

## Chapter 4: The Path of Progress: Reckoning

We now come to a matter on which there has been some confusion of thought among the Lord's children. It concerns what follows this knowledge. Note again first of all the wording of Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him". The tense of the verb is most precious for it puts the event right back there in the past. It is final, once-for-all. The thing has been done and cannot be undone. Our old man has been crucified once and for ever, and he can never be un-crucified. This is what we need to know.

Then, when we know this, what follows? Look again at our passage. The next command is in verse 11: "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin". This, clearly, is the natural sequel to verse 6. Read them together: '*Knowing* that our old man was crucified, ... reckon ye yourselves to be dead'. That is the order. When we know that our old man has been crucified with Christ, then the next step is to reckon it so.

Unfortunately, in presenting the truth of our union with Christ the emphasis has too often been placed upon this second matter of reckoning ourselves to be dead, as though that were the starting point, whereas it should rather be upon *knowing* ourselves to be dead. God's Word makes it clear that 'knowing' is to precede 'reckoning'. "Knowing this ... reckon." The sequence is most important. Our reckoning must be based on knowledge of divinely revealed fact, for otherwise faith has no foundation on which to rest. When we know, then we reckon spontaneously.

So in teaching this matter we should not over-emphasize reckoning. People are always trying to reckon without knowing. They have not first had a Spirit-given revelation of the fact; yet they try to reckon and soon they get into all sorts of difficulties. When temptation comes they begin to reckon furiously: 'I am dead; I am dead; I am dead!' but in the very act of reckoning they lose their temper. Then they say, 'It doesn't work. Romans 6:11 is no good.' And we have to admit that verse 11 *is* no good without verse 6. So it comes to this, that unless we know for a fact that we are dead with Christ, the more we reckon the more intense will the struggle become, and the issue will be sure defeat.

For years after my conversion I had been taught to reckon. I reckoned from 1920 until 1927. The more I reckoned that I was dead to sin, the more alive I clearly was. I simply could not believe myself dead and I could not produce the death. Whenever I sought help from others I was told to read Romans 6:11, and the more I read Romans 6:11 and tried to reckon, the further away death was: I could not get at it. I fully appreciated the teaching that I must reckon, but I could not make out why nothing resulted from it. I have to confess that for months I was troubled. I said to the Lord, 'If this is not clear, if I cannot be brought to see this which is so very fundamental, I will cease to do anything. I will not preach any more; I will not go out to serve Thee any more; I want first of all to get thoroughly clear here.' For months I was seeking, and at times I fasted, but nothing came through.

I remember one morning -- that morning was a real morning and one I can never forget -- I was upstairs sitting at my desk reading the Word and praying, and I said, 'Lord, open my eyes!' And then in a flash I saw it. I saw my oneness with Christ. I saw that I was in Him, and that when He died I died. I saw that the question of my death was a

matter of the past and not of the future, and that I was just as truly dead as He was because I was in Him when He died. The whole thing had dawned upon me. I was carried away with such joy at this great discovery that I jumped from my chair and cried, 'Praise the Lord, I am dead!' I ran downstairs and met one of the brothers helping in the kitchen and I laid hold of him. 'Brother', I said, 'do you know that I have died?' I must admit he looked puzzled. 'What do you mean?' he said, so I went on: 'Do you not know that Christ has died? Do you not know that I died with Him? Do you not know that my death is no less truly a fact than His?' Oh it was so real to me! I longed to go through the streets of Shanghai shouting the news of my discovery. From that day to this I have never for one moment doubted the finality of that word: "I have been crucified with Christ".

I do not mean to say that we need not work that out. Yes, there is an outworking of the death which we are going to see presently, but this, first of all, is the basis of it. I have been crucified: it has been done.

What, then, is the secret of reckoning? To put it in one word, it is revelation. We need revelation from God Himself (Matt. 16:17; Eph. 1:17,18). We need to have our eyes opened to the fact of our union with Christ, and that is something more than knowing it as a doctrine. Such revelation is no vague, indefinite thing. Most of us can remember the day when we saw clearly that Christ died for us, and we ought to be equally clear as to the time when we saw that we died with Christ. It should be nothing hazy, but very definite, for it is with this as basis that we shall go on. It is not that I reckon myself to be dead, and therefore I will be dead. It is that, because I *am* dead -- because I see now what God has done with me in Christ -- *therefore* I reckon myself to be dead. That is the right kind of reckoning. It is not reckoning *toward* death but *from* death.

## **The Second Step: "Even So Reckon..."**

What does reckoning mean? 'Reckoning' in Greek means doing accounts book-keeping. Accounting is the only thing in the world we human beings can do correctly. An artist paints a landscape. Can he do it with perfect accuracy? Can the historian vouch for the absolute accuracy of any record, or the map-maker for the perfect correctness of any map? They can make, at best, fair approximations. Even in everyday speech, when we try to tell some incident with the best intention to be honest and truthful, we cannot speak with complete accuracy. It is mostly a case of exaggeration or understatement, of one word too much or too little. What then can a man do that is utterly reliable? Arithmetic! There is no scope for error there. One chair plus one chair equals two chairs. That is true in London and it is true in Cape Town. If you travel west to New York or east to Singapore it is still the same. All the world over and for all time, one plus one equals two. One plus one is two in heaven and earth and hell.

Why does God say we are to reckon ourselves dead? Because we *are* dead. Let us keep to the analogy of accounting. Suppose I have fifteen shillings in my pocket, what do I enter in my account-book? Can I enter fourteen shillings and sixpence or fifteen shillings and sixpence? No, I must enter in my account-book that which is in fact in my pocket. Accounting is the reckoning of facts, not fancies. Even so, it is because I am really dead that God tells me to account it so. God could not ask me to put down in my account-book what was not true. He could not ask me to reckon that I am dead if I am

still alive. For such mental gymnastics the word 'reckoning' would be inappropriate; we might rather speak of 'mis-reckoning'!

Reckoning is not a form of make-believe. It does not mean that, having found that I have only twelve shillings in my pocket, I hope that by entering fifteen shillings incorrectly in my account-book such 'reckoning' will somehow remedy the deficiency. It won't. If I have only twelve shillings, yet try to reckon to myself: 'I have fifteen shillings; I have fifteen shillings; I have fifteen shillings', do you think that the mental effort involved will in any way affect the sum that is in my pocket? Not a bit of it! Reckoning will not make twelve shillings into fifteen shillings, nor will it make what is untrue true. But if, on the other hand, it is a fact that I have fifteen shillings in my pocket, then with great ease and assurance I can enter fifteen shillings in my account-book. God tells us to reckon ourselves dead, not that by the process of reckoning we may become dead, but because we are dead. He never told us to reckon what was not a fact.

Having said, then, that revelation leads spontaneously to reckoning, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are presented with a command: "Reckon ye ...." There is a definite attitude to be taken. God asks us to do the account; to put down 'I have died' and then to abide by it. Why? Because it is a fact. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, I was there in Him. Therefore I reckon it to be true. I reckon and declare that I have died in Him. Paul said, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God." How is this possible? "In Christ Jesus." Never forget that it is always and only true *in Christ*. If you look at yourself you will think death is not there, but it is a question of faith not in yourself but in Him. You look to the Lord, and know what He has done. 'Lord, I believe *in Thee*. I reckon upon the fact *in Thee*.' Stand there all the day.

## The Reckoning Of Faith

The first four-and-a-half chapters of Romans speak of faith and faith and faith. We are justified by faith in Him (Rom. 3:28; 5:1). Righteousness, the forgiveness of our sins, and peace with God are all ours by faith, and without faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ none can possess them. But in the second section of Romans we do not find the same repeated mention of faith, and it might at first appear that the emphasis is therefore different. It is not really so, however, for where the words 'faith' and 'believe' drop out the work 'reckon' takes their place. Reckoning and faith are here practically the same thing.

What is faith? Faith is my acceptance of God's fact. It always has its foundations in the past. What relates to the future is hope rather than faith, although faith often has its object or goal in the future, as in Hebrews 11. Perhaps for this reason the word chosen here is 'reckon'. It is a word that relates *only* to the past -- to what we look back to as settled, and not forward to as yet to be. This is the kind of faith described in Mark 11:24: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." The statement there is that, if you believe that you already *have received* your requests (that is, of course, in Christ), then 'you shall have them'. To believe that you *may* get something, or that you *can* get it, or even that you *will* get it, is not faith in the sense meant here. This is faith -- to believe that you have already got it. Only that which relates to the past is faith in this sense. Those who say 'God can' or 'God

may' or 'God must' or 'God will' do not necessarily believe at all. Faith always says, 'God has done it'.

When, therefore, do I have faith in regard to my crucifixion? Not when I say God can, or will, or must crucify me, but when with joy I say, 'Praise God, in Christ *I am crucified!*'

In Romans 3 we see the Lord Jesus bearing our sins and dying as our Substitute that we might be forgiven. In Romans 6 we see ourselves included in the death whereby He secured our deliverance. When the first fact was revealed to us we believed on Him for our justification. God tells us to reckon upon the second fact for our deliverance. So that, for practical purposes, 'reckoning' in the second section of Romans takes the place of 'faith' in the first section. The emphasis is not different. The normal Christian life is lived progressively, as it is entered initially, by faith in Divine fact: in Christ and His Cross.

## **Temptation And Failure, The Challenge To Faith**

For us, then, the two greatest facts in history are these: that all our sins are dealt with by the Blood, and that we ourselves are dealt with by the Cross. But what now of the matter of temptation? What is to be our attitude when, after we have seen and believed these facts, we discover the old desires rising up again? Worse still, what if we fall once more into known sin? What if we lose our temper, or worse? Is the whole position set forth above proved thereby to be false?

Now remember, one of the Devil's main objects is always to make us doubt the Divine facts. (Compare Gen. 3:4) After we have seen, by revelation of the Spirit of God, that we are indeed dead with Christ, and have reckoned it so, he will come and say: 'There is something moving inside. What about it? Can you call this death?' When that happens, what will be our answer? The crucial test is just here. Are you going to believe the tangible facts of the natural realm which are clearly before your eyes, or the intangible facts of the spiritual realm which are neither seen nor scientifically proved?

Now we must be careful. It is important for us to recall again what are facts stated in God' Word for faith to lay hold of and what are not. How does God state that deliverance is effected? Well, in the first place, we are not told that sin as a principle in us is rooted out or removed. To reckon on that will be to miscalculate altogether and find ourselves in the false position of the man we considered earlier, who tried to put down the twelve shillings in his pocket as fifteen shillings in his account-book. No, sin is not eradicated. It is very much there, and, given the opportunity, will overpower us and cause us to commit sins again, whether consciously or unconsciously. That is why we shall always need to know the operation of the precious Blood.

But whereas we know that, in dealing with sins committed, God's method is direct, to blot them out of remembrance by means of the Blood, when we come to the principle of sin and the matter of deliverance from its power, we find instead that God deals with this indirectly. He does not remove the sin but the sinner. Our old man was crucified with Him, and because of this the body, which before had been a vehicle of sin, is unemployed (Romans 6:6).[5] Sin, the old master, is still about, but the slave who served him has been put to death and so is out of reach and his members are unemployed. The gambler's hand is unemployed, the swearer's tongue is unemployed, and these members are now

available to be used instead "as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13).

Thus we can say that 'deliverance from sin' is a more scriptural idea than 'victory over sin'. The expressions "freed from sin" and "dead unto sin" in Romans 6:7 and 11 imply deliverance from a power that is still very present and very real -- not from something that no longer exists. Sin is still there, but we are knowing deliverance from its power in increasing measure day by day.

This deliverance is so real that John can boldly write: "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin ... he cannot sin" (1 John 3:9), which is, however, a statement that, wrongly understood, may easily mislead us. By it John is not telling us that sin is now no longer in our history and that we shall not again commit sin. He is saying that to sin is not in the nature of that which is born of God. The life of Christ has been planted in us by new birth and its nature is not to commit sin. But there is a great difference between the nature and the history of a thing, and there is a great difference between the nature of the life within us and *our* history. To illustrate this (though the illustration is an inadequate one) we might say that wood 'cannot' sink, for it is not its nature to do so; but of course in history it will do so if a hand hold it under water. The history is a fact, just as sins in our history are historic facts; but the nature is a fact also, and so is the new nature that we have received in Christ. What is 'in Christ' cannot sin; what is in Adam can sin and will do so whenever Satan is given a chance to exert his power.

So it is a question of our choice of which facts we will count upon and live by: the tangible facts of daily experience or the mightier fact that we are now 'in Christ'. The power of His resurrection is on our side, and the whole might of God is at work in our salvation (Rom. 1:16), but the matter still rests upon our making real in history what is true in Divine fact.

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), and "the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). I think we all know that Hebrews 11:1 is the only definition of faith in the New Testament, or indeed in the Scriptures. It is important that we should really understand that definition. You are familiar with the common English translation of these words, describing faith as "the substance of things hoped for" (A.V.). However, the word in the Greek has in it the sense of an action and not just of some thing, a 'substance', and I confess I have personally spent a number of years trying to find a correct word to translate this. But the New Translation of J.N. Darby is especially good in regard to this word: "Faith is the *substantiating* of things hoped for". That is much better. It implies the making of them real in experience.

How do we 'substantiate' something? We are doing so every day. We cannot live in the world without doing so. Do you know the difference between substance and 'substantiating'? A substance is an object, something before me. 'Substantiating' means that I have a certain power or faculty that makes that substance to be real to me. Let us take a simple illustration. By means of our senses we can take things of the world of nature and transfer them into our consciousness so that we can appreciate them. Sight and hearing, for example, are two of my faculties which substantiate to me the world of light and sound. We have colours: red, yellow, green, blue, violet; and these colours are real things. But if I shut my eyes, then to me the colour is no longer real; it is simply nothing - *to me*. It is not only that the colour is there, but I have the power to 'substantiate' it. I have the power to make that colour true to me and to give it reality in my consciousness.

That is the meaning of 'substantiating'.

If I am blind I cannot distinguish colour, or if I lack the faculty of hearing I cannot enjoy music. Yet music and colour are in fact *real* things, and their reality is unaffected by whether or not I am able to appreciate them. Now we are considering here the things which, though they are not seen, are eternal and therefore real. Of course we cannot substantiate Divine things with any of our natural senses; but there is one faculty which can substantiate the "things hoped for", the things of Christ, and that is faith. Faith makes the *real* things to become real *in my experience*. Faith 'substantiates' *to me* the things of Christ. Hundreds of thousands of people are reading Romans 6:6: "Our old man was crucified with him". To faith it is true; to doubt, or to mere mental assent apart from spiritual illumination, it is not true.

Let us remember again that we are dealing here not with promises but with facts. The promises of God are revealed to us by His Spirit that we may lay hold of them; but facts are facts and they remain facts whether we believe them or not. If we do not believe the facts of the Cross they still remain as real as ever, but they are valueless to us. It does not need faith to make these things real in themselves, but faith can 'substantiate' them and make them real in our experience.

Whatever contradicts the truth of God's Word we are to regard as the Devil's lie, not because it may not be in itself a very real fact to our senses but because God has stated a greater fact before which the other must eventually yield. I once had an experience which (though not applicable in detail to the present matter) illustrates this principle. Some years ago I was ill. For six nights I had high fever and could find no sleep. Then at length God gave me from the Scripture a personal word of healing, and because of this I expected all symptoms of sickness to vanish at once. Instead of that, not a wink of sleep could I get, and I was not only sleepless but more restless than ever. My temperature rose higher, my pulse beat faster and my head ached more severely than before. The enemy asked, 'Where is God's promise? Where is your faith? What about all your prayers?' So I was tempted to thrash the whole matter out in prayer again, but was rebuked, and this Scripture came to mind: "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). If God's Word is truth, I thought, then what are these symptoms? They must all be lies! So I declared to the enemy, 'This sleeplessness is a lie, this headache is a lie, this fever is a lie, this high pulse is a lie. In view of what God has said to me, all these symptoms of sickness are just your lies, and God's Word to me is truth.' In five minutes I was asleep, and I awoke the following morning perfectly well.

Now of course in a particular personal matter such as the above it might be quite possible for me to deceive myself as to what God had said, but of the fact of the Cross there can never be any such question. We *must* believe God, no matter how convincing Satan's arguments appear.

A skillful liar lies not only in word but in gesture and deed; he can as easily pass a bad coin as tell an untruth. The Devil is a skillful liar, and we cannot expect him to stop at words in his lying. He will resort to lying signs and feelings and experiences in his attempts to shake us from our faith in God's Word. Let me make it clear that I do not deny the reality of the 'flesh'. Indeed we shall have a good deal more to say about this further on in our study. But I am speaking here of our being moved from a revealed position in Christ. As soon as we have accepted our death with Christ as a fact, Satan will do his best to demonstrate convincingly by the evidence of our day-to-day experience

that we are not dead at all but very much alive. So we must choose. Will we believe Satan's lie or God's truth? Are we going to be governed by appearances or by what God says?

I am Mr. Nee. I know that I am Mr. Nee. It is a fact upon which I can confidently count. It is of course possible that I might lose my memory and forget that I am Mr. Nee, or I might dream that I am some other person. But whether I feel like it or not, when I am sleeping I am Mr. Nee and when I am awake I am Mr. Nee; when I remember it I am Mr. Nee and when I forget it I am still Mr. Nee.

Now of course, were I to pretend to be someone else, things would be much more difficult. If I were to try and pose as Miss K. I should have to keep saying to myself all the time, 'You are Miss K.; now be sure to remember that you are Miss K.,' and despite much reckoning the likelihood would be that when I was off my guard and someone called, 'Mr. Nee!' I should be caught out and should answer to my own name. Fact would triumph over fiction, and all my reckoning would break down at that crucial moment. But I *am* Mr. Nee and therefore I have no difficulty whatever in reckoning myself to be Mr. Nee. It is a fact which nothing I experience or fail to experience can alter.

So also, whether I feel it or not, I am dead with Christ. How can I be sure? Because Christ has died; and since "one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor. 5:14). Whether my experience proves it or seems to disprove it, the fact remains unchanged. While I stand upon that fact Satan cannot prevail against me. Remember that his attack is always upon our assurance. If he can get us to doubt God's Word, then his object is secured and he has us in his power; but if we rest unshaken in the assurance of God's stated fact, assured that He cannot do injustice to His work or His Word, then it does not matter what tactics Satan adopts, we can well afford to laugh at him. If anyone should try to persuade me that I am not Mr. Nee, I could well afford to do the same.

"We walk by faith, not by appearance" (2 Cor. 5:7), mg). You probably know the illustration of Fact, Faith and Experience walking along the top of a wall. Fact walked steadily on, turning neither to right nor left and never looking behind. Faith followed and all went well so long as he kept his eyes focused upon Fact; but as soon as he became concerned about Experience and turned to see how *he* was getting on, he lost his balance and tumbled off the wall, and poor old Experience fell down after him.

All temptation is primarily to look within; to take our eyes off the Lord and to take account of appearances. Faith is always meeting a mountain, a mountain of evidence that seems to contradict God's Word, a mountain of apparent contradiction in the realm of tangible fact -- of failures in deed, as well as in the realm of feeling and suggestion -- and either faith or the mountain has to go. They cannot both stand. but the trouble is that many a time the mountain stays and faith goes. That must not be. If we resort to our senses to discover the truth, we shall find Satan's lies are often enough true to our experience; but if we refuse to accept as binding anything that contradicts God's Word and maintain an attitude of faith in Him alone, we shall find instead that Satan's lies begin to dissolve and that *our experience is coming progressively to tally with that Word.*

It is our occupation with Christ that has this result, for it means that He becomes progressively real to us on concrete issues. In a given situation we see Him as *real* holiness, *real* resurrection life -- for us. What we see in Him objectively now operates in us subjectively -- but *really* -- to manifest Him in us in that situation. That is the mark of maturity. That is what Paul means by his words to the Galatians: "I am again in travail

until Christ be formed in you" (4:19). Faith is `substantiating' God's facts; and faith is always the `substantiating' of eternal fact -- of something eternally true.

## Abiding In Him

Now although we have already spent long on this matter, there is a further thing that may help to make it clearer to us. the Scriptures declare that we are "dead indeed", but nowhere do they say that we are dead *in ourselves*. We shall look in vain to find death within; that is just the place where it is not to be found. We are dead not in ourselves but *in Christ*. We were crucified with Him because we were in Him.

We are familiar with the words of the Lord Jesus, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4). Let us consider them for a moment. First they remind us once again that we have never to struggle to get into Christ. We are not told to get there, for we are told to *stay* there where we have been placed. It was God's own act that put us in Christ, and we are to *abide* in Him.

But further, this verse lays down for us a Divine principle, which is that God has done the work in Christ and not in us as individuals. The all-inclusive death and the all-inclusive resurrection of God's Son were accomplished fully and finally apart from us in the first place. It is the history of *Christ* which is to become the experience apart from Him. The Scriptures tell us that we were crucified "with Him", that we were quickened, raised, and set by God in the heavenlies "in Him", and that we are complete "in Him" (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:5,6; Col. 2:10). It is not just something that is still to be effected in us (though it *is* that, of course). It is something that has already been effected, *in association with Him*.

In the Scriptures we find that no Christian experience exists *as such*. What God has done in His gracious purpose is to include us in Christ. In dealing with Christ God has dealt with the Christian; in dealing with the Head He has dealt with all the members. It is altogether wrong for us to think that we can experience anything of the spiritual life in ourselves merely, and apart from Him. God does not intend that we should acquire something exclusively personal in our experience, and He is not willing to effect anything like that for you and me. All the spiritual experience of the Christian *is already true in Christ*. It has already been experienced by Christ. What we call `our' experience is only our entering into *His* history and *His* experience.

It would be odd if one branch of a vine tried to bear grapes with a reddish skin, and another branch tried to bear grapes with a green skin, and yet another branch grapes with a very dark purple skin, each branch trying to produce something of its own without reference to the vine. It is impossible, unthinkable. The character of the branches is determined by the vine. Yet certain Christians are seeking experiences *as experiences*. They think of crucifixion as something, of resurrections as something, of ascension as something, and they never stop to think that the whole is related to a Person. No, only as the Lord opens our eyes to see the Person do we have any true experience. Every true spiritual experience means that we have discovered a certain fact in Christ and have entered into that; anything that is not from Him in this way is an experience that is going to evaporate very soon. `I have discovered *that* in Christ; then, Praise the Lord, it is mine! I possess it, Lord, because it is in Thee.' Oh it is a great thing to know the facts of Christ

as the foundation for our experience.

So God's basic principle in leading us on experimentally is not to give us something. It is not to bring us through something, and as a result to put something into us which we can call '*our* experience'. It is not that God effects something within *us* so that we can say, 'I died with Christ last March' or 'I was raised from the dead on January 1st, 1937,' or even, 'Last Wednesday I asked for a definite experience and I have got it'. No, that is not the way. I do not seek experiences *in themselves* as in this present year of grace. Time must not be allowed to dominate my thinking here.

Then, some will say, what about the crises so many of us have passed through? True, some of us have passed through real crises in our lives. For instance George Muller could say, bowing himself down to the ground, 'There was a day when George Muller died'. How about that? Well, I am not questioning the reality of the spiritual experiences we go through nor the importance of crises to which God brings us in our walk with Him; indeed, I have already stressed the need for us to be quite as definite ourselves about such crisis in our own lives. But the point is that God does not give individuals individual experiences. All that they have is only an entering into what God has already done. It is the '*realizing*' in *time* of *eternal* things. The history of Christ becomes our experience and our spiritual history; we do not have a separate history from His. The entire work regarding us is not done in us here but in Christ. He does no separate work in individuals apart from what He has done there. Even eternal life is not given to us as individuals: the life is in the Son, and "he that hath the Son hath the life". God has done all in His Son, and He has included us in Him; we are incorporated into Christ.

Now the point of all this is that there is a very real practical value in the stand of faith that says, 'God has put me in Christ, and therefore all that is true of Him is true of me. I will abide in Him.' Satan is always trying to get us out, to keep us out, to convince us that we are out, and by temptations, failures, suffering, trial, to make us feel acutely that we are outside of Christ. Our first thought is that, if we were in Christ, we should not be in this state, and therefore, judging by the feelings we now have, we must be out of Him; and so we begin to pray, 'Lord, put me into Christ'. No! God's injunction is to "abide" in Christ, and that is the way of deliverance. But how is it so? Because it opens the way for God to take a hand in our lives and to work the thing out in us. It makes room for the operation of His superior power -- the power of resurrection (Rom. 6:4,9,10) -- so that the facts of Christ do progressively become the facts of our daily experience, and where before "sin reigned" (Rom. 5:21) we make now the joyful discovery that we are truly "no longer ... in bondage to sin" (Rom. 6:6).

As we stand steadfastly on the ground of what Christ is, we find that all that is true of Him is becoming experimentally true in us. If instead we come onto the ground of what we are in ourselves we will find that all that is true of the old nature remains true of us. If we get *there* in faith we have everything; if we return back *here* we find nothing. So often we go to the wrong place to find the death of self. It is in Christ. We have only to look within to find we are very much alive to sin; but when we look over there to the Lord, God sees to it that death works here but that "newness of life" is ours also. We are "alive unto God" (Rom. 6:4,11).

"Abide in me, and I in you." This is a double sentence: a command coupled with a promise. That is to say, there is an objective and a subjective side to God's working, and the subjective side depends upon the objective; the "I in you" is the outcome of our

abiding in Him. We need to guard against being over-anxious about the subjective side of things, and so becoming turned in upon ourselves. We need to dwell upon the objective -- "abide in me" -- and to let God take care of the subjective. And this He has undertaken to do.

I have illustrated this from the electric light. You are in a room and it is growing dark. You would like to have the light on in order to read. There is a reading-lamp on the table beside you. What do you do? Do you watch it intently to see if the light will come on? Do you take a cloth and polish the bulb? No, you get up and cross over to the other side of the room where the switch is on the wall and you turn the current on. You turn your attention to the source of power and when you have taken the necessary action there the light comes on here.

So in our walk with the Lord our attention must be fixed on Christ. "Abide in me, and I in you" is the Divine order. Faith in the objective facts make those facts true subjectively. As the apostle Paul puts it, "We all ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18 mg.). The same principle holds good in the matter of fruitfulness of life: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit" (John 15:5). We do not try to produce fruit or concentrate upon the fruit produced. Our business is to look away to Him. As we do so He undertakes to fulfill His Word in us.

How do we abide? 'Of God are ye in Christ Jesus.' It was the work of God to put you there and He has done it. Now *stay* there! Do not be moved back onto your own ground. Never look at yourself as though you were not in Christ. Look at Christ and see yourself in Him. *Abide in Him*. Rest in the fact that God has put you in His Son, and live in the expectation that He will complete His work in you. It is for Him to make good the glorious promise that "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14).