

RISEN WITH CHRIST.

"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." – Col. 3:1-3.

It is evident that the apostle Paul is here addressing a particular class – not the world, nor mere believers, but that comparatively small class who have made a covenant with God of entire consecration to his service, even unto death. This class, he affirms, is dead (reckonedly), and his language also implies that they have (reckonedly) risen as new creatures, and from these two facts the apostle draws certain reasonable conclusions, and upon them bases a timely exhortation.

Let us consider first the sense in which the consecrated are dead and risen, that we may clearly see our present position and its responsibilities. Once we were dead with Adam in trespasses and in sins. That is, we with all the rest of mankind were under the condemnation; the death sentence had passed upon us; and, as we sometimes say of a condemned criminal, "he is a dead man," although the sentence is not yet executed, so we were likewise all dead men – reckoned dead already. But being redeemed, purchased, from that condemnation, we, by faith in that transaction, passed from death unto life – from under God's condemnation of death, into his favor and into justification of life. And yet it was only *a reckoning* – a right or title to life, secured, and not yet the actual possession of it.

In due time ("the times of restitution") that title would have been made good, had we not again lost it – disposed of it. None have lost it except those who have first accepted of it, and then presented themselves to God as living sacrifices – holy (because justified), and (therefore) acceptable unto him. (Rom. 12:1.) This covenant of sacrifice, even unto death, is the same covenant which Jesus made. All

who make it, thus solemnly engage to die, to spend and surrender human life in God's service. By faith (*i.e.*, reckonedly) we are risen from the Adamic condemnation (death); we have consecrated the life reckoned as restored; we have counted ourselves *dead with Christ* as actually we were dead with Adam; and further we *reckon* ourselves as though *risen with Christ* and now, like him, no longer human, but "new creatures," "partakers of the divine nature," and as though seated with him "in heavenly places." We are thus reckoning to ourselves all the promises of God *in advance*, because we realize that "It is a faithful saying: If we be dead with him we shall also live with him." – 2 Tim. 2:11,12.

It is in this sense that the apostle speaks to us of being both dead and risen – dead and risen a second time: first dead through sin with Adam and redeemed and risen with him and all men to human perfection; but now *dead with Christ* our Redeemer as sharers in the sacrifice for sin, and risen with him as new creatures.

Actually, we are not yet either dead or risen with Christ, but if our covenant was sincere, and if our faith in the promise of God, who raised up Christ from the dead, and that he will raise up us also, is firm, we may reckon the transaction as sure as though it were already actually performed, as though we were already in actual possession of the glory which shall be revealed in us.

It is to these embryo "new creatures," before whom is set such a sure and glorious hope, that Paul gives counsel and exhortation, saying: "Mind the things above, not the things on the earth; for you [as a human being] died, and your life has been hidden with the Anointed One by God. When the Anointed One, our life, shall be manifested, then you also will be manifested with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, those members on the earth – fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness [money loving], which is idol-worship; on account of which things the wrath of God is coming [the "time of trouble"]."

It would scarcely seem necessary to thus exhort those who have covenanted to become dead to all earthly things, even to the sacrifice of life itself; yet Paul saw the necessity and did not neglect the duty of faithfully warning those inclined to forget or ignore their covenant. We find him again writing to the Philippians, "Brethren, become joint-imitators of me, and watch those who are thus walking, as you have us for a pattern. For often I told you, and now even weeping, I say, many walk as the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end [if they pursue that course to the end] will be destruction, whose God is the stomach, and their glory is their shame; they who are *engrossed with earthly things.*" – Phil. 3:17-19.

Our acquaintance with the truth and the remembrance of our covenant is all that should be necessary to inspire zeal and constancy in the Master's service; but alas! such is not always the case, for many of those called to be saints we now see walking as men – minding earthly things, cumbering themselves with earthly [R915 : page 6] cares, hampering and fettering themselves, so as to hinder their usefulness in the great work of the present hour, and often cutting off all opportunity in this direction. The heart thus turned to earthly things, and the attention fastened there by increasing earthly cares, it becomes an easy matter to let the whole current of thought and interest turn toward earthly things – food, raiment and the provision for present and future emergencies. In every condition in life it is much easier to follow the bent of the old nature than to crucify it.

The earthly things are present with us; the world and its ideas and interests, in which we also formerly shared, still draws us, and we must resist its spirit and influence, else we are in no sense overcomers. We must be willing to be thought peculiar, to be separated from their company and to bear the reproach of Christ as we go forward, steadily pushing aside the earthly interests, while, denying ourselves, we spend our time and strength and means for the advancement of the heavenly kingdom.

If we are minding the heavenly things and not the earthly, we will be planning and arranging and endeavoring to devise ways and means to advance the Lord's work, to spread the knowledge of his truth. If our sphere is narrow, we will be seeking to enlarge it, just as a prudent business man will study to increase his business and to make the most out of it.

Some will undoubtedly find that they cannot do a great deal in this direction, but in all probability they can do something; they can at least try. It is a very indolent and indifferent steward who concludes without an effort, that almost nothing, is the full measure of his ability to serve the Master. And while it is far from our province or intention to pass judgment upon any one, yet the aggregate of the effort put forth to advance the truth is far short of what it should be if all the consecrated were fully awake to their opportunities and privileges, minding chiefly the heavenly things, and studying how to most advance the heavenly interests, and giving to the earthly things only the *needful* thought and attention, such as decency, order and honesty require. If *all* the Lord's stewards were spending time, physical and mental effort, money, influence and every talent as wise stewards, and in full harmony with their covenant, we would be able to see much larger results than we do see. And yet the results show a degree of faithfulness which gives evidence of some effort on the part of many, and great effort on the part of some. Our desire here is not to discourage any, but to awaken to greater diligence the many who should be more active and faithful.

Paul advised the church to take himself as an example, and to mark for imitation others who walk in harmony with their covenant. The daily walk and conversation of all the saints, and their untiring zeal in the Master's service, should be such as to be worthy of imitation. Paul's zeal for the truth would have made him active and useful in any position in life, and we may be sure that no position would have held him long which furnished no opportunities for the divine service to which he had consecrated all. He did not permit business or worldly prospects, or friends or foes to interfere. Nor did he take upon himself

domestic cares to limit and fetter him in the service. Dearly beloved, mark Paul and all who so walk, and let your zeal abound yet more and more to the glory of God. Spend and be spent in the service. If you grow weary mentally and physically in the service, rejoice in the privilege of *wearing out* in it; for when worn out you shall receive the crown of life.

To walk otherwise than in full accord with our profession is to walk to that extent as the enemies of the cross of Christ. To claim to be running for the heavenly prize, while actually grasping after and minding chiefly the earthly things, is to misrepresent the truth; and others who mark our course will do likewise, mistaking the way. Thus we would be misleaders and "enemies" or opposers. Let us faithfully push aside the earthly cares and ambitions, and run with zeal and patience to the end, taking heed that we be not stumbling-blocks in the way of other runners. If ye be risen with Christ, seek and set your affections on the things above, not on things on the earth; for your interests are heavenly. The earthly blessings of restitution, and all the good things in store for the redeemed natural man are not your future portion. Look into the *exceeding great and precious* promises of the blessings in store for the new creatures in Christ, that you may catch more of the inspiration of that glorious hope. Then forgetting the things behind, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

