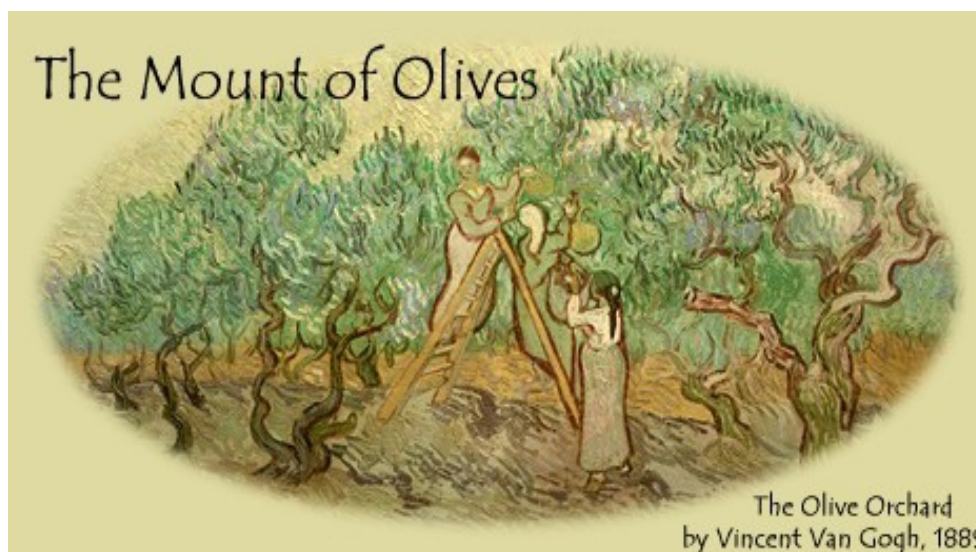


“And when he {Jesus} had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. And his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.”

(Acts 1:9-11, Zechariah 14:4)

Like Manner



Easter Is Newness of Life

A compilation

All the disciples were in a mood of deepest and darkest depression. The light had been cut off from their minds. They were in the dark. The taste had gone out of their lives. Everything had become stale and profitless. Simon Peter was gloomy with despondency and haggard with remorse. ... Mary Magdalene started at the “early dawn” to carry spices to the grave, but there was no dawning in her spirit, and the roadway was wet with her tears. ...

And then came the cry, “He is risen!” The Lord is alive. His tomb is empty! He has shaken off death, He has marched out of the grave! Think of that trumpet note pealing through the late night. Think of that great burning light streaming through the darkness, kindling life after life into blazing hope again. Now what did the apostles find in the resurrection which made them give it weighty and unfailing emphasis? What was its practical significance? What did it mean? First of all, it meant this, that Jesus of Nazareth had been clearly manifested to be the Son of God. Before this wonderful morning, the disciples had been the victims of uncertainty, chilled by cloudy moods of doubt and fear.

But with the resurrection, the uncertainty ends. It is not only that the immediate darkness passes, but the troublesome mists are lifted as well, and the Master emerges as the clearly manifested Son of God. “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!” ...

In the power of the resurrection, the apostles saw a vast reservoir of spiritual energy for the quickening and emancipation of the race. This was their reasoning and their faith ... that in Christ we, too, can rise out of death into newness of life, that, just as He walked out of that tomb, we, too, can walk out of the grave and graveyard of our own corrupt past, and in vigour and sweetness of being, become alive unto God.—Dr. J. H. Jowett1

If you come to seek His face, not in the empty sepulcher, but in the living power of His presence ...

then your hearts will be full of true Easter joy, and that joy will shed itself abroad in your homes. And let your joy not end with the hymns and the prayers and the communions in His house. Take with you the joy of Easter to the home, and make that home bright with more unselfish love, more hearty service; take it into your work, and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; take it to your heart, and let that heart rise anew on Easter wings to a higher, a gladder, a fuller life; take it to the dear graveside and say there the two words “Jesus lives!” and find in them the secret of calm expectation, the hope of eternal reunion.—John Ellerton

What is His message to us this springtime? If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.² It is not just risen with Christ, but resurrected. It is not rising a little higher in the old life, but it is rising from the dead.—A. B. Simpson

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”³

“Newness of life”—what does it mean? It means this: When we are born again, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ... we receive a life which we never before possessed. We begin to feel, to think, and to act as we never had before. The new life is something foreign to our fallen nature. ... The carnal mind knows nothing of spiritual things. The man who is not born again cannot understand what the new birth means. ... In your rebirth you received a light which had never before shone in your bosom—a life that came not from men, neither by men. ... No seeds of eternal life lie buried in the dunghill of fallen nature. Eternal life is the gift of God.

This novel life is new in its principles. The old life at its very best only said, “I must do right that I may win a reward.” Wage-earning is the principle of the old legal life when it tries to be obedient. Now you are moved by gratitude, and not by a mercenary motive. ... Now, you serve not as a hired servant, but as a loving child. Grace reigns. The love of Christ constrains you. It is your joy to obey out of love, and not from slavish fear.

This life is swayed by new motives. You live now to please God; before you lived to please yourself, or to please your neighbors. Once you lived for what you could get for yourself; you lived for the passing pleasures of a fleeting life; but now you have launched upon eternal seas. Eternity holds your treasures; eternity excites your efforts; eternity elevates your desires. You live as seeing him who is invisible, and your conduct is controlled, not by the judgment of fallible men, but by the rule of the heart-searching God.

Your new life has new objects. You aim higher; yes, you aim at the highest of all; for you live for the glory of God, and seek that “your light may so shine, that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The will of God has now become your law. You count yourself only happy as you may fulfill his purposes, honor his name, and extend his kingdom. ...

God has made us “rich in faith,” and he has given us greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

When the Lord lifts up his countenance upon us, we no longer cry for corn and wine and oil. Though flocks die, and crops fail, our bread shall be given us, and our waters shall be sure. Instead of groaning that life is not worth having, we bless God for our being, because our well-being is in Christ. ...

We are happy creatures now. Once we were doleful enough, save when we were in our cups and inflamed with a delirious mirth; but now we have peace like a river, and a secret joy which no one can take from us. We drink of a well which will never dry up; we have bread to eat that the world knows not of. Truly our fellowship is with the Father; and this, even to ourselves, is so vast a joy that it overwhelms us. When we are nearest to God, and are absorbed in him, we cannot comprehend our own delight.—Charles Spurgeon⁴

¹ The School of Calvary (James Clarke and Company, 1911).

² Colossians 3:1, 3.

³ Romans 6:4.

⁴ Adapted from <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/2197.htm> 2015.04.03

