

The Law and the Liberty

Dr. H. E. Jessop

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2.

Life in the Holy Ghost is strangely paradoxical. Only as we will to die do we begin to live. According as we suffer we reign. As we humble ourselves we are exalted. We become free from the old law as we yield ourselves to the new. This life in the Holy Ghost is one of perpetual yieldedness and it is a willingness to be Divinely enslaved that ensures the most glorious liberty. Consider then these two thoughts concerning the Spirit filled life:

I. THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE RECOGNIZES A GOVERNING LAW.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." What a glorious tyranny. The soul beaten and mastered by another so that the whole life comes under His sway.

The law here is not in the nature of a commandment, it is rather a spiritual principle; a mighty force which, given suitable conditions in which to work, masters and manages the soul.

1. It is a Spiritual law: "The law of the Spirit."

This is essentially an inward spiritual principle, and is to be regarded as directly contrasting itself with the law of the Mosaic economy which at most could write "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" on tables of stone. That law, to the Jew, was the most terrible thing known. It became the sentence of death, uttering its terrible curse on all who broke it, and holding the man who offended in one point as being guilty of all. Whatever might have been his other virtues, he had broken the law, and the penalty of a broken law was clearly defined. Try as he would he could not keep it, hence its function was saving but condemnatory.

By the law was the knowledge of sin! (Rom. 7:7). Should we not now be thankful to God for a spiritual principle implanted by the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the Divine promise: "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:33 with Heb. 10:15-17).

2. "It is a law of the Spirit of Life."

It is a living law; an active principle; the operation of a life-giving Spirit.

This is in contrast to another law, not Mosaic but Satanic, "The law of sin and death"—that active principle of evil which came into human nature with the Fall and has operated with deadly effect ever since. Its awful working has been known in every heart. It is that strange downward pull in spite of our best endeavor. It is that subtle agent of hell within the human breast which works the design of hell upon the human race.

How glorious a thing then is this new law which captivates the soul and makes it the bondsman of another power, giving it the upward trend.

3. It is a law operating only in those vitally related to Christ. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

For the believer, everything is "in Christ Jesus." Nothing of the Spirit's working may be secured apart from Him, He is the radius

wherein the life honors the Divine Son. All the life which the Spirit imparts is the life of the Risen Lord Jesus.

II. "THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HATH MADE ME FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH."

"The law . . . hath made me free from the law . . ." That is, the Holy Spirit having met me, and mastered my life in the depths, its inner experience has liberated me from the former power by which I was enslaved. The introduction of the new law has delivered me from the power of the old law and has brought me into a life of glorious liberty.

"Free from the law of sin and death!" Once this new law really operates—that is, when the heavenly enslavement, that bondage of love made real by the Divine life agency, really begins, the old law definitely terminates.

1. Sin is destroyed.

The Calvary victory wrought by our atoning Lord as recorded in Rom. 6:6 is now made blessedly real to the believing soul by the Holy Spirit. The sin principle within is destroyed.

2. Death is vanquished.

There is no death in a God-possessed soul—that is, as the worldling understands the word. He has "passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). If Jesus tarries, the temple of clay in which he now resides will one day fall asleep, for it will be noticed that in the New Testament wherever it is possible the word sleep is substituted for death in the case of the child of God. Meanwhile the life-law is intended to operate even to the quickening of the physical body. (Rom. 8:11).

Has God introduced the new life-law into your personality? If so, see to it that there are no hindrances as to its working. This blessed enslavement will make you gloriously free.—Heart and Life.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

"I am not so much concerned about having the church filled with people as I am having the people filled with the Spirit." The man who said this was a young and successful preacher. He had attended a meeting the day before in which the whole time had been consumed in discussing methods to get people to church. This young preacher's object was to have his people "filled with the Spirit" as in apostolic days, and he is right. The church will be filled with people when the people are filled with the Spirit of God. We are confident that too much effort is made to "draw" crowds and not enough to have people baptized with the Holy Spirit. Crowds may mean much or little, while the presence of the Holy Spirit means much.—W. Courtland Robinson.

Come Pentecost with its baptism of fire, the disciples no longer tried to cultivate a protective resemblance to the world; but stood out from it courageously and challenged strongholds of sin in the name of Christ. They had the courage, sanity, and power of Christ Himself . . . They who were formerly paralyzed by fear began to implement a world compassing evangelism and within three generations they carried the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the Roman Empire.—Joe Brice.

When Pentecost Comes

The Holy Spirit is the only revivalist. When He comes, spiritual life is always quickened. When He dominates, evangelistic activity is intense. He alone can awaken, revive, sanctify, and empower.

When the history of evangelism is studied from the eternal side, it will be found that no genuine revival, great or small, ever came to a community in which some eager soul was not first touched by the Pentecostal flame. "When He is come, He will reprove (convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

At one of the annual conferences the leader of the morning devotional hour was giving an exposition of the Scripture quoted above. Among those who listened was a scholarly, influential minister. The speaker said, "When He is come—to whom? Why, to you!" When the words "to you" were spoken, this minister dropped his face in his hands and leaned over the back of the seat in front of him. The tears ran down his cheeks and through his fingers. He said to himself, "To you—yes, to me. Why have I not seen it before? The personal Holy Ghost must come to me, then I shall convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Dare I presume to open my heart now? I do receive Him to dwell with me." Before the meeting was over the minister arose and with choking emotion exclaimed, "My Pentecost has come!" He went from the conference to his old field to see nearly a hundred souls convinced within ninety days.

"When He is come to you"—to you, pastor; to you, Sunday school teacher; to you, member of the official board; to you, father or mother—you will instantly become a storm center of a new and mighty evangelism, and all the powers of hell cannot keep back the incoming tides of saving grace!—The Epworth Herald.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPIRIT

By Dr. Samuel Chadwick

I have written and preached much on the Holy Spirit, for the knowledge of Him has been the most vital fact of my experience. I owe everything to the gift of Pentecost. . . . I came across a prophet, heard a testimony, and set out to seek I knew not what. I knew that it was a bigger thing and a deeper need than I had ever known. It came along the line of duty, and I entered in through a crisis of obedience. When it came I could not explain what had happened, but I was aware of things unspeakable and full of glory. Some results were immediate. There came into my soul a deep peace, a thrilling joy, and a new sense of power. My mind was quickened. I felt that I had received a new faculty of understanding. Every power was alert. Either illumination took the place of logic, or reason became intuitive. My bodily powers also were quickened. There was a new sense of spring and vitality, a new power of endurance, and a strong man's exhilaration in big things. Things began to happen. What we had failed to do by strenuous endeavour came to pass without labour. It was as when the Lord Jesus stepped into the boat that with all their rowing had made no progress, immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. It was gloriously wonderful.