

We Believe In the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life

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We call him shy; we call him silent; we call him Sanctifier. But in our sermons, our catechism lessons, or our Bible classes, how often do we call him “Life-giver?” Other than when we rattle off the Nicene Creed every other Sunday, the first term for the Holy Spirit that comes to our mind and through our lips is probably not “Life-giver.” Yet when the Fathers who had been tempered by persecution, by exile, and by war in the church sat down to confess their faith in the Holy Spirit they began by saying: τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν. It is this paper’s goal to help rediscover this meaningful epithet by exploring the origin of this creedal phrase and its meaning.

This paper’s first objective is to explore the origin of the phrase τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν in the Nicene Creed. However, to find its origin, the scope of the search needs to be widened, because in the original Nicene symbol of 325 A.D., this phrase was missing. In fact, nearly all of what we know as the third article of the Nicene Creed didn’t exist in the symbol formed at the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 A.D. Though the genesis of the third article is found in the years immediately following Nicea I, the roots of the controversy that led to its formation stretch to the early years of the third century.

The Nicene Creed must be read against the backdrop of the Trinitarian controversies of the third and fourth centuries A.D. One of the most troublesome controversies for the Church’s later confession of Trinitarian doctrine was Sabellianism. As one may recall, in the early years of the third century Sabellius propagated his heresy of modalism. In an attempt to stress the unity of God, he reduced the Trinity to God viewed in three modes of activity. Each of the three *prosopa* (“faces”) was a representation of God. This heresy is also referred to as Patripassianism for obvious reasons. The long-term effects of Sabellianism were twofold: first, this heresy led the eastern Fathers to be wary of an over-emphasis on the unity of God; and second, it led to trouble in terminology. In stressing the unity of his modalistic god, Sabellius used the word ὁμοούσιος, guaranteeing an aversion to this term from orthodox teachers in later history.

The other well-known controversy that laid the groundwork for the Council at Nicea came from a priest in Boucalis named Arius. Arianism could be seen as a knee-jerk reaction to Sabellianism that went drastically too far. The heresy had as its keystone the absolute transcendence and perfection of the Godhead. God the Father was absolutely one: there could be no other God in the proper sense of the word. Arius wrote, “We acknowledge one God, who is alone unbegotten, alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, alone possessing immortality, etc.” If another being were to share this divine nature there would be a plurality of divine beings, which, of course, could not be. The inescapable corollary of this was the drastic subordination of the Son and the Spirit. Each is relegated to the role of a *κτίσμα*; hence the familiar slogan ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν.¹

As the Church struggled with these controversies they did so in relative peace. Christianity, no longer a *religio illicita*, enjoyed the Empire’s favor, though it was always under the specter of caesaropapism. If not quite Marx’s “opium of the people,” Emperor Constantine certainly saw religion as a tool to unite his diverse empire. As a result, the First Ecumenical Council was convened at the Emperor’s order at Nicea in Bythina. Its purpose was simple: consolidate the church.²

The proceedings and outcome of the council are no doubt familiar. The central issue was the second person of the Trinity, but the results of this council are applicable to the phrase under discussion in this paper as well. Please permit, as a form of the briefest review, this account of the Council of Nicea as given by the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*:

¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1960), 232.

² Op. cit., 235.

[At the council] the formula proposed by the Arians was laughed out of session. But the vast majority could not agree on a positive statement. One group, following Eusebius of Caesarea, did not agree with Arius, but did insist that the godhead was of 3 hypostasies. When the western bishops would not agree to this formula, fearing it would lead to Arianism,³ and insisted on the statement that God is One in essence (*homoousios*), a long standing suspicion between Greek and Latin teachers came to the surface.⁴ Those who insisted on the three hypostasies believed that a simple statement of *homoousios* would lead to modalism. Therefore they used the term *homoiousios* to preserve the identity of each. They signed the Creed of Nicea but only upon assurances from Constantine that it did not involve modalism.⁵

The creed signed by the 318 fathers contained three articles. However, the third article stated only: *καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα*, followed by the anathema regarding Arianism. Since the central issue was the Logos, the Spirit was largely ignored in the Creed of Nicea.

The homoousian party won the day, but it did not win the battle with Arianism in 325 A.D. However, a critical development did occur: the rise to prominence of a young deacon of Alexandria named Athanasius. Over the next few decades, Athanasius would prove instrumental in defending the orthodox faith from the continuing attacks of Arianism. Though perhaps his greatest accomplishment was his reconciliation of the western bishops who emphasized the unity of the Trinity, with the eastern bishops who emphasized the three persons of the Godhead. It was that reconciliation that ultimately dealt Arianism its *coup de grace*. But there were many hard years before that was accomplished.

The Council of Nicea didn't give peace that lasted. Though the homoousians had won, Arianism continued to flourish. Within three short years, the tide had turned against Athanasius and the creed of Nicea. By 328, leading Arians had won the ear of the Constantine who ordered the reinstatement of the exiled Arius. Soon the church at large, suffering under effects of caesaropapism, attacked the orthodox teachers. Constantine wanted an end to the divisions in the church, and in the year 335, he tried to accomplish that goal by deposing Athanasius and sending him into exile in Gaul. After his death, Constantine was succeeded in turn by his three sons Constantine II, Constans, and Constantinus, each of whom side with the Arians. With each emperor Athanasius was granted a brief reprieve from his exile—though in his lifetime, Athanasius faced exile five times.⁶ Indeed the old maxim was true: *Athanasius contra mundum et mundus contra Athanasium*.

The favor of the emperor so greatly influenced the church toward Arianism, that by 351 A.D. the Nicene faith was nearly non-existent. As Jerome remarked, "The whole world woke from a deep slumber and discovered that it had become Arian."⁷

But "the seeming victory of Arianism, since it was based on a decree of Emperor Constantinus rather than a real settlement by the church, was illusory. However, the reversal of the tide did not come quickly."⁸ To turn that tide, a consensus needed to be reached on the terminology of the Trinity. A study of that is certainly outside this paper's scope, but one aspect merits discussion.

The middle party at the Council of Nicea didn't want to use the term *homoousios* because of its offensive history as a Sabellian term. They had preferred *homoiousios* to stress the persons of the Trinity in opposition to modalism; the Arians loved the term *homoiousios* because it was a Polish boot.⁹ Because of their agreement with an Arian term, the homoiousians were also called the Semi-Arians.

³ In the East, *hypostasis* was virtually synonymous with *ousia*. For an excellent summary of the controversy over Trinitarian terminology, see Richard Muller's *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* under the entry "*persona*."

⁴ As noted above, the Sabellian term "*homoousios*" left a bad taste in the mouth of the eastern bishops. Though the arguments were heated, these men were for the most part just talking past one another. The East and the West stressed different aspects of the Trinity because each had been fired in the kiln of a different controversy.

⁵ Walter W. Oetting, *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, edited by Erwin Lueker, (St. Louis: CPH, 1954/1975), 47.

⁶ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 157-159.

⁷ Course notes from "Church History 131: The Early Church to Calcedon," Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1995.

⁸ Latourette, 160.

⁹ Our beloved brethren, the Poles, wore boots that could fit on either foot.

Between 325 and 381 A.D. the central issue shifted from the Logos to the person of the Holy Spirit. The problem arose within the Semi-Arian (homoiousian) party, in particular, the faction of the party led by Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople.¹⁰ Their teaching took the Arian heresy and applied it to the Holy Spirit. As part of the homoiousian party, they didn't reject that Christ was of the same essence (*ousia*) as the Father, but since the New Testament says nothing of the participation of the Spirit in the work of creation, they denied that the Holy Spirit is of the same *ousia* as the Father and the Son.¹¹

By 360 A.D., the controversy most at debate in the church centered on the Spirit. In that year, Athanasius was obliged to answer letters from Serapion, Bishop of Thumuis, which spoke of "certain persons who had forsaken the Arians on account of their blaspheming...yet oppose the Holy Spirit, saying that he is not only a creature, but actually one of the ministering spirits, and differs from the angels only in degree."¹²

This faction of the Semi-Arians was first called "Macedonian" after their spokesman, but Athanasius referred to them by a more descriptive name. He gave them the telling name *πνευματομαχοί*.¹³ Ritter summarized the pneumatomachian position succinctly: *die den Geist unter die Geschöpfe rechneten oder ihm bestenfalls eine Mittelstellung zwischen dem Schöpfer und den Geschöpfen einräumten*.¹⁴ They even argued that if the Spirit were of God he must either be another Son, which would not do since the Son is the Only-begotten and can have no brother, or must be a Grandson of the Father!¹⁵

In 362 A.D., Athanasius, fresh from his most recent trip abroad on exile, convened a council in Alexandria. The hope was to come to an understanding with the homoiousian, or Semi-Arian, party. They came to a reciprocal understanding once the terminology issues were out of the way. In the development of the thought of the Nicene party, *ousia* referred to God's one essence—an equivalent of the Latin *substantia*; *hypostasis* referred to the three persons—an equivalent of the Latin *persona*.¹⁶ Here at Alexandria, the question of the Holy Spirit became more prominent than it had been at Nicea. It was made clear that the approved belief was that the Holy Spirit is not a creature, but is inseparable from the Father and the Son.¹⁷ In fact, Athanasius declared at the council that only those could be received into communion who rejected the thesis of the creation of the Spirit.¹⁸

In the matter of the Spirit, one can see that Athanasius understood both the doctrine and the significance of the heresy. This heresy was Arian in form, and the response of Athanasius and the orthodox teachers would focus on soteriology, just as it had in 325 A.D. when the person under attack was the Son. Kannengiesser wrote:

Athanasius understood that the underlying issue in the Arian controversy was Trinitarian. He was aware that whatever was said of the Father-Son relationship had to apply to the Holy Spirit. As with his defense of the Son's deity, Athanasius fell back on soteriology to explain the divinity of the Spirit. Only as incarnate Son of God could Christ bring redemption. It is only through the Spirit that Christ became incarnate. The Spirit cannot be a creature for the work of redemption must be divine.¹⁹

In the 370s A.D. the leadership of the Neo-Nicene (homoousian) party was assumed by the three great Cappadocians: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus. Basil, the chief of the troika, led the fight against pneumatomachians. In his treatise *On the Spirit*, he discredited the Macedonian position by collating biblical texts ascribing to the Holy Spirit attributes and functions that are prerogatives of the Godhead.

¹⁰ Berard Marthaler, *The Creed*, (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987), 248.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹² Frances Young, *The Making of the Creeds*, (London: SCM Press, 1991), 52.

¹³ Lit. "enemies of the Spirit."

¹⁴ Adolf-Martin Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*. (Göttingen: Vandenhöck & Ruprecht, 1965), 295.

¹⁵ Young, 53.

¹⁶ This kept the eastern bishops from having to swallow the *prosopon* of modalism and gave the term for "person" a meaning closer to "essence" than to "mask."

¹⁷ Latourette, 161.

¹⁸ Kelly, 340.

¹⁹ Charles Kannengiesser, "Athanasius of Alexandria and the Holy Spirit between Nicea I and Constantinople I," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 49:3 (1981), 167.

In particular, he explained the role of the Spirit in creation, because in denying such a role the pneumatomachians also denied the divinity of the Spirit.²⁰ In his writings, Basil affirmed that the Holy Spirit was to be worshipped and co-glorified because he shared the same divine nature (*ousia*) as the Father and the Son. However, he never applied the term *homoousios* to the Spirit.²¹ Marthaler proposes:

He was (and is) charged with being cautious and tentative in affirming the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. Thus Gregory of Nazianzus felt it necessary to give over part of his funeral oration to defend Basil... It is true that Basil stopped short of saying that the Spirit is *homoousios* with the Father and Son, but his silence seems to have been dictated by two considerations: 1) he did not want to overstate his case by using terms that were not defined in Scripture; and 2) he hoped to win over sympathetic *homoiousians* and not further alienate the pneumatomachians. Since some peace was returning to the church after almost fifty years of controversy over Nicea's condemnation of Arianism, Basil was careful to let sleeping dogs lie.²²

Basil died two years before the issue was resolved, so leadership of the Neo-Nicene party fell to his brother, Gregory of Nyssa. Gregory advanced the same arguments for the divinity of the Holy Spirit as Basil did, but he was even more insistent on the Spirit's co-creative role with the Father and the Son. Gregory would play a leading role in the formation of the Nicene Creed that we have today, and its expression regarding the Holy Spirit is largely the teaching of these two brothers.²³

The issue came to a head in 381 A.D. when Emperor Theodosius called for a council to be held in Constantinople. The First Ecumenical Council had laid the groundwork for the fight against Arius. But there needed to be another council to deal with the lingering vestiges of Arianism, especially the pneumatomachian variation that had emerged in the Macedonian wing of the homoousian party. For that purpose a council was convened.

The Council of Constantinople in 381 began by ratifying the Nicene faith as confessed by the 318 bishops, laying to rest once and for all the Arian claim that Christ was something less than God. Next they turned their attention to pneumatomachians whom they identified as those who said, “*ἀπὸ μὴ εἶναι θεόν, ἀλλὰ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλότριον.*”²⁴ In their first canon, the council anathematized the pneuma-tomachians and asserted the full deity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit and his existence as a separate *hypostasis*.²⁵ So strong was their condemnation that thirty-six pneumatomachian bishops left the council.²⁶

The next order of business was to produce a confession of faith. They meant their symbol to be an affirmation of the Nicene faith, but that meant some additions were needed. Gregory of Nazianzus, who served as the president of the council, wrote:

We, for our part, have never esteemed, and never can esteem, any doctrine preferable to the faith of the holy fathers who assembled at Nicea to destroy the Arian heresy... We adhere to this faith, supplementing the gaps which they left concerning the Holy Spirit because this question had not then been raised.²⁷

²⁰ Marthaler, 251.

²¹ Young, 53.

²² Marthaler, 251.

²³ Anthony Meredith, “The Pneumatology of the Cappadocian Fathers and the Creed of Constantinople,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 49:3 (1981), 213.

²⁴ Lit. “[Macedonius] said that he [the Holy Spirit] is not God, but is of the deity belonging to the Father.”

²⁵ The first assertion was directed at the pneumatomachians, and the second to guard against Sabellianism.

²⁶ Kelly, 341.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 307.

The creed we know as Nicene was not written at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Instead the creed in our hymnal is actually the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed²⁸ (CPanum) of 381 A.D. Some noted historians propose that CPanum was not a 381 revision of the Nicene Creed, but a contemporary baptismal confession of the Jerusalem Church.²⁹ However, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, a mere 70 years later, the Council recognizes and accepts CPanum as the faith of the 150 fathers who gathered at Constantinople. The bishops did their job: the Creed they left to the Church addressed the controversies that required it and did so in masterful fashion. Using only ten words, they laid to rest the pneumatomachian form of Arianism and guarded against any remnants of Sabellianism. The words under discussion are found in the received text of the CPanum as preserved in the minutes of the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D. In the third article we find this change of phrase:

Nicene Creed of 325	Constantinopolitan Creed of 381
καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα	[Πιστεύομεν] Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν

A brief exegesis would note several points. The initial *καὶ* coordinates the third article with the first and second, giving it equal footing. In the third article's first word the council began to defend the Spirit from charges that he was less than God. The article before *πνεῦμα* could be dismissed as irrelevant because of its position preceding a proper noun, but the articularized adjective in the attributive position emphasizes the meaning of the adjective: The Spirit, the one who is holy. This article with the attributive adjective was crafted and confessed in response to false doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit that had become prevalent in the East. In 325, the Church confessed *καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα*. But the pneumatomachian belief that the Spirit was just one of the ministering spirits necessitated a change. Using the phrase *τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, the Council showed that this isn't one of the ministering spirits, but the Holy Spirit of God.

The phrase *τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν* is appositional to *τὸ πνεῦμα*. Syntactically, the article is again significant. Only *κύριον* has the article; when only the first in a series is articularized, it indicates that the series forms a single or unit thought: "Lord-and-life-giver."

The *κύριον* is a direct attack against the pneumatomachian form of Arianism. *Κύριον* is the LXX equivalent of *יהוה* and confesses that though a separate *hypostasis*, the Spirit is of the same *ousia* as the Father and the Son. The attack is made more pointed in the second word of this unit title: *ζωοποιόν*.

²⁸ Though it would have considerably more panache to say, "We now join in confessing our faith according to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed found on page 31 of *Christian Worship*," the author doesn't have much hope that the misleading name will be supplanted.

²⁹ F.J.A. Hort and A. Hornack. Hort makes the case that the N and CPanum have stylistic differences that wouldn't have been changed in a mere revision. He also cites the fact that of the 178 words in CPanum, only 33 can be plausibly derived from N. Finally, he notes that there is relative silence in history regarding CPanum between 381 and 451. However, Hort's proposition that the CPanum wasn't written in 381 in Constantinople, but rather is a baptismal creed from Jerusalem has its own difficulties. As for history's silence, it could be that the Council of Constantinople and its symbol were not recognized as ecumenical until they were declared as such in 451. But the strongest point remains that 150 Chalcedonian bishops accepted CPanum as the creed of 381. For Hort's argument, cf. Hort, *JFA, Two Dissertations*, Cambridge, 1876, 73ff. For an in-depth analysis, cf. Kelly, 301ff.

We will note here that the form ζωοποιόν is not biblical, though the thought certainly is. The form's root meaning comes from ζωοποιέω, "to make/give life." This isn't the participle, which would be ζωοποιούν;³⁰ it's a verbal substantive formed from the participle using the -ιον suffix.

The council confessed the Spirit as Life-giver first and foremost to deny any foothold to the pneumatomachians. As one may recall, Basil and Gregory stressed the Spirit's role in creation, because in denying that role to Him, the pneumatomachians also denied his divinity. So the Church boldly confessed: Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν, that is: "We also believe in the Spirit, the holy one, the one who is the LORD-and-life-giver." But secondly, they confessed him as Life-giver, because that is the Spirit's soteriological role. As they fell back on soteriology to defend Christ's deity, so they defended the Spirit's by confessing his soteriological work as Life-giver—so Pieper notes, "Constantinopolitum presents the Trinity as an indissoluble nexus with soteriology."³¹

The title "Life-giver," drawn from Jesus' words in John 6:63, "τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ζωοποιούν," is a title that would still serve us well today, because ζωοποιόν characterizes all the Spirit's work, and does so in a more vivid way than the term "Sanctifier." Certainly, each of the persons of the Trinity share in all the aspects of giving life, as Augustine's rule clearly states the *opera ad extra sunt indivisa*.³² However, the Spirit's "proper" work always centers on life: He is the giver of physical life, the giver of eternal life, the giver of a new kind of life, and the giver of a new quality of life.

The Spirit's gifts of physical life bookend the course of each person's life, and the history of the world. The Spirit was there to create man in the image of God. The Spirit breathed the breath of life into man so that he might become a living being. The Spirit continues his creative work throughout history: as the psalmist says, he is God's tool to create life in this world: **הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְבָרַךְ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהָאָרֶץ יָבְרָא חַיִּים** (Ps 104:30).³³ But when life in this world comes to a final halt, the Life-giver will be there on the Last Day to grant physical life again. As Paul wrote: ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν³⁴ (Rm 8:11). This is the Life-giver's final act, as Kelly remarks, "The resurrection of the flesh was the eschatological crown of the possession of the Spirit that the Christian might hope to gain in the church."³⁵

Certainly, the Spirit is the giver of physical life, but the most blessed gift of the Life-giver is life eternal. It is the Spirit who brought us to God: οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν, Κύριος Ἰησοῦς εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.³⁶ (1 Cr 12:3) He raised us up from spiritual death to spiritual life; even when we were dead in our transgressions, he **συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ**.³⁷ (Ep 2:5) The Life-giver's work through Word and Sacrament has made the heavenly prize our present possession; God ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουροῦ παλιγγενσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος

³⁰ The form comes from the contraction of ζωοποιε + ον. Εω contract verbs retain the accent on the contracted syllable and use a circumflex if possible. Therefore, ζωοποιούν.

³¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics Volume I*, (St. Louis: CPH, 1950), 406.

³² The external acts of the Godhead are shared. The Father created, the Son created, the Spirit created. The Father sanctifies, the Son sanctifies, the Spirit sanctifies. The only acts not shared by the persons are the *opera ad intra* which would be paternity, filiation, and procession. However Scripture itself clearly ascribes each *opus* especially to one person, so we speak of the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer, and the Spirit as Life-giver.

³³ Lit. "You send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground."

³⁴ Lit. "The one who raised Christ from the dad will give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit which dwells within you."

³⁵ 156.

³⁶ Lit. "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

³⁷ Lit. "he made us alive with Christ."

ἀγίου.³⁸ (Ti 3:5) Because eternal life is the Christian’s present possession, that greatly changes him. The Life-giver gives a new kind of life.

The new kind of life that a Christian receives from the Spirit is a life in diametric contradiction to his old life. The Spirit liberates man from the living death of being fettered by sin. No longer is man enslaved to sin, but lives a new life of obedience that leads to life. ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.³⁹ (Rm 8:2). “He liberates us from that living death when each motion of our unfree will and each action of our fettered hands is guilt and punishment in one, a suicidal life-in-death.”⁴⁰ This life of liberty is a new kind of life for man who is so accustomed to struggling under the heavy weight of the Law: τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτένει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ⁴¹ (2 Cr 3:6).

He has released us from our ruined past, from the standing indictment of the “written code” of God’s law which condemns and kill us all. He has set us free from ourselves, free from compulsion to justify ourselves, free to accept God’s justification of the ungodly for ourselves... The Spirit who moves us to call God, “Abba! Father!” can make our response to his will a son’s glad “I can! I will!” This was something the old “written code” could not do. The best the Law could do was to wring from us a grim “I must.” Now we are free to seek God and live. Man alive—that is what God’s Spirit at work means.⁴²

The Life-giver offers a life that is new not just in contrast to our old life: he offers life that is new in quality. Having been convinced of God’s love, having been made certain of his redemption, having been assured that heaven awaits, man is now free to live the quality of life that would be impossible without the Spirit. Man can live life to the hilt; man can live life as God intended. Man can live life to the hilt because the Spirit constantly holds before his eyes the image of his Savior slain for sin and the resulting hope of heaven. The Life-giver’s power is to bring that one act of the distant past into our present experience and to make that one hope of the far-off future our present possession. He makes ours the peace of forgiveness, the trust of God, and the certainty of heaven. So he gives us life of a quality that can belong only to a Christian:

The life conferred by the Spirit of life is new absolutely... Life in Christ Jesus is human life as it has not been since Adam, life to the hilt, life to be lived to the full, the feast of God with no death’s head at the feast, no sword suspended over the feaster’s head, no moving finger suddenly writing doom upon the wall. Life is no longer merely death deferred; this is life that breathes the fresh eternal air which rushes into the vacuum left by the destruction of death.⁴³

One may call him shy; one may call him silent. But perhaps, one should remember the words of the Fathers who fought to give him the place he deserves, the place that Scripture ascribes him, the place that has been his for eternity. Perhaps one should just call him Life-giver, because the Spirit of God at work in the church and in the world is daily accomplishing the resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life—is daily empowering us to lead lives new in kind and in quality—and on that great day will give our bodies of flesh the life they need to match the unsurpassable glory realized in life eternal. Yes, Life-giver says it all. May we always treasure that phrase for its confession of truth and for the comfort of its meaning:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.

³⁸ Lit. “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

³⁹ Lit. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and of death.”

⁴⁰ Martin Franzmann, *Alive with the Spirit*, (St. Louis: CPH, 1973), 11.

⁴¹ Lit. “For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

⁴² Franzmann, 45.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11.

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