

YOUR LIFE IN CHRIST

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pampered self in order that a greater Christ might shine out through our broken, sanctified personality? Do we believe, with F. J. Huegel, that the Church of Christ, meaning we Christians of course, "has been enjoying a fifty per cent redemption because she has not realized the implications of the Cross?" Are we willing to say with Christina Rossetti:

"God harden me against myself,
The coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:

Myself, archtraitor to myself;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free."

Let Him do it—now! Potentially and provisionally, you died to sin and self when Christ died for you. Now it is for you to affirm, by faith, the reality of this death as you claim your full participation in the power of His Cross.

In further analysis of our life in Christ Paul points out to us that it has the strong quality of His resurrection. Note the first part of verse 1: "If ye then be risen with Christ!" "Risen with Christ!" Isn't that a tonic phrase? Having shared Christ's life, and having participated in His death, we are to experience the power of His resurrection.

Down With the Barriers!

Let's be clear in our thinking as to the point of view from which the apostle is here considering the resurrection of Jesus. It is not the future resurrection of the body, as guaranteed by Christ's triumph over the tomb, that Paul has in mind. Read him carefully and you will see that he is thinking a perfectly thrilling thing. It is this: that just as Jesus displayed the evidences of being alive **before** His Crucifixion but afterwards, in His resurrected form, displayed an even larger, more transcendent life, so we Christians, passing through the gateway of death to self and the world, enter into a more abundant life with our risen Lord.

There was something transcendent about the experience of Jesus during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. Certain limitations to which He submitted before His Cross were now gone. He would move in and out of a room without benefit of an open door. The barriers were gone.

Reverently may I say it: there is something that corresponds to that in the life of the Christian who has made the complete commitment to the Lordship of Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit has swept in to take up the vacuum that might otherwise have been there when self moved out. And now what? The old barriers are down. There is an open road, and it's called "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Old fears, old tangles, old conflicts, old resentments, old frustrations—they are gone. Hallelujah, they are gone! Swept clean out by this tidal invasion of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Miracle of Grace

One man, who passed by faith through a Gethsemane and Calvary of crucifixion with Christ and found this resurrection power waiting for him, came home from work one night, worn to a frazzle. Almost as soon as he crossed the threshold a member of the family gave him a sharp, ugly word. It was like a slap in

the face. Before he took his place with Christ in death and resurrection, he would have blown up. Now, according to his testimony, he suddenly became so conscious of Christ's nearness that he was filled with laughter. He was able literally to laugh it off. As he put it, "A miracle had taken place, the miracle of love... First-Corinthians-Thirteen love, which never faileth, even when you are struck in the face."

His life in Christ was showing the strong quality of resurrection triumph.

Again, it should be seen that our life in Christ has the splendid quality of His ascension. Return now to verse 1: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Now, you see, the angle of vision from which we are asked to look at Jesus has shifted. We behold Him seated "on the right hand of God." Thus we have moved from His birth to His death to His resurrection to His ascension. And yet—mysterious as this may sound to some of my readers—we are still linked with Him in our true life, our true love, and our true communion.

As one of the poetically-minded saints has put it, with beautiful mysticism:

"He has raised our human nature
In the clouds to God's right hand;
There we sit in heavenly places,
There with Him in glory stand.

Jesus reigns, adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne;
Mighty Lord, in Thine ascension
We by faith behold our own."

See now what happens to us when we, in some practical measure, realize our oneness with the ascended Redeemer. Two splendid things follow: First, there will be the splendor of the humble mind and, second, the splendor of the heavenly mind.

Perpetual Quest

The humble mind is hidden away in these words: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." It is the humility of the unattained, the humbling discipline of the perpetual quest. Seek! Seek! Seek! And remember that **always there is more** ahead.

Perhaps some of you were uneasy a few moments ago when I spoke so strongly about the crucifixion of the self-life and the incoming of the resurrection power of Christ. You wondered what would be left for the years of growth in Christian grace. There need be no fear. Dying out to self and being filled with the Spirit of God is not the goal of the life in Christ—the goal is perfected Christlikeness of character. The crisis of the believer's crucifixion makes his commitment to Christ total, but it neither completes his character nor gives him the full measure of efficiency in service. That comes a little at a time, with here a battle fought and there a victory won, with here a lesson learned and there a failure analyzed, with here a temptation resisted and there a responsibility accepted. And all along, it will be the realization of the unattained that will keep you humble.

Then the splendor of the heavenly mind: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." When are we going to get it through our muddled heads that God never intended man to be earth's prisoner, He made him to be eternity's pilgrim. You can fill a glutton's stomach with goulash and dazzle a miser's eye with gold, but it takes more than goulash and gold to stop the leap-

ing, longing spirit of the man who has glimpsed his heavenly destiny.

"Eternal Sunshine"

The margin has it, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." That noble preacher of the yesterdays, Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, tells of a day when, in his pastoral ministry, he called at the home of a Christian woman who had lately lost her very aged mother. After he had expressed his sympathy and the daughter had expressed her thanks, she broke into a quiet smile, not untouched with proper pride. "You know, Doctor," said she, "for forty years my mother's mind has been in heaven." Whereupon, said Pierson, I inwardly recalled those lines by Goldsmith, descriptive of the noble parson:

"Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale but midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Does that make the life in Christ impractical, detached from reality, aloof from the sobbing of the world's tragedy and need? Not at all. It simply means that the light of heaven plays perpetually around the tasks of earth, and that the hope of heaven contributes its own peculiar medicine to the healing of earth. Your life — supernatural, sacrificial, strong, and splendid—"your life is hid with Christ in God."

If that be true, then never fear. For it will follow, as day follows night, that "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory!"

RESURRECTION MORN

Leland Wilcox

Dark was the night that settled down
While Jesus lie within the tomb;
The shades of death were all around
And aching hearts were filled with gloom.
But once again the sun did shine,
And new hope to the world was born,
For Jesus triumphed o'er the tomb,
There on that Resurrection Morn!

The grave could not its captive hold,
The bars of death were torn away;
The gates of Hell could not prevail,
When Christ arose on that glad day!
Our Saviour bruised the serpent's head,
While He the Roman seal did scorn,
And Jesus triumphed o'er the tomb,
There on that Resurrection Morn!

Behold, Our Saviour lives again!
O, let the joyful tidings swell,
He lives! He lives forever more,
And hath the keys of Death and Hell!
Some day we'll meet our risen Lord,
There at the great Eternal dawn,
For Jesus triumphed o'er the tomb,
There on that Resurrection Morn!

Chorus:

All hail that resurrection morn,
Dear one, take courage and press on,
For Jesus broke the bonds of sin,
There on that Resurrection Morn!

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

—John 11:25, 26.