

Articles and Sermons :: The Law of the Spirit ~ F.B. Meyer

The Law of the Spirit ~ F.B. Meyer - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/4/29 9:18

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

Rom. 8:2

*"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." --Rom. 8:2.*

BEFORE proceeding further let us say, for the purpose of emphasizing the fact, that the enduement and energy of the Holy Spirit are governed by law. They are not won primarily by an agony of prayer, nor characterized necessarily by intense emotion, but by our careful obedience to the conditions and laws which govern their operation. That prayer and emotion will sooner or later visit the soul which has claimed the portion from the Ascended Saviour is certain, but these are incidental. The primary condition is the "obedience of faith." Two citations from the New Testament place this beyond doubt. In his final address to the Sanhedrin, Peter asserted that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey; while in the epistle to the Galatians, Paul teaches that we receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.

It is true that our Lord compared the action of the Holy Spirit on its subject to the wind that bloweth where it listeth, and it is true that we know not the plains over which it has swept nor the seas over which it may go; but we are sure that the winds obey law, equally with the seasons and the tides. From the daily press we learn that the course of the wind in a given locality is predicted by meteorological science, and we know that this could not be done if the winds were left to their own lawless way.

*"All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee,  
All chance, direction that thou canst not see!"*

Re: The Law of the Spirit ~ F.B. Meyer - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/4/29 9:20

AN ANALOGY

The outstanding distinction between what we know as civilization and the life of the aboriginal native consists in our employment of those great natural forces, of which the child-races were ignorant, or before which they trembled. They fulfilled their purpose by the skill and energy of their physical constitution. Their deft hand, strong muscle, swift foot, supplied their simple wants. We, on the other hand, the children of this highly civilized age, have learned to yoke an infinite number of forces to the chariot of progress. We have compelled these Boanergic Samsons to surrender the secret of their strength and toil for us in their prison-houses. The native paddles his own canoe; we sit at our ease, and are borne across the ocean by the actinic rays of the sun, stolen from his beams by primeval forests, and imprisoned for untold ages in the cellars of the earth.

These natural forces had always been within man's reach, throbbing in the atmosphere, or imprisoned in the earth; but they evaded capture, because the childraces did not set themselves to discover the conditions or laws by which they were controlled. Day unto day uttered speech, night unto night whispered knowledge, but untutored man failed to understand. He did not set himself to spell out their language, or to extract their secret.

Then a new era dawned. Men suddenly awoke to discover the uniformity of Nature's action. May we not believe that the divine Spirit girded men like Galileo, Newton, Pascal, Stephenson, Marconi, as He did Cyrus of old? By close observation they have deciphered the hieroglyphics of creation, and have invented machinery which so precisely fulfils the principles on which these Titan forces operate, that they have no option but to toil in our service and do our bidding. They are very imperious. If there is the least flaw in our obedience, they are obdurate in refusing their help. Your wife or child may be dying, but your motor will not carry you to their side if in the smallest degree you have slurred or evaded the conditions on which the petrol is prepared to act. But when we fulfil her conditions, Nature will sweat in our factories, propel our ships, drag our railway trains, flash our messages, and broadcast our music or our speech.

When we speak thus of these mighty forces and the laws which govern their operation, we must never forget that they are the expression of the mind of the Creator, and communicate the pulse of His power. Their laws are promulgated by Him.

s will. "He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." There can be no thoughts without a thinker; no energy without a personal agent. They, therefore, who work in factories or laboratories should be as reverent as those who preach in pulpits, for if they only understand their calling, they also are fellow-workers with God. Now, just as God has put forth His energy on the lowest level of natural forces, and has impressed on each of them their several laws, so He has put forth His energy on the highest level, the level of the spiritual, and on that also He has impressed the law of its operation. The analogy is perfect.

It has been suggested that this conception of the spiritual kingdom underlay Daniel's suggestion to Nebuchadnezzar that "the Heavens do rule"; and that both John the Baptist and our Lord referred to it when they announced the near advent of the Kingdom of Heaven, or, as Luke puts it, of God. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that, in this sense, Jesus Christ is the Door, and that for all who believe "in Him He has opened the way to reservoirs of power which can never be exhausted. The simplest and humblest may set in motion waves of holy influence which change the face of continents! How else can we account for the effect of the life-work of Luther, Wesley, Hudson Taylor, or D. L. Moody?

Paul is never weary of insisting that the results of his life-work were not due to the persuasive words of human wisdom. He refused to employ excellency of speech when proclaiming the mystery of God. Though he walked in the flesh, he did not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of his warfare were not of the flesh, but mighty before God for the casting down of strongholds, and for bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. His sole reliance was on the indwelling, outflowing, and demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. Has there not been a grave decline from this position on the part of many who occupy the pulpit at the present hour? They are earnest students, they are careful in the preparation of their sermons, they are painstaking in the exercise of their responsible duties, but they are breaking their hearts in disappointment, because they do not avail themselves of their resources in the Risen Christ.

**Re: The Law of the Spirit ~ F.B. Meyer - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/4/29 12:52**

## **TWO SIGNIFICANT PREPOSITIONS**

There are two directions in which, specially, the Power of the Holy Spirit can be experienced. When Barnabas and Paul returned from their first missionary journey, they accounted for the extraordinary results which had accrued from their labors by rehearsing what God had done by, or through them, and all things that He had done with, or in partnership with them. It was He who had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. These two prepositions are clearly distinguished in the Greek original and are luminous with meaning.

(1) The Holy Spirit is prepared to work through the nature which is yielded to Him. This does not imply that we become automats. At every moment we are called upon to exercise our will and choice, but we cultivate the habit of asking Him to illuminate our mind, suggest our thought, and direct our speech. "He that is of God heareth the words of God." This has been the happy experience of many of God's chosen instruments. For instance, Hudson Taylor, one Sunday morning, while walking along the seashore at Brighton, England, heard the inner voice, which he knew so well, say to him: "Hudson Taylor, I am going to evangelize Inland China, and if you will walk with Me, I will do it through you."

As a young man, D. L. Moody was walking with two men of God in the Merrion Gardens, Dublin, and heard one say to the other: "The modern world has yet to learn what God can do through a man who is wholly yielded to Him." He left them at once, and going to his bedroom in the hotel, consecrated his manhood to God with the cry: "Let this be true of me, as I yield my whole being for Thy use."

Dr. Wilbur Chapman, the well-known evangelist, often narrated the following incident. When he was fulfilling the work of the ministry at Wanamaker Church, Philadelphia, he became so discouraged with the paucity of the results, that one Monday morning he began to write a letter of resignation. He felt that he had better return to a business life than fail to meet the requirements of that important sphere. While the ink was still wet, the servant brought in the morning newspaper, which contained an address of my own delivered at the Northfield conference, in which I had happened to say that the work which really counts is not that which we do for God, but which He does through us. That sentence revolutionized his life. As soon as the servant had retired, he knelt at his table and asked that from that hour his whole nature might be so absolutely at God's disposal as to be the pure channel for the living water, or, as the early Christians used to say, what a man's hand is to himself. This was the intelligent act of a surrendered will. To do God's will became henceforward the origin, motive, and gladness of his life. I heard him tell this story to a great company of ministers gathered in the ancient Indian forest at Winona, and shall never forget the profound impression it produced. Scores of them, as they passed out of the forest through the gateway which led back to the town, said as they gripped our hands: "No longer for Him, but He through my yielded will." I learned afterwards that revivals broke out in several directions through the western states, as the res

ult of that meeting.

(2) But those who are thus surrendered to God may also confidently count on the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.--The Greek word rendered in the English as "communion" is the same as that used of the partnership of James and John with Peter in the fishing trade (2 Cor. 13:14; Luke 5:7). When we go forth to catch men for God, we may count on the partnership of the Holy Spirit. When we stand on our trial, as Peter and John did before the Sanhedrin, we may cite the co-witness of the Paraclete, whom we summon to stand by our side. When we affirm the great truths of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit's "Yea" will be forthcoming, affirming the truth. It is repeatedly said of the heroes and saints in Hebrews 11. that they had witness borne to them.

How often in my ministry--if I may be allowed to speak of my own experience---have I had some such experience as Peter had, when, against all the rules of his craft, he let down his nets in the glare of the moon, because Christ bade it. But He, who gave the command against all precedent, filled the nets to breaking. Then, as Peter strained every muscle to hold the heavily laden net, he became aware of the marvellous share contributed by that silent Man who sat in the stern. May I not appeal to all Christian workers to place themselves and their boats at the disposal of Jesus Christ? Obey His orders; reckon on His enabling; be assured of His cooperation through the Holy Spirit; and you will find the nets breaking with the weight of a success which will humble you before Him, and elicit the confession of your profound unworthiness!

This conception of the cooperation of the Holy Spirit is specially applicable to those who are set over regular congregations of faithful people. It is interesting to note that Cardinal Manning, in his treatise on "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," lays great emphasis on the word "sat" in Acts 2:3. He says that when the one Paraclete or Advocate took the seat at the right hand of God, the other descended to the seat or throne of the Church; and that this was the origin of the phrase "the Holy See" (from the Latin verb sedere, to sit). We will not argue the point as concerning the Church of Rome, but we may appropriate the thought in connection with any stated gathering of believers met in the Name of Christ. Wherever such a gathering is found, there the Holy Spirit broods, and as the servant of God proclaims the Word of Truth, the Spirit authenticates and enforces it, so that if there came in one who is unbelieving and unlearned, he is convicted and judged by all he hears; the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and "so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is present indeed."

When this thought lays hold on a minister of Christ, he realizes the necessity of maintaining the purity of the Church, that no permitted evil may grieve or quench the cooperation of his great Ally. It was this that led Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston to dismiss an operatic quartette, which had led the singing of his congregation, but were notoriously irreligious; and to discontinue raising church funds by ice cream suppers, which were scenes of unworthy vanity and display.

The platform from which the Holy Spirit operates must be cleansed of all that would neutralize His help.

One of the most conspicuous instances of the cooperation of the Holy Spirit is that furnished in the house of Cornelius. We are told (Acts 11:15) that when Peter began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on the assembled Church. It was an august occasion, designed to prove that the gift of Pentecost was intended, not for Jews and proselytes only, but for the great world of men. As Joppa looked out on the Mediterranean, which washed the shores of the Gentile world, so that interruption of his address by the Spirit of God was intended to accentuate the divine purpose of including the whole Gentile world in that supreme donation.

What Peter intended to say, in addition to his great opening words, must be left to conjecture. It was as though the Spirit said: "Stand aside; thou hast opened well, I will now take up and conclude thy discourse!" Happy would it be if we were subject to similar interruption! This surely is the co-partnership of the Holy Spirit, the alliance between the human and the divine agents in the evangelization of the world.

We ought to add a sentence here to the effect that the Holy Spirit's ministry is not limited to His work through and with His chosen instrument, but enhances our own powers. When a piece of dull coal is baptized in flame, the heat releases the latent energy received centuries before from the sunbeams in the primeval world. So, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire, as John the Baptist predicted, the love of God releases as well as imparts. He releases vast moral energies which had been stored in our subconscious nature; and we realize the possibility of fulfilling the inspiring commission of one of the greatest missionaries the world has ever seen: "Go! Set the whole world on fire and in flames!"

The Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit are always associated with our consciousness of Christ. "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and declare it unto you." In the present dispensation the whole object of the Spirit's work is to shed light upon the face of Jesus. I can never forget a young Glasgow merchant breaking in on a discussion of theological students by saying: "I have a factory and a private counting-house, and if ever I lose the sense of the presence of Christ,

I go alone, lock the door, and ask the Holy Spirit to show me wherein I have grieved Him and caused Him to withdraw His light from the face of my Lord; and when I have learned it, I go back to the place where I dropped the thread of obedience and confess my fault. I have unbroken fellowship with my Lord; for the work of the Spirit is to make Jesus a living, bright reality." We broke up in tumultuous joy, and went to our several homes, and to one at least of the group there was so deep a realization of Christ that he walked round and round the table, on which the untasted supper was laid, saying, "The Lord whom I sought has suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom I delight."

Clearly the sculptor of the monument of Phillips Brooks, which stands hard by the church in Boston where he exercised one of the greatest ministries of modern times, must have had something of the same in mind when he carved in the same pulpit a figure of the bishop in his characteristic attitude, with his Master standing just behind him, with His hand on His servant's shoulder. The Holy Spirit in the great preacher's heart made him aware of his Lord close by, and would enable him to magnify Him to the people as he proclaimed the evangel of His truth and grace.

In one of the sweet idylls of the long ago, we are told that Abraham sent the trusted steward of his household to fetch a bride for Isaac from the ancestral home in the Euphrates valley. The old man's artless narrative, the evident indications of God's guiding Providence, and the gleam of the precious gifts won the maiden's heart, and she arose with her damsels to become the wife of his master's son. We can imagine that during that long journey Eliezer would walk beside her camel and tell everything he could remember of Isaac from his birth and upwards. His whole conversation circled about her bridegroom, and the gift's heart had already given him its love before he claimed it in person. In their greeting the steward was almost forgotten; and if, in after days, Rebekah inquired more particularly about him, might not Isaac have reminded her that for six weeks she had enjoyed his company, and that surely that had afforded ample opportunity for her to make his acquaintance? But she might have answered very readily: "Indeed, husband, he never gave me the chance to learn anything about himself, because his one theme was You. He never ceased to talk about You, and always turned the conversation back to the Man on whose errand he had come." This is a kind of allegory of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He has come to woo the Church for her Bridegroom; therefore He hides Himself lest He might distract us from the utmost loyalty and love to Christ that we are capable of giving. But, in some future age, we shall perhaps know Him in His own glorious Being.

**Re: The Law of the Spirit ~ F.B. Meyer - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/5/2 8:36**

#### **A NEEDFUL CAUTION**

A modern school of thought, which is obtaining considerable vogue, holds that God is within each of us, in the depths of our subconscious self, and that it is possible for any one to draw on this hidden reservoir of power and vitality. A formula has been suggested for general use, which has at least the merit of substituting a healthy and hopeful outlook for the pessimism and depression of protracted ill-health. But this system falls far short of the teachings of the New Testament. The difference between them is that between a cistern and a spring. You may exhaust the one, but the other is fed from the mountains, and is perennial.

Each soul has a moral sense which naturally points to God as the infinite source of righteousness and well-being. As the needle points to the pole, so does conscience imply the existence of the Creator; but this instinctive recognition is far removed from the teachings of Christ, who promised that the Father would come with Him to find a home in the heart of obedient faith. "If a man love me, he will keep my word and the Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." This would be no boon, if by nature God were resident within. In his carefully worded address, Paul spoke of God as not far from any one of us, but this is a very different position to that of auto-suggestion. We live, and move, and have our being in God; but He stands at the door and knocks! By nature, according to the New Testament, man is "without God in the world." Before we can draw at will on the divine resources we must become partakers of the divine nature. Then only will the eternal spring arise perennially.

"If there be any Fellowship of the Spirit.. ." Those who reckon most of the "fellowship of the Spirit" in their public ministrations and service to the world, will be characterized by deep humility. If their faces shine, they will not wist it. If garlands of adulation and praise are offered them, they will immediately hand them over to their Lord. Like John the Baptist, they will be glad to decrease and be forgotten, if only Jesus is loved, trusted, and exalted.

They will also be much in prayer. Sometimes they will simply lie, like John, on the Master's bosom. At other times they will be pleading for souls with strong cryings and tears. And again they will be wrestling beside the Jabbok, refusing to let the Angel go until He has blessed them. The Spirit travaileth within them with groanings that cannot be uttered, as He leads them to sympathize in the deep schemes and purposes of the Almighty.

They will enjoy a delightful freedom from the weary chains of moods, of fears for the future, and anxiety for the present. They will live in the warm zone of the love of God, and be anointed with the oil of joy. The garment of heaviness will be exchanged for that of praise. The traces of worry and fretting care will disappear from their countenance, and the peace of God will sentinel their heart and mind. They shall delight themselves in the Almighty and lift up their faces to God, and all things become new. Beholding and reflecting the glory of Jesus, they will be changed into the same image. Weights will be abandoned and besetting sins will be conquered. There will be a growing tenderness and sweetness, with new strength and courage. Forgetting things behind, they will press on to apprehend that for which they were apprehended of Christ Jesus. The "All of self and none of Thee" will become exchanged for "None of self and all of Thee." The channels will deepen and the banks widen as such draw nearer to the eternal ocean. Then it will be said of them as of another of God's chosen saints: "That having completed forty years of his age and twenty of service, he passed away to the Lord Jesus, whom he loved with his whole heart, with his whole mind, with his whole strength, following Him most perfectly, and running after Him most swiftly, and at the last reaching Him most gloriously, who, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever!"

The Word of Christ will dwell in them richly. To them it will be as God's dictaphone; and they will read off what His Spirit has spoken throughout its sacred contents. It will be in their heart and on their lips. Containing as it does the results of those explorations of God's nature which were achieved by the saints of old, it will incite them to tread in their tracks, verifying and discovering for themselves. For them fresh light will be ever breaking forth from God's Word. To their spiritual senses it will be luminous with an inner beauty, and sweeter than honey to the taste. Those who knew Dr. Maclaren of Manchester intimately bear witness that whatever guests might be visiting his home, he would excuse himself from their company between nine and ten A. M., that he might sit quietly in his study with the English Bible on his knee, meditating on its familiar pages until they yielded their precious ore.

But above all, there will be a growing conformity to Christ. Old things will pass away, and you will learn to receive that abundance of grace which made a Luther, a Knox, a Ridley Havergal, a Spurgeon, and a Moody. The stream is flowing past your door, but you must utilize its power to drive your water-wheel. The same electricity is in the air, but you must learn to yoke it to your life. The freight-train is in the station, waiting to be unloaded; the ship is in the dock, waiting for its discharge. Take, take, of the Water of Life, freely!