broken,
Shall now be moulded by the Potter's hand.
- 2 Life out of death—oh, wondrous resurrection!
Seed sown in conscious weakness, raised in power;
Thy life lived out in days of toil and friction,
“Not I, but Christ” in me from hour to hour.
- 3 Life out of death—a pilgrim path and lonely,
Trodden by those who glory in the Cross.
They live in fellowship with “Jesus only,”
And for His sake count earthly gain but loss.
- 4 Life out of death—blest mission to be ever
Bearing the living water brimming o'er.
With life abundant from the clear, pure river,
Telling that thirsty souls need thirst no more.
(Hymns, #640)

Life out of death—the phrase immediately captivates our attention. When reading or singing this hymn, it is unmistakable that the life to which it refers is another life, a life that proceeds out of death in which death is an essential introduction to and intrinsic element. This hymn also testifies that the life out of death is not merely the resurrection life in abstract—reserved for our eventual participation in the future; it is the resurrection life now to be manifested in the present living of proper Christian believers. The author—who is anonymous—wrote this hymn in celebration of our participation in and experience of the power and efficacy of the resurrection life as the basic ingredient of our active Christian living. This life, therefore, is the resurrection life accomplished by Jesus Christ in its application to His believing followers. After we first receive this life through regeneration at the time of our believing into the Lord, we must learn to participate in its continuing operation in us as the empowering element of God that enables us to enjoy a meaningful and fulfilling daily life. This life is lived out in an atmosphere of continuing conflict in which the believer must learn to glory in the cross of Christ, that is, to acknowledge that it is “not I, but Christ” in our living. The hymn ends with an exulting proclamation of the joy and satisfaction of being commissioned to bear—to carry forth as the precious content in our human vessel—this

life which is full of “living water brimming o'er.” We who have a share in this glorious life out of death, a life of rich experience that fully satisfies, also have the inestimable privilege of telling “thirsty souls” that they “need thirst no more.”

The phrase *life out of death* does not signify simply a life that occurs after death; it is rather a new life, a completely different life that proceeds out of death. In this life, death is a necessary component, not simply an event that precedes resurrection. We can see the difference by reflecting on the resurrection of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus was a temporary occurrence through which he passed before his inevitable submission to the relentless pursuit of death. His life had been resuscitated, but he was not clothed with the resurrection body spoken of by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:52-53: “The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Thus, the Scriptures lucidly articulate that there is a life that proceeds out of death, having a new form and a new essence—a life that overcomes corruption, dishonor, and weakness, a life that overpowers death itself and makes death no longer relevant. To this resurrection life, death no longer is real. The full manifestation of this resurrection is future, but the immediate and constant foretaste of this life is our portion today.

The Resurrection of Christ

In order to fully understand and appreciate resurrection as a life that issues out of death, we must spend time to consider the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know that Jesus, the son born to Mary the wife of Joseph, was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20). Such a conception and birth produced a wonderful person—Jesus, the Son of God who is Emmanuel, God with us. A footnote in the Recovery Version is helpful here:

Matt. 1:18 and 20 tell us that Mary “was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit,” and that “that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.” This indicates that the divine essence out of the Holy Spirit had been begotten in Mary’s womb before she delivered the child Jesus. Such a conception of the Holy Spirit in the human virgin,

accomplished with the divine and human essences, constituted a mingling of the divine nature with the human nature, which produced a God-man, One who is both the complete God and the perfect man, possessing the divine nature and the human nature distinctly, without a third nature being produced. This is the most wonderful and most excellent person of Jesus, who is Jehovah the Savior. (Luke 1:35, note 2)

This wonderful person lived a perfect human life for thirty-three and a half years. In His humanity He served God and expressed God perfectly. He preached the good news of forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and release from captivity and oppression. He healed the sick, cast out the demons, and restored sight to the blind. His words and His actions astonished the people and confounded the religious leaders of the day. As God yet man, He perfectly carried out the economy of His Father God. Yet there was an unfulfilled purpose that constrained and motivated Him, and He looked forward with anticipation to His passing through death and resurrection in order to complete His goal in the divine economy. He must die and be raised. He told His disciples during a time of unveiling His person and His work to them “that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised” (Matt. 16:21). The night before His crucifixion, He told them that it was “expedient” (John 16:7) that He go away from them (referring to His death) in order that He might send to them the Comforter, referring to the Spirit whom He would send as a direct issue of His death and resurrection. This was a burden that lay heavily on His heart.

Watchman Nee, in a message titled simply “The Resurrection of Christ” captures the significance of the weight that was heavy in the heart of the Lord, a burden which He unveiled in a moment recorded in Luke 12:49-50:

Let us read Luke 12:49. This is the deepest verse in the Gospel of Luke. The Lord said, “I have come.” He does not mention anything about redemption. He merely came “to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!” This verse speaks of a fire being cast on the earth. This means that the fire is not from the earth, but from heaven and from God. Fire signifies the life in the Spirit. The Lord came to cast fire on the earth, that is, to release God’s life to the earth. Following this the Lord said, “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!” (v. 50). The word “pressed” in Greek means “bound” and “confined.” The Lord was saying that He came to release the life of God. Yet He was still in the flesh and could not release such a life. He felt bound and confined. Because of His flesh, God’s life could not be released; His life was limited by the flesh. This is why He felt bound and confined.

...We must note that the Lord did not say that He had not been baptized. He was saying that there was a baptism that had not yet been accomplished. “Baptism” in this verse clearly refers to His death on the cross (Mark 10:38). The death of Christ was His great release. If Christ had not died, the divine life within Him would have been imprisoned and bound. But once He died, the divine life was released and ready to be received by man. This is what He wished to see.

The phrase *in Jesus* is not in the Bible. The Bible only says “in Christ.” We cannot be in Jesus, because Jesus was a man. He was God’s only begotten Son, and we have no part in Him. No one can be in Jesus of Nazareth. But one day this man who was in the flesh, this individual man, was crucified on the cross. Although His flesh died, this death released His life. When He resurrected from the dead, He became Christ Jesus; He became the One whom we can get into. When we are in Christ, we receive His life; we die and are raised up together with Him. This is what Christ’s resurrection has accomplished. (370-371)

The death of Christ is linked directly to the redemption of His chosen people that they may be forgiven, justified, and reconciled to God, but it also is connected to the releasing of His divine life to become the factor of regeneration and growth in the divine life for the fulfilling of God’s eternal purpose according to His divine economy.

God’s Special Purpose for Man

To realize and enter into the significance of Christ’s resurrection life transmitted to and functioning in His believers, we must be impressed with the fact that God has a special purpose for man. The creation of man was very particular—God created man in His own image (Gen. 1:27). The Bible further details the creation of man, declaring that God took special pains when He made man: “Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul” (2:7). God did not bring forth man simply by speaking as He did with the rest of creation; He personally and intimately—with His own hands as it were—formed man of the dust of created earth. Then He breathed life into man with His breath. When the breath of God entered into the dust-formed vessel, man emerged as a living soul. The profound meaning of the creation of man is that he became the unique creature in the universe who is both physical and spiritual. As flesh, he is able to live, move, and have his being in the physical creation; as spirit, he is able to sense God, touch God, receive God, and thus become a part of God for His expression and representation. The creation of man was the peak of the divine

creation, yet something was still needed that God's purpose in man might be fulfilled. At that point in time man's creation was complete, and man was perfect and without sin; however, this perfect created man was still limited and short, lacking God's uncreated life as his substance and constitution. God, therefore, put man in front of the tree of life in the garden indicating that man must receive God's infusing and indwelling life that he might express and represent God in and over all of creation.

God's purpose is to gain a corporate man who would be the manifestation of God in the flesh. Only by the Son coming in the flesh could God's plan be fulfilled to have a man represent and express Him—a proper man containing and living by the divine life in His humanity. The man Jesus carried out the will of God perfectly and completely in His human living from His birth to His death. His human living was necessary and wonderful, but His death was an inherent and inseparable aspect of the redemption that He accomplished through pouring out His precious blood for sinners. His death was also crucial for the release of His divine life for the regeneration of His redeemed chosen and elect (1 Pet. 1:3). Without His death there was no possibility that His divine life could be dispensed into His redeemed. Now God's intention is to reproduce this God-man living in all of His chosen people through His redeeming, regenerating, renewing, sanctifying, and transforming work. Christ's death and resurrection released His perfect life to regenerate man; in resurrection He was changed in form so that as the life-giving Spirit He could enter into man to become the resurrection life within man (1 Cor. 15:45; Col. 1:27; 3:3-4). Thus, Christ is able to infuse man with His overcoming life so that He becomes the indwelling element living out the new creation through His regenerated believers. In this way, we become one with Him to be conformed to His image, the many brothers of the Firstborn (Rom. 8:29). When we see God's special purpose for man and His way of fulfilling this purpose through Christ as the indwelling Spirit within us to be our life, we are ready to enjoy the riches of this hymn and receive the benefits of its fellowship.

Marked Out by God to Become and Live as Sons through the Surpassing Power of Resurrection

The hymn begins with a question that goes directly to the heart of the teaching of the apostles comprising the New Testament—the believers' experience of the resurrection life. "Life out of death—dear Master, is it spoken / Of the life here, or in the better land?" Many

Christians mistakenly believe that only when the believers die or when the Lord returns will they enjoy the resurrection life. It is relegated to an experience in "the better land." But the hymn's response is a resounding, "Nay, wherefore wait?" Resurrection is a present power that enables us to live out the Christian life today. Paul succinctly illuminates this in his aspiration "to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10). Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians is an astounding account of God's economy and the impact of the power of resurrection toward us who believe. In the beginning of the Epistle, we are brought into a vista of the rich supply we enjoy in God's full salvation. God chose us before the foundation of the world, having marked us out beforehand unto sonship (*huiiothesia*). Many versions translate this Greek word *adoption*, but Wuest helps us to understand the meaning in Paul's usage of the word:

We consider now the words "unto the adoption of children." The preposition is *eis*, which is sometimes translated "with a view to," signifying purpose or result.

This marking out beforehand, this setting limits upon, this predestinating had in view the act of God adopting these selected out ones as children. The Greek word is *huiiothesia*, from *tithēmi*, "to place," and *huios*, "an adult son." Thus, the word refers to the act of God placing these selected-out

ones as adult sons. Paul speaks of this in Romans 8:15 in the words "Spirit of adoption." The apostle here uses as an illustration the Roman practice of legally adopting a child, and thus not only bequeathing to him the material possessions of the one adopting, but also giving him his civil status. Thus God takes a believing sinner, regenerates him, and by means of this makes him His child, (*teknon*, a born one). Then He takes this child and places him in a legal position as an adult son (*huios*). We thus become joint-heirs with Christ, having been raised to a civil status as adult sons, in which we become heirs of God, inheriting jointly with Christ all that He possesses as an heir of God the Father by virtue of His Sonship and work on the Cross. This is one object of God's predestination. The other is that the believer is to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). Thus, God selected certain from among mankind to be included within the saving work of Christ, and those selected, He predestined to be placed as adult sons and to be conformed to the image of His own Son. (36-37)

God has determined, thus, before the world was created that He would select and predestinate a people who will become His full-grown sons—the same as the firstborn Son in likeness and expression. God's selection was

“through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:5). It is through the effectiveness of Christ’s redemption that we are qualified to enter into the purpose for which the Father selected us. And the action of the Father to make us His sons was “to Himself,” indicating that it was with a view to His satisfaction; hence, it was according to “the good pleasure of His will” (v. 5). But how could God accomplish this desire of His heart? In verses 3 through 14 Paul shows that the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Spirit—each have a part in the accomplishing of the Father’s plan. Each of the Divine Trinity has participated in the dispensing of the life of God into the chosen ones. Then in verses 15 to the end of the chapter, Paul opens something further; first, he shares his prayer for the church that through receiving a spirit of wisdom and revelation, the saints may know three aspects of the marvelous grace they have received: the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe—power that is “according to the operation of the might of His strength, which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies” (vv. 17-20). In this portion, particularly in the aspect of the resurrection power which is toward us who believe, we see the divine transmission of His purpose into us to constitute us to become the Body of Christ which is the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22-23). If the eyes of our heart are enlightened to see God’s great grace and power toward us, we will be poised to enter into His divine purpose through the life-power that operates in us to conform us to the image of His Son. This power has raised Christ from the dead, seated Him at God’s right hand in the heavenlies (a position far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe, with a name above every name), subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church. This power “toward us who believe” (v. 19) operates through the Head “to the church” (v. 22). God’s resurrection power is now activating us in our daily living for His expression. There is no need to wait for a “better land.”

The Work of the Potter

After answering this initial question, the hymn turns from resurrection as a present reality to the vessel upon which the resurrection power is applied: “The vessel marred and broken, / Shall now be moulded by the Potter’s hand.” The author recalls the words of Jeremiah 18:4-6:

The vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand; so he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good for the potter to make. And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Am I not able to do with you, O house of Israel, as this potter does? declares

Jehovah. Indeed, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so you are in My hand, O house of Israel.

The vessel became marred; then the potter used the same clay to make another vessel. Life out of death is seen here—the new creation in the eternal economy comes out of the old. God as the Potter is doing something new in the universe; He is creating a new man that will fulfill His original purpose, yet this new man is “out of” the old man. For this reason, the death of Christ must be applied to us before we can enjoy His resurrection life. The old man must die so that the new man may emerge in resurrection, a vessel that is now being molded by the Potter’s hand.

We need to pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to see the vision that captivated and motivated Paul when he declares in Ephesians 2:1-7:

You, though dead in your offenses and sins, in which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all conducted ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest; but God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

We were “marred and broken,” ruined, under the authority of darkness, dead toward God in trespasses and sins. We were the sons of disobedience, even by nature children of wrath. We walked in the realm of darkness and death and were under the condemnation and wrath of God. “But God”—what a precious word!—but God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us made us alive with Christ! How can such a transforming rescue be accomplished? It is the resurrection power; it is life out of death. It is not merely that Christ died for us judicially that we may be justified before God; it is that we have also been included with Christ in His death and resurrection—the power of resurrection is now operating in us:

We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom. 6:4-5)

Sown in Weakness, Raised in Power

Stanza 2 exults in this wondrous resurrection: “Seed sown in conscious weakness, raised in power.” This aspect of the resurrection life is according to 1 Corinthians 15:42-43: “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” The ultimate power of resurrection will be manifested at the coming of our Lord in glory “who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:21). This is our hope of glory; the consummation of God’s salvation is the transfiguration of our mortal body. But we are not simply waiting for that day; today this resurrection life is for our experience. This power is operating in us every moment from the time of our regeneration to the completion of our journey here on earth. We are enjoying daily renewal through resurrection in the new creation. Paul describes this process as “the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). A footnote in the Recovery Version defines the meaning of the word *regeneration* in this verse:

The Greek word for *regeneration* is different from that for *regenerated* in 1 Pet. 1:23. The only other place the word is used is Matt. 19:28, where it is used for the restoration in the millennium (see note 1 there). Here it refers to a change from one state to another. Being born again is the commencing of this change. The washing of regeneration begins with our being born again and continues with the renewing of the Holy Spirit as the process of God’s new creation, a process that makes us a new man. It is a kind of reconditioning, remaking, or remodeling, with life. Baptism (Rom. 6:3-5), the putting off of the old man, the putting on of the new man (Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:9-11), and transformation by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23) are all related to this wonderful process. The washing of regeneration purges away all the things of the old nature of our old man, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit imparts something new—the divine essence of the new man—into our being. In this is a passing from our old state into a wholly new one, from the old creation into the status of a new creation. Hence, both the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit are working in us continually throughout our life until the completion of the new creation. (Note 4)

This life-changing process is one “lived out in days of toil and friction.” The Christian life is a life under opposition.

The Lord told us that in the world we would suffer affliction (John 16:33) and that the world hates us because we are not of the world (15:18-19). He suffered when He was in the world, and now we also suffer. Nevertheless, He has overcome, and the life that overcame is the life that is now abiding in us; “Not I, but Christ’ in me from hour to hour.” We suffer, yet it is not we who suffer. We also overcome, yet not we, but Christ “in me.” We praise the Lord for the powerful resurrection life moving and working in us which is Christ Himself. This is His reproduction of Himself in His disciples as the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died and is now bearing much fruit (12:24). The significance of this seed falling to the ground and dying to produce much fruit is profound. The Lord Jesus realized that although He had come as the manifestation of God in the flesh and had lived a perfect and victorious life among the disciples, He was still alone. No one could match Him. No one could imitate Him. No one could live as He lived. He had come to reproduce Himself in the many grains; hence, His commission was still unaccomplished; it could not be fulfilled until, through death, He released His life. He came as the only Begotten of the Father, but His desire was that

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through His death and resurrection, He would become the firstborn Son *among many brothers* (Rom. 8:29). In the same way, although the Father was delighted in His only Begotten, His ultimate desire and goal was to lead *many sons*

into glory (Matt. 3:17; Heb. 2:10). Through death the seed fell into the ground and died. Through resurrection many grains have been produced by means of the motivating and energizing life of the Son which has been imparted into the disciples to constitute them the many sons.

This life must be lived out in “days of toil and friction.” While the many sons are still in the world, they must “learn Christ...as the reality is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20-21). They must not live as the Gentiles live “in the vanity of their mind” (v. 17). By our living, we testify both of His redeeming grace and of His overcoming life for the defeat of all the negative elements still on the earth. These, the many sons are in fact the means by which He is executing His triumphant victory over Satan to crush him under the feet of the church and to usher in His kingdom for His return (Matt. 16:16-19; Rom. 16:20, 25-27; Rev. 12:9-11; Matt. 25:19-23). The resurrection life of the Lord in the daily living and walk of the disciples is the unique source by which they overcome. And they live in full consciousness of “not I, but Christ.” We must never attempt to live a victorious Christian life by self-effort, self-improvement, and self-righteousness. We must come to the realization that our living is a matter of “life out of

death.” Christ must be the unique center, the enlivening and vitalizing source, and the overcoming power in all our living.

Being Terminated by the Cross

Stanza 3 asserts that this life out of death is “a pilgrim path and lonely,” probably referring to the testimony of Hebrews 11:13-14:

All these died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar and joyfully greeting them and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek after a country of their own.

We are living as sojourners—pilgrims and exiles—a people looking for the city which “has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God” (v. 10).

This pilgrim path is “trodden by those who glory in the Cross.” To know the resurrection power, the followers of the Lord must also know and experience the cross’s termination of their natural life. There must be the realization that in their natural being they are completely untrustworthy. In fact, the self—the ultimate manifestation of the natural man in his fallen condition—is the embodiment of the satanic nature which has usurped fallen man. Even though we have been redeemed and regenerated, we still live in the body of flesh described by Paul in Romans 7. The cross is the unique solution to the problem of self within us. Through the resurrection life, we experience the operation of the cross for the termination of the self (Phil. 3:10-11). In His word to Peter, the Lord Jesus made it clear that we need to deny the self, take up the cross, and follow the Lord (Matt. 16:21-25). Commenting on the work of the cross in the life of the believers, Witness Lee observes,

The Lord Jesus said that if anyone wants to follow Him, he must take up his cross (Matt. 16:24). Prior to this word, the Lord mentioned that man must deny himself. We need to see that the cross is an adversary of the self and that what the cross deals with is the self. The Lord spoke such a word with a certain background. That day the Lord had solemnly spoken to the disciples that He would go to Jerusalem to suffer death. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You!” But the Lord turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men” (vv. 21-23). What Peter expressed was not hatred but sympathy, love, and concern. Yet this love was of the self, and Satan is hidden in the self. May God open

our eyes one day to show us that Satan is hidden in and mingled with our self. Not only is our hatred Satan, but even our love for others has Satan hidden in it.

Sadly, hardly anyone today knows this. Even Peter did not realize this. Do you think he hated the Lord or loved the Lord? Of course, he loved the Lord. No one would ever say that Peter hated the Lord, yet the Lord called him “Satan.” Many times our thoughts of loving the Lord, of doing good, and of pleasing God all come out of Satan. Why is this? As the Lord said, “You are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.” Whenever we are in ourselves, setting our mind on the things of men, we are Satan. (*Crucified* 60-61)

We must, therefore, glory in the cross for the termination of the self within us. Stanza 3 concludes that as the disciples of Christ glory in the cross, “they live in fellowship with ‘Jesus only,’ / And for His sake count earthly gain but loss.” The reference to “Jesus only” may be based on the experience of the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration where the disciples witnessed a conversation between the Lord Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Peter (not knowing what to say) spoke of building three tabernacles, one for each of the three. Suddenly, a cloud appeared and overshadowed everything and everyone. Then a “voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him! And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them” (Mark 9:7-8). To fellowship with Jesus only is to enter into fellowship with the One who is the unique center in God’s eternal economy. Those who walk as pilgrims and glory in the cross are those who honor and abide by Jesus only—not right and wrong, good and evil, successfulness and unsuccessfulness. They remain in the matchless fellowship of Jesus only. Finally, they count all earthly gain but loss, a reference to Paul’s testimony in Philippians 3:7-10 where he testifies that he counted everything as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. His deepest longing was that he would know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings; eventually that he would be conformed to His death. The knowing of Christ only is the goal and aspiration of every believer who treasures this life out of death.

Bearing the Living Water Brimming Over

Stanza 4 joyfully proclaims, “Life out of death—blest mission to be ever / Bearing the living water brimming o’er. / With life abundant from the clear, pure river, / Telling that thirsty souls need thirst no more.” John 7:37-38 testifies that on the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Lord Jesus stood in the midst of the crowds and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture

said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.” Later in Revelation John further identifies this living water as “a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1). It is the flowing out of the pure, clear river of the divine life which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb and consummates in the New Jerusalem. This is the culminating aspect of a person who is living in the resurrection life; it is the joy of being a co-worker with the Lord, joining Him to flow out the life of God as a river. When Christ stood and cried out on that day of the feast, there was within Him a longing to impart His life into others to satisfy their thirst. Now we are His fellow workers continuing to carry out this “blest mission.” Surely this is the highest calling in the universe! As we labor together with God, we are bearing the living water brimming over—the Spirit in our spirit is full of joy and bubbling over to testify that we have eternal satisfaction. We are not simply heralds, proclaiming the truth of the gospel. We are witnesses bearing in our hearts, minds, spirits, and even our bodies the rivers of living water. Our living testifies to a life out of death and assures others that there is such a life available not merely in the “better land” but now for our full satisfaction in this life. The life of which we testify is a life which “is profitable

for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). We have the living Christ as the resurrection life brimming over in our being. This is the blessed result of walking in the pilgrim way, of glorying in the cross, of living in fellowship with Jesus only, and of counting all earthly gain but loss. This is life out of death.

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Footnotes from the Recovery Version of the Bible

“But if Christ is proclaimed that He has been raised from the dead, how is it that some among you say that there is **no** resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:12).

no: In this chapter the apostle dealt with the Corinthians’ heretical saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. The Corinthians were like the Sadducees (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). This was the tenth problem among them. It is the most damaging and destructive to God’s New Testament economy, worse than the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus concerning resurrection (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Resurrection is the life pulse and lifeline of the divine economy. If there were no resurrection, God would be the God of the dead, not of the living (Matt. 22:32). If there were no resurrection, Christ would not have been raised from the dead. He would be a dead Savior, not a living One who lives forever (Rev. 1:18) and is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). If there were no resurrection, there would be no living proof of our being justified by His death (Rom. 4:25 and note), no imparting of life (John 12:24), no regeneration (John 3:5), no renewing (Titus 3:5), no transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), and no conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). If there were no resurrection, there would be no members of Christ (Rom. 12:5), no Body of Christ as His fullness (Eph. 1:20-23), and no church as Christ’s bride (John 3:29), and therefore no new man (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11). If there were no resurrection, God’s New Testament economy would altogether collapse and God’s eternal purpose would be nullified.

“Who was delivered for our offenses and was **raised** for our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

raised: The death of Christ has fulfilled and fully satisfied God’s righteous requirements; hence, we are justified by God through His death (3:24). His resurrection proves that God’s requirements were satisfied by His death for us, that we are justified by God because of His death, and that in Him, the resurrected One, we are accepted before God. Furthermore, as the resurrected One, He is in us to live for us a life that can be justified by God and is always acceptable to God.