

Dead with Christ, Risen with Christ.
Colossians 2:20, 3:1

by J. N. Darby

The Christian's risen life is exhibited in two things-death unto that which is here, and heavenly-mindedness. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ," writes the apostle, "from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" The expression "rudiments of the world," goes a vast way. I am to be dead, not only to sin, but to all the religiousness of human nature. A Jew has this religiousness, and it was cultivated of God; but it brought not forth good fruit, it produced nothing but "wild grapes."

Now, if we do not see that we are risen, we shall be cultivating human nature, for God. He Himself has tried this already; and He says, that not anything could have been done more than He has done; Isa. 5. But man would still, still be striving to cultivate the religiousness of human nature, and introduce sinners into heaven, otherwise than by death. We are dead and risen again, and it is simply heavenly.

In this, is the real power of our living above sin. It assumes death, it goes upon the principle that we are "dead to sin," Rom. 6. We get a blessed liberty in seeing and accounting ourselves dead. We have a new life. Christ has taken His place where death and resurrection have put Him. And there I am, where Christ is. It is altogether another life, and this life has its own world, and its own sphere of affections. "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit," Rom. 8: 5.

Resurrection life is manifested in walking through this world as abstracted, withdrawn from, unactuated by, the motives of the world. A Christian has new motives.-If I see a man walking through the world without things here affecting him; I say, "He is either mad-or risen with Christ." Alas! we are not as consistent as madmen. All the motives in the world never touch the new nature. Do you think it could be thinking about friendship with the world? could be seeking riches, or honour, or power? The motives which actuate men have no influence upon it. Perplexity comes in by our having a motive which is not drawn from heaven; whenever I see myself, or another, in difficulty, I may be quite sure some other motive is at work. There is always a tendency to decline from this singleness of eye.

When we first receive the knowledge of life in Christ, we are absorbed, we readily admit all else to be "dung and dross," Phil. 3 But when decline comes in, we get old motives into action again. Little by little, we are not absorbed, and then a hundred things begin to be motives-things of which I took no notice, which did not act before. People say, "What harm is there in it?" When I begin to inquire, "What harm is there in this, or in that?" there is the tendency to decline. There may be no harm in the thing, but the thought about it shews that I am not absorbed with that which is heavenly. "Thou hast left thy first love." It is not in great sins, but here, that decline in the saints is manifested.

When the sense of grace is diminished, we decline in practice. Our motives must be in God. Sometimes, effort is made to press conduct, works, and practice; because (it is said) full grace was preached before; now, that there is decline in practice, you must preach practice.

That which is the rather to be pressed, is grace-the first grace. It is grace, not legalism, will restore the soul. Where the sense of grace is diminished, the conscience may be, at the same time, uncommonly active, and then it condemns the pressing of grace, and legalism is the result. When conscience has been

put in action through the claims of grace, that is not legalism; and there will be holy practice in detail.

We may fall into either of two faults--that of (because fruits have not been produced) preaching fruits; or, that of getting at ease, when certain things come to have influence over us again, through thinking that what we approved of before, was legalism.

We shall not get back by dwelling on detail. Christ is the great motive for everything; and we must get up into the knowledge of resurrection in Christ, to remedy detail. Here, there is a wonderful truth, and wonderful liberty.

Another very important point is, the tone and spirit of our walk. Confidence in God, and gentleness of spirit, is that which becomes the saint. For this we must be at home with God. The effect of thus walking in Christ, setting the Lord ever before us, is always to make us walk with reverence--lowliness, adoration, quietness, ease, and happiness. If I go where I am unaccustomed to be--if I get, for instance, into a great house, I may have much kindness shewn me there, but when I get out again, I feel at ease; I am glad to be out. Had I been brought up in that house, I should feel otherwise. The soul is not only happy in God for itself, but it will bring the tone of that house out with it; because of its joy in God, anxieties disappear, and it will move through the ten thousand things, that would trouble and prove anxieties to another, without being a bit troubled. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances, whilst abiding in God.

If a man be risen with Christ, if he be dwelling there, it will shew itself thus. We shall not be afraid of the changes around. We shall live, not in stupid apathy and listlessness, but in the exercise of lively affections and energies towards the Lord. One great evidence of my abiding in Christ, is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on. Another sign is confidence in obeying.

This connects itself with fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ--fellowship, not only in joy, but in the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity, is our power of entering with the affections into the things of God. "The Father loveth the Son"--what a place this puts me in, to be thus cognisant of the Father's feelings towards His beloved Son.

In our proper place, we get our mind filled and associated with things, that leave this world as a little thing--an atom, in the vastness of the glory, which was before the world was.