

The Normal Christian Life

The Path of Progress: Bearing the Cross

The Cross and Fruitfulness

- **John 12:24-25** – Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit**. He who loves His soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.
 - We have the **inward** working of the Cross – The **losing of the soul**.
 - This is linked with and likened to the aspect of the death of the Lord – His death with a **view to increase** (grain of wheat).
 - The end in view is fruitfulness.
- The Lord passed into death, and, as we saw earlier, **His life emerged in many lives**.
 - It is in this aspect of His death that we are called to die.
 - It is here that He makes clear the value of **conformity** to His death.
 - We lose our own natural life, our soul, in order that we may become **life-imparters**.
- There is new life in us, if we have received Christ.
 - The reason why there is so little sign of life where life is present is that the **soul** in us is **enveloping and confining** that life so that it cannot find outlet.
 - We are **living** in the soul; we are **working and serving** in our own natural strength; we are **not drawing** from God.
 - It is the *soul* that stands in the way of the springing up of life.

A Dark Night—A Resurrection Morn

- There is an **unending** day-by-day need for the Cross to operate in us because the soul will continue with us **until our death**.
 - Death and resurrection must remain an **abiding principle** of our lives for the losing of the soul and the uprising of the Spirit.
- God must bring us to a point where, through a **deep and dark experience**, our natural power is **touched** and **fundamentally weakened**, so that we no longer dare trust ourselves.
 - There comes a time when we no longer “like” to do Christian work.
 - It is then that He can begin to use us.

- The Lord has to weaken our **strength of preference**, of like and dislike, until we will do a thing because He wants it and not because we like it.
- The **spirit of the Servant** does not come *naturally* to us. It only comes when our soul has known the touch of the Cross.
- When death in principle has been wrought out to a crisis in our natural life, we find God releases us into **resurrection**.
 - What we have lost is coming back under discipline and control.

(The Normal Christian Life – Chapter 13)