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failure of the children of Israel, and that is after all the gravamen of Ezekiel's message, see especially ch, 16, 20, 23. The New Testament introduces us to the beginnings of trouble in the Church, and makes it clear that they will grow worse rather than better. Here too, in the mysterious purpose of God, alongside His triumphs in the individual is set the failure of the organization.

The final proof of the failure of man is to be his response, when placed in the most favourable position conceivable. Though the sanctuary of God is with man, though the curse is lifted from nature, though the tempter, the enemy of God and man is bound, yet when the opportunity is offered, the deep-seated rebellion in the hearts of so many at once becomes obvious. I do not know whether we are to understand the names symbolically as of those who have kept far from the glory of God centred in Jerusalem, or whether it refers above all to those who in previous dispensations had not been exposed so directly to God's testing. In either case there is no contradiction between 38:4, where God is pictured as drawing Gog to his doom, and Rev. 20:8, where Satan is portrayed as the deceiver of the nations. Man must be put to the test, or else it will not be clear what is in him. Satan is the willing instrument by which the testing is carried out.

(To be continued)

ALIVE UNTO GOD

Epistle to the Romans 6: 11

W. WILCOX

Paul uses many pregnant phrases by which to describe the great change effected by conversion and the state resultant therefrom. Perhaps as he does so, he recalls the vitally real experience he had on the Damascus Road, and of the subsequent events in Antioch. Those experiences did not involve the acceptance of certain well-defined and clearly worded propositions regarding Christ and His Work, but did bring about a radical change of heart

and life consequent upon that contact with Christ; that realization that He was Lord, and the assurance that Christ had accomplished a work whereby his sins might be effectively cleansed and he be made righteous before God.

Frequently, later, as he reflected upon the nature of this change and of that which resulted from it, he described the former condition as one in which death reigned; while in the latter, a *new* life had come and was now the ruling power within. He was dead unto sin but alive unto God. He bases his argument for this on what happened to our Lord in His death and resurrection, Who, in 'the death that He died, died unto sin once, but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God'.

The Apostle describes this life as (a) A Life *with* Christ. v. 8. (b) A Life *like* Christ's. v. 10. (c) A Life *in* Christ. v. 11.

It is thus a life which finds its origin in Christ, brought about by His instrumentality, finding its sustenance in that region of which He is the environing element, and aiming at those ends which are the ends for which Christ died and lives.

This Life becomes (1) *An Associated Life* (v. 8)—it is a life *with* Him. The verse does not confine itself to an eschatological interpretation. It may include the onward look to the future state, but includes also, the present act of living. As Vine puts it; 'This . . . is not a matter of mere futurity, but the inevitable result of our having died with Christ. There can be no other consequence of this, than that we live with Him now and shall do forever' and Moule comments, 'We live, and shall continue to do so in our near and distant future'.

We may get a further view of this in our Lord's appointment of the Apostles and in His final prayer for them. In Mark's record of the former we read that 'He appointed twelve, that they might be *with* Him' (3:14). While in John's record of the latter He prayed, 'I will that, where I am they also may be *with* Me' (17:24). Our Lord evidently laid much stress upon this present and continuing association of His disciples with Him.

Paul had learned this lesson also, for not only here does he note the fact of the present experience being that of living with Christ, but to the Philippians he writes that: '*for me to live is Christ*'.

The believer's life as it is lived in the companionship of Christ, will bear some of the features of that life, the one in view in this passage being its attitude to sin, to which it has died and to which it will not yield its members as instruments.

(2) *A Directed Life* (v. 11). He is alive *unto* God in Christ Jesus. As Garvie so finely puts it: 'The Christian Life is one of which Christ is the sphere and atmosphere. He sets its limits, ordains its laws, provides its nourishment, and controls its exercise'. And all of this *in Christ* is made ours and is to bring us into the Presence of, and enable us to enjoy God.

This life, being the kind of life that belongs to God in contrast to that life which is in the flesh, enables the believer to grasp the things unseen, to know those things which cannot be discovered by the faculties of the fleshly mind, and to commune with God in free and unfettered fellowship.

It is a life which lives for God, which moves towards God and which finds the maturity of all its powers in God. Such life needs the constant nourishment found only as it draws supplies from God through His Word, in its communion and in prayer. It needs the constant stimulus that is found in the indwelling Spirit of God, that Spirit Who was given to guide, to teach, to testify and so to promote life, and motivate action. But it needs the knowledge of God as given to us in Christ with His saving grace, ennobling example, and inspiring ideals. Such life, in the words of the Lord Jesus, may be described as 'abundant life—the life that is life indeed'.

(3) *A Presented Life* (v. 13). 'Present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead'. The change in the life had been very real; they 'were dead and are alive' (see Moule). Formerly they were constantly presenting their members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness now (note the change from the present tense to the aorist) they are exhorted to present 'by an act of choice' (Garvie) 'by an act carried out with definite decision and having abiding results' (Vine), their lives, as those which have come alive having cast off their old dead selves and what belonged to them, unto God in the entirety of their beings, to be for Him and to be used by Him.

Now life manifests itself in a number of ways among which we may consider three:

(1) *An Awareness to Environment.* The psychologists used to say that the stream of consciousness is ever flowing, and thus there is an awareness of the immediate environment. Spiritually, the believer is variously said to be 'in God', 'in Christ Jesus', or 'in the Spirit', according to the aspect of his life being discussed. This is his environing element both making his life possible and providing that medium in which it is able to manifest itself. With the believer there should be a constant consciousness of God (see 1 Pet. 2:19, where 'for conscience toward God' (R.V.) some would translate 'for a consciousness of God', i.e., a consciousness of His immediate Presence) and the outflow of life should be suited to such a realized Presence.

Do we constantly realize that 'the Lord is at hand, (i.e., near by)?' His nearness should have marked effects upon our lives.

(2) *A Purposefulness in Activity.* As the infant stage merges into childhood and proceeds to adulthood motion and action in which life manifests itself become more and more purposeful. They pursue ends which the individual seeks to achieve. So the believer, in this new life of his, shews purpose in that his life is 'unto God'; he yields his members as instruments unto righteousness; and as one who has become a 'servant of God has his fruit unto sanctification'.

This Activity is (a) Volitional.—he wills to do the Will of God. No longer does he will to do that which shewed his servitude to sin and was unrighteous, but he 'reckons himself as dead indeed unto sin', he presents himself unto God, 'he yields his members as instruments unto righteousness', each verb indicating a definite act of choice arising from the new life which is his in Christ Jesus.

(b) Vocational.—it tends toward the fulfilment of purpose, it seeks the fruit unto sanctification, it fulfils the law of righteousness, it calls for a life unto God.

It is this sense of vocation in the life that raises Christian living to high levels, ever calling the believer to 'walk worthily of his high calling in Christ Jesus', to 'leave the first principles . . . and go on to perfection', to live as 'those whose citizenship is in Heaven'.

(c) Vital—it is as he acts so he goes on to further acts in the way of expressing this new life; therein is the ‘obedience from the heart’ made manifest, thereby do men ‘see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven’, therefore does the believer in the race of faith ‘look off unto Jesus, the Author and the Perfecter of his faith’.

This life is real and lives in a real sphere, albeit it is a life of the Spirit. Spiritual vitality is not less real than natural vitality; indeed it is more real, for it ‘takes hold’ on those things with which natural powers have no contact.

(3) *A Communicableness of Expression.* Life is manifest in its ability to communicate with others of the species having the same kind of life. Human beings are able to express that life and communicate its meaning in,

(a) The Realm of Thought by means of Words. In Scripture language Christ is called The Word in that aspect of His Being wherein He is the Expression of the Mind of God. The Spiritual life of the believer will constantly express itself in the words he will employ. That life ‘unto God’ will find a medium of expression in words of praise, words of ‘confessing His Name’, words of publishing His fame. These are words so different from those that came from the old life, from the ‘untouched’ lip from the ‘unclean vessel’, for they are the outflow of a new life, a consecrated lip, and a sanctified vessel.

These words will have far-reaching results for they are charged with a dynamic which belongs to them as coming from a spiritual source. They communicate to others the thoughts we have of God as we live *to Him*: this conscious relationship to Him, this abiding with Him, this ever-realized nearness to Him providing the region in which these thoughts arise.

(b) The Realm of Action by means of Work. The Lord could say to the people of His day that not only were the words that He spake the words of His Father, but the works that He did were the works of His Father. So closely did that life within the Godhead knit Father and Son together that the works of the Latter were also the works of the Former. This, in measure, should be true of God and the believer. In the power of that life which has been

imparted to him, the deeds of the believer should be those that the Father has given him to do.

By such deeds there will be communicated to others in concrete fashion the expression of what the Christian life is.

(c) The Realm of the Spirit by means of Worship. Spiritual life will give expression to itself in worship. The whole life being lived to God, the whole consciousness being aware of God, the whole mind being occupied with God, there will of necessity come the urge on the spirit to express itself in praise and worship. That worship will not be expressed by the use of mere pious phrases, routine formularies or parrot-like repetitions, but will arise spontaneously as an expression of life.

In his comment on verse 10 Garvie beautifully describes this life unto God as 'a life of unobscured vision, of undisturbed communion with absolute consecration to God'.

May we enter more fully into this life as being 'alive unto God', enjoying its fulness, knowing its power, and realizing its immense possibilities.

BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS

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The Organization of Society

Palestine is one of those rare countries in which a very wide range of natural features is packed into a small space. It has been estimated that there are more than forty natural divisions of the land¹, and modern engineering has not yet managed to make a true unity of them. In so far then as the country was really settled at the Conquest—archaeology suggests that the population West of Jordan was very thin in the hills between Shechem and Bethel, Jerusalem and Hebron, and in the centre of Galilee—it consisted almost entirely of unlinked city-states. The conquering, semi-nomadic Israelites burnt the captured cities, but very soon rebuilt their walls and built many new ones, where there had been none before. Though the tribal divisions of the country represented

¹ Schwöbel quoted by Köhler: *Hebrew Man*, p. 149.