

The Risen Life

J. Gregory Mantle

The risen life is not the imitation of a splendid model but the indwelling of a living Person. The Christ-life is only the outward development of the Christ nature; the life manifesting itself after its kind. Personal and abiding union with Him makes it as easy for the believer to do Christ-like works as for the branch to bear the luscious fruit when it is in unhindered fellowship with the vine.

"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father" (John 14:12).

This risen life is characterized by newness. In everything which is really of God there is a singular freshness and novelty. We are raised with Jesus that we may walk henceforth in "newness of life," and "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and this newness of life is the crowning joy of union with the risen Jesus. We blunder when we make the mystic grave the goal; for we are the children of the resurrection, and the goal is life so unspeakably energizing, fresh, free, and joyous, as that words fail to describe its blessedness.

This new life is so heavenly in its character, that it makes its possessor responsive to everything with which it has affinity, both in heaven and earth. Who can enjoy the sounds and sights of this fair world—which are but "the drapery of the robe in which the Invisible has clothed Himself"—like the man who is living in the perpetual enjoyment of God's fresh life? Having been brought into perfect harmony with God, he appreciates everything in its true and Divine relation—all in God, and God in all. He sings as only a child of the resurrection can sing:

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen;
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine."

The risen life is characterized by quietness and confidence. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3) Says Dr. J. Rendel Harris: "I believe there is an experience of union with the Lord in which God has met all the needs of the soul, and has become the indwelling power of the human spirit; that the man who is thus united to God moves as God moves, and acts as the Lord wills him to act in the body and in the circumstances in which he is placed. Christ can be all in all in the twentieth century as well as in the first, and we do not need to think Him less than He wishes to be to those who trust in Him."

It was from this fact that the early disciples derived much of their strength and courage. Thus Paul wrote: "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you; for which cause we faint not. for though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:14).

The calm of God's presence had settled

down upon the man who wrote these words, and in nothing was he terrified by his adversaries; living his life "within the veil," he knew that in the very perfection of opposition he would be more than conqueror through Him who loved him. The adversaries might rage, the storms might beat, the kings of the earth might set themselves against the Lord's anointed ones, but though the circumference was awirl, the centre was at rest, and the secret was a life hidden with Christ, where no sharp arrow from the enemy's bow could penetrate, and where there was consequent "quietness and confidence for ever" (Isa. 32:17).

Tauler beautifully says: "As a loadstone draws the iron after itself, so doth Christ draw all hearts after Himself which have once been touched by Him; and as when the iron is impregnated with the energy of the loadstone that has touched it, it follows the stone uphill although that is contrary to its nature, and cannot rest in its own proper place, but strives to rise above itself on high; so all the souls which have been touched by this loadstone, Christ, can neither be chained down by joy nor grief, but are ever rising up to God, out of themselves. They forget their own nature, and follow after the touch of God, and follow it the more easily and directly the more they are touched by God's finger."

This risen life is characterized by complete and constant victory.

"Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him" (Romans 6:9). The death of Christ meant the conquest of the world, the flesh, and the devil. "He was crucified through weakness yet He liveth through the power of God." Christ's human body came at last to an end of all its capacities and resources and He died of mortal weakness. We see Him bearing the burden of the world's sin, despised and rejected, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; surrounded by taunting foes, scourged, buffeted, spat upon, bound upon the Cross of shame, then dying of a broken heart. "He was crucified through weakness, but He liveth through the power of God."

The victory of the head carries with it the victory of the body. By virtue of our union with Christ we are placed under the influence of an ascending power by which we are drawn higher and higher. Just as when a man, lying upon the ground, gets up and stands upright, his upright posture draws up with it all his limbs, so in the mystical body of Jesus Christ, the Risen Head, necessarily draws up all the mystical members.

The subordination also of every force, whether hostile or friendly, carries also with it present victory and exaltation for every member of the true Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23).

HOW MUCH OUGHT I TO GIVE?

Give as you would if an angel

Waited your gift at the door;

Give as you would if tomorrow

Found you where giving was o'er;

Give as you would to the Master

If you met His loving look;

Give as you would of your substance

If His hand your offering took.

—Selected

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF REVELATION

C. W. Butler

Our Christian faith is a Book faith. The truth is revealed and recorded. In the Book of our faith we have a finished and a final revelation. The faith revealed in the Word centers in the dominant personality of that Word—Jesus Christ. We believe the Word, we trust the Person. "He is the Truth; thus, He is the way, and the Life."

If the world should stand a million years and generation follow generations of men, there would never be any need for one word to be added to our final and finished revelation—The Holy Scriptures. God has said His last word to men regarding all essential truths any man will need to know about God Himself, and about man, his origin, his condition as a fallen creature, his recovery by the provision of grace, and his eternal destiny.

We make progress in material things as we come to know and utilize the forces of God's created universe, but no progress has been made in the revealed standards of the Word, by which men are saved, and by which they are to live as saved men and women.

In the teaching ministry we have taught every truth of the Word of God any man and all men of all time will ever need to know for their highest possible welfare in time, and for their full preparation for eternity. Does this mean that there is no progress to be made or growth in grace? No, it does not mean that, for all the great truths of our faith have dimensions. We may know them and Him in an uttermost salvation, but our growing knowledge of the truths embraced and of Him whom we know and trust will take on depths, and breadths, lengths and heights, not only during all the future of our probationary life here, but doubtless on into the eternal ages of the future.

God, the Infinite in all the glory of His absolute perfections, will stand an eternal challenge to our growing, developing souls. Let us therefore believe the truth, and prove that it is the truth in the laboratory of personal experience, until the door of our thinking will be closed to all error, but open to the unfolding realities in the dimensions of the truth which makes us free.

Ours is a ready-made faith. Accept it or reject it and take the consequences. The Word of God is a road map, marked for a safe and successful journey from where we meet God in personal salvation, to the final results in His eternal glory.

God is the beginning and He is the end of a full and final revelation. He is the Alpha and Omega.

Let us not lust for something new to satisfy our intellectual pride, but in humility seek to know the wealth of truth which God has revealed in His word, for our present victory and for our eternal salvation.—Heart and Life.

The clean vessel God uses. The surrendered instrument God employs. The believing soul God honors. If your life is low and indifferently and unlike the life of Christ, and if your possession of God is partial and interrupted in consciousness, and if your service is weak and nerveless, it is because you are not filled with the Spirit of God.—G. Campbell Morgan.