

## The Liberty of the Spirit

**Andrew Murray:**

**The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live.'**-Rom. 8: 2:13

In the sixth chapter Paul had spoken (vers. 18, 22) of our having been made free from sin in Christ Jesus. Our death to sin in Christ had freed us from its dominion: being made free from sin as a Power, as a Master, when we accepted Christ in faith, we became servants to righteousness and to God. In the seventh chapter (vers. 1-6) he had spoken of our being made free from the law.

'The strength of sin is the law:' deliverance from sin and the law go together. And being made free from the law, we had been united to the living Christ, that, in union with Him, we might now serve in newness of the Spirit (7: 4-6). Paul had, in these two passages (6 and 7: 1-6), presented this being made free from sin and the law, in its objective reality, as a life prepared in

Christ, to be accepted and maintained by faith, According to the law of a gradual growth in the Christian life, the believer has, in the power of the Spirit with which he has been sealed, in faith to enter into this union and to walk in it. As a matter of experience, almost all believers can testify that, even after they have seen and accepted this teaching, their life is not what they had hoped it would be. They have found the descent into the experience of the second half of Rom. 7 most real and painful. It was because there is, as a rule, no other way for learning the two great lessons the believer needs. The one is the deep impotence of the human will, under the law urging it to obedience, ever to work out a Divine righteousness in man's life; the other, the need of the, conscious and most entire indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the only sufficient power for the life of a child of God.

In the first half of Rom. 8 we have the setting forth of this latter truth. In the Divine exposition of the Christian life in this Epistle, as in its growth in the believer, there is a distinct advance from step to step. The eighth chapter, in introducing the Holy Spirit for the, first time in the unfolding of the life of faith, as we have it in chaps. 6-8, teaches us that it is only as the Spirit definitely animates our life and walk, and as He is distinctly known and accepted to do this, that we can fully possess and enjoy the riches of grace that are ours in Christ. Let every one who would know what it is to be dead to sin and alive to God, to be free from sin and a bondsman unto God, to be freed from the law, and married to Him who is raised from the dead, come hither to find the strength he needs, in that Spirit, through whom the union with Christ can be maintained as a Divine experience, and His life be lived within us in Power and in Truth.

In the first half of this eighth chapter the second verse is the centre. It reveals the wonderful secret of how our freedom from sin and the law may become a living and abiding experience. A believer may know that he is free, and yet have to mourn that his experience is that of a wretched captive. The freedom is so entirely in Christ Jesus, and the maintenance of the living union with Him is so distinctly and entirely a work of Divine power, that it is only as we see that the Divine Spirit 'dwells within us for this very purpose, and know how to accept and yield to His working it, that we can really stand perfect and complete in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free. The life and the liberty of Rom. 6 and 7:1-6 are only fully ours as we can say, 'The law of the Spirit of the life that is in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.' Through the whole Christian life the principle rules: 'According to your faith be it unto you.' As the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of faith, reveals the greatness of God's resurrection power working in us, and as faith in the indwelling Spirit submits to receive that power to the full, all that is true for us in Christ Jesus becomes true in our daily personal experience. It is as we perceive the -difference between this and the previous teaching (Rom. 6-7: 6), as we see what a distinct advance it is upon it, the indispensable completion of the wonderful revelation of our life in Christ there made, that the unique and most glorious place which the Holy Spirit as God holds in the scheme of redemption and the life of faith will open up to us. We learn thus, that, as divinely perfect as is the Life of Liberty in Christ Jesus, is also the power of that Life in the Holy Spirit, enabling us to walk in that Liberty. The living assurance and experience of the Holy Spirit's indwelling will become to us the very first necessary of the new Life, inseparable from the Person and Presence of Jesus Christ our Lord.

'The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus made us free from the Law of Sin and Death.' Paul here contrasts the two opposing laws; the one of Sin and Death in the members, the other of the Spirit of Life ruling and quickening even the mortal body. Under the former we have seen the believer sighing as a wretched captive. In the second half of Rom. 6, Paul had addressed him as made free from sin, and by voluntary surrender become a servant to God and to righteousness. He has forsaken the service of sin, and yet it often masters him. The promise, 'Sin shall not'-shall never for a moment-'have dominion over you,' has not been realized. To will is present but how to perform he knows not. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this

death ? is the cry of impotence amid all his efforts to keep the law. 'I thank God, through Christ Jesus our Lord,' is the answer of faith that claims the deliverance in Christ from this power that has held him captive. From the Law, the Dominion of Sin and Death in the members, its actual power in working sin, there is deliverance. That deliverance is a new law, a mightier force, an actual power making free from sin. As real as was the energy of sin working in our members, and more mighty, is the energy of the Spirit dwelling in our bodies. It is the Spirit of the Life that there is in Christ. Out of that Life, when filled as it was in the resurrection and ascension with the mighty energy of God's power (Eph.1:17, 2 1 ), and admitted on the throne to the omnipotence of God as the Eternal Spirit-out of that Life there descended the Holy Spirit, Himself God. The Law, the Power, the Dominion of the Life in Christ Jesus, made, me free from the Law, the Dominion of Sin and Death in my members, with a freedom as real as was the slavery. From the very first beginnings of the New Life, it was the Spirit who breathed faith in Christ. On our first entering into justification, it was He who shed abroad the love of God in our hearts. It was He who led us to see Christ as our Life as well as our Righteousness. But all this was in most cases still accompanied with much ignorance of His Presence, of the great need and the supply of His Almighty Power. As the believer in Rom.7: (14-23) is brought to the discovery of the deep-rooted legality of the old nature, and its absolute impotence, the truth of the Holy Spirit, and of the Mighty Power with which He does make practically free from the Power of Sin and Death is understood as never before, and our text becomes the utterance of the highest faith and experience combined: 'The Law of the Spirit of Life made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.' As real, and mighty, and spontaneous as was the Law of Sin in the members, is now the Law of the Spirit of Life in those members too.

The believer who would live fully in this liberty of the Life in Christ Jesus will easily understand what the path is in which he will learn to walk, Rom.8 is the goal to which Rom. 6 and 7 lead up. In faith he will first have to study and accept all that is taught in these two earlier chapters of his being in Christ Jesus; dead to sin and alive to God, made free from sin and enslaved to God, free from the law, and married to Christ. 'If ye abide in my word ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' Let the word of God, as it teaches you your union with Christ, be the life-soil in which your faith and life daily roots; abide, dwell in it, and let it abide in you. To meditate, to hold fast, to hide in the heart the word of this gospel, to assimilate it in faith and patience, is the way to rise and reach each higher truth the Scripture teaches. And if the passage through the experience of carnality and captivity, which the attempts to fulfil the law we delight in bring, appears to be anything but progress, let us remember that it is just in the utter despair of self that the entire surrender to the Spirit, to bring and keep us in the liberty with which Christ makes free, is born and strengthened. To cease from all hope in the flesh and the law, is the entrance into the liberty, of the Spirit.

To walk in the path of this New Life it will further be specially needful to remember what is meant by the expression the word so distinctly uses, a 'walk after the Spirit.' The Spirit is to lead, to decide and show the path. This implies surrender, obedience, a waiting to be guided. He is to be the ruling Power, we are in all things to live and act under the Law, the legislation, the Dominion of the Spirit. A holy fear to grieve Him, a tender watchfulness to know His leading, an habitual faith in His hidden but most sure presence, a lowly adoration of Him as God, must be the mark of such a life. The words which Paul uses towards the close of this section are to express our one aim - 'If ye, through the Spirit, make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' The Holy Spirit possessing, inspiring, animating all the powers of our spirit and soul, entering even: into the body, and, in the power of His Divine life, enabling us to make and keep dead the deeds of the body, this is what we may count upon as the fulfilment of the word, 'The law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus made, me free from the law of Sin and Death.' This is that salvation in sanctification of the Spirit' to which we have been chosen.

'We walk by faith:' this is what we specially need to remember in regard to a 'walk after the Spirit.' The visible manifestation of Christ to us, and His work, are so much more intelligible than the revelation of the Spirit within us, that it is here, above all, in seeking the leading of the Spirit, that faith is called for. The Almighty Power of the Spirit hides Himself away in such a real union with our weakness, with our personality in its abiding sense of weakness, that it needs patient perseverance in believing and obeying to come into the full consciousness of His indwelling, and of His having indeed undertaken to do all our living for us. It needs the direct fresh anointing day by day from the Holy One, in fellowship with Christ, the Anointed, and in persevering waiting on the Father. Here, if ever, the word is needed, 'Only believe! Believe in the Father and His promise! Believe in the Son and His life as thine: 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Believe in the Spirit, as the bearer, and communicator, and maintainer of the Life and Presence of Jesus ! Believe in Him as already within thee! Believe in His power and faithfulness to work, in a way that is Divine and beyond thy conception, His work in thee! Believe, ' The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.' Bow in deep silence of soul before God, waiting on Him to work mightily in thee by His Spirit. As self is laid low, He will do His blessed and beloved work. He will reveal, will impart, will make and keep divinely present Jesus Christ as the Life of thy spirit.

**The Liberty of the Spirit**

**Ever blessed God and Father! we do praise Thee for the wonderful gift of Thy Holy Spirit, in whom 'Thou with Thy, Son comest to make abode in us. We do bless Thee for that wonderful gift of Eternal Life, which Thy beloved Son brought us, and which we have in Jesus Himself, as His own life given to us. And we thank Thee that the Law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus now makes us free from the Law of Sin and Death.**

**Our Father! we humbly pray Thee to reveal to us in full and blessed experience what this perfect Law of Liberty is. Teach us how it is the Law of an inner Life, that in joyful and spontaneous power grows up into its blessed destiny. Teach us that the Law is none other than of the Eternal Life, in its power of continuous and unfading being. Teach us that it is the Law of the Life of Christ Jesus, the living Saviour Himself, living and maintaining it in us. Teach us that it is the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit revealing and glorifying Christ in us as an indwelling Presence. 0 Father ! open our eyes and strengthen our faith, that we may believe that the Law of the Spirit is indeed mightier than the Law of Sin in our members, and makes free from it, so that through the Spirit we make dead the deeds of the body, and indeed live the life of Christ.**

**0 Father! teach this to all Thy children. Amen.**