

The Coming Great Revival - Part 2

by Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray emphasizes the necessity of the Holy Spirit's power for effective witness and service in the Christian life.

Scripture: Luke 24:49, Acts 1:5, Acts 1:8, Romans 7:6, Romans 8:26, Galatians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Witness"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, highlighting the necessity of being filled with the Spirit to effectively witness for Christ. He explains that the Spirit empowers believers to pray, intercede, and live in newness, enabling them to fulfill their divine calling. Murray calls for the Church to recognize the importance of the Spirit's presence and to seek a deeper relationship with Him, which is essential for revival and effective ministry. He encourages believers to submit to the Spirit's leading, allowing Him to work through their weaknesses to glorify God. Ultimately, the sermon is a call to embrace the fullness of the Spirit for a vibrant Christian life and impactful witness.

Transcript

compiled by greg gordon

Contents

4. The Spirit of Power
5. The Outpouring of the Spirit
6. The Newness of the Spirit
7. The Spirit of Prayer
8. Walking by the Spirit
9. Filled With the Spirit

Appendix I: Various Quotes and Maxims

Chapter four

The Spirit of Power

"If the spiritual life be healthy, under the full power of the Holy Spirit, praying without ceasing will be natural." - Andrew Murray

Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses.'--Acts 1: 5, 8.

'Tarry ye in the city, till ye be clothed with power from on high.'--LUKE 24: 49.

The disciples had heard from John of the Baptism of the Spirit. Jesus had spoken to them of the Father's giving of the Spirit to those that ask Him, and of the Spirit of their Father speaking in them. And on the last night he had spoken of the Spirit dwelling in them, witnessing with them, having come to them to convince the world. All these thoughts of what this coming of the Holy Spirit would be were thus connected in their mind with the work they would have to do and the power for it. When our Lord gathered up all His teaching in the promise, 'Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and shall be my witnesses,' it must have been to them the simple summing up of what they looked for: a new Divine power for the new Divine work of being the witnesses of a Crucified and Risen Jesus.

This was in perfect harmony with all they had seen in Holy Scripture of the Spirit's work. In the days before the flood He had been striving with men. In the ministry of Moses He fitted him, and the seventy who received of his Spirit, for the work of ruling and guiding Israel, and gave wisdom to those who built God's house. In the days of the Judges He gave the power to fight and conquer the enemies. In the times of Kings and Prophets He gave boldness to testify against sin, and power to proclaim a coming redemption. Every mention of the Spirit in the Old Testament is connected with the honour and Kingdom of God, and the fitting for service in it. In the great prophecy of the Messiah, with which the Son of God opened His ministry at Nazareth, His being anointed with the Spirit had the one object of bringing deliverance to the captives and gladness to the mourners. To the mind of the disciples, as students of the Old Testament and followers of Christ Jesus, the promise of the Spirit could have but one meaning--fitness for the great work they had to do for their Lord when He ascended the Throne. All that the Spirit would be to them personally in His work of comforting and teaching, sanctifying the soul and glorifying Jesus, were but as a means to an end--their induement with power for the service of their departed Lord.

Witness for Christ Would God that the Church of Christ understood this in our days ! All prayer for the guiding and gladdening influence of the Holy Spirit in the children of God ought to have this as its aim: fitness to witness for Christ and do effective service in conquering the world for Him. Waste of power is always cause of regret to those who witness it. The economy of power is one of the great moving springs in all organization and industry. The Spirit is the great power of God; the Holy Spirit the great power of God's Redemption, as it comes down from the Throne of Him to whom all power has been given.

And can we imagine that God would waste this power on those who seek it only for their own sake, with the desire of being beautifully holy, or wise, or good? Truly no. The Holy Spirit is the power from on high for carrying on the work for which Jesus sacrificed His Throne and His Life. The essential condition for receiving that power is that, we be found ready and fit for doing the work the Spirit has come to accomplish. 'My Witnesses:' these two words do indeed contain, in Divine and inexhaustible wealth of meaning, the most perfect description of the Spirit's Work and our work; the work for which nothing less than His Divine power is needed, the work for which our weakness is just fitted.

There is nothing so effective as an honest witness. The learned eloquence of an advocate must give way to it. There is nothing so simple: just telling what we have seen and heard, or, perhaps in silence, witnessing to what has been done in us. It was the great work of Jesus Himself: 'To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.' And yet, simple and easy as it appears, to make us witnesses of Jesus is what the Almighty power of the Spirit is needed for, and what He was sent to work.

If we are, in the power of the eternal life, the power of the world to come, in heavenly power, to witness of Jesus as He reigns in heaven, we need nothing less than the Divine power of the heavenly life to animate the testimony of our lips and life. The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses because He Himself is a witness. 'He shall witness of me,' Jesus said. When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached that Christ, when He had ascended into heaven, had received from 'the Father the Holy Ghost, and had poured Him forth, he spake of what he knew: the Holy Ghost witnessed to him, and in him, of the glory of his exalted Lord.

It was this witness of the Spirit to the reality of Christ's power and presence that made him so bold and strong to speak before the council: 'God did exalt Him to be a Prince and a Saviour; and we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost.' It is as the Holy Spirit becomes to us, in a Divine life and power, the witness to what Jesus is at the present moment in His glory, that our witness will be in His power. We may know all that the Gospels record and all that Scripture further teaches of the person and work of Jesus; we may even speak from past experience of what we once knew of the power of Jesus : this is not the witness of power that is promised here, and that will have effect in the world.

It is the Presence of the Spirit at the present moment, witnessing to the Presence of the personal Jesus, that gives our witness that breath of life from heaven that makes it mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds. You can truly witness to just as much of Jesus as the Holy Spirit is witnessing to you in life and truth.

Baptism of Power The baptism of power, the indument of power, is sometimes spoken of and sought after as a special gift. If Paul asked very distinctly for the Ephesians who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, that the Father would still give them 'the Spirit of wisdom' (Eph. 1:17), we cannot be far wrong in praying as definitely for 'the Spirit of power.' He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, and will give not according to the correctness of our words, but the Spiritbreathed desire of our hearts.

Or let us take that other prayer of Paul (Eph.3:16), and plead that ' He would grant us to be mightily strengthened by His Spirit.' However we formulate our prayer, one thing is certain: it is in unceasing prayer, it is in bowing our knees, it is in waiting on God, that from Himself will come what we ask, be it the Spirit of Power or the Power of the Spirit. The Spirit is never anything separate from God; in all His going out and working He still ever is the inmost self of God; it is God Himself who, according to the riches of His glory, is mighty to do above what we ask or think who will in Christ give us to be clothed with the power of the Spirit.

In seeking for this Power of the Spirit, let us note the mode of His working. There is one mistake we must specially beware of. It is that of expecting always to feel the power when it works. Scripture links power and weakness in a wonderful way, not as succeeding each other, but as existing together. 'I was with you in weakness ;my preaching was in power.' 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' (See 1 Cor.2: 3-5 ; 2 Cor. 4:7, 16, 6: 10, 7:10, 13: 3, 4.) The power is the power of God, given to faith; and faith grows strong in the

dark.

The Holy Spirit hides Himself in the weak things that God hath chosen, that flesh may not glory in His presence. Spiritual power can only be known by the Spirit of faith. The more distinctly we feel and confess our weakness and believe in the power dwelling within us, ready to work as need arises, the more confidently may we expect its Divine operation even when nothing is felt. Christians lose much not only by not waiting for the power, but by waiting in the wrong way. Seek to combine the faithful and ready obedience to every call of duty, however little thy power appears to be, with a deep, dependent waiting and expectation of Power from on high.

'Let thy intervals of repose and communion be the exercise of prayer and faith in the Power of God dwelling in thee, and waiting to work through thee; thy time exertion and effort will bring the 'proof that by faith out of weakness we are made strong. Let us also see and make no mistake about the condition of the working of this Divine Power. He that would command nature must first, and most absolutely obey her. It does not need much grace to long and ask for power, even the power of the Spirit.

Who would not be glad to have power? Man pray earnestly for power in or with their work, and receive it not, because they do not accept the only posture in which the Power can work. We want to get possession of the Power and use it. God wants the Power to get possession of us, and use us. If we give up ourselves to the Power to rule in us, the Power will give itself to us, to rule through us. Unconditional submission and obedience to the Power in our inner life is the one condition of our being clothed with it.

God gives the Spirit to the obedient. 'Power belongeth unto God' and remains His for ever. If thou wouldst have His power work in thee, bow very low in reverence before the Holy Presence that dwelleth in thee, that asks thy surrender to His guidance even in the least things. Walk very humbly in holy fear, lest in anything thou shouldst fail in knowing or doing His holy will. Live as one given up to a Power that has the entire mastery over thee, that has complete possession of thy inmost being.

Let the Spirit and His Power have possession of thee: thou shalt know that His power worketh in thee. Let us be clear, too, as to the object of this power, the work it is to do. Men are very careful to economize power, and to gather it there where it can do its work most effectually. God does not give this power for our own enjoyment,--as little to save us from trouble and effort. He gives it for one purpose, to glorify His Son. Those who in their weakness are faithful to this one object, who in obedience and testimony prove to God that they are ready at any cost to glorify God,--they will receive the power from on high.

God seeks for men and women whom He can thus clothe with power. The Church is looking round for them on every side, wondering at the feebleness of so much of its ministry and worship. The world waits for it, to be convinced that God is indeed in the midst of His people. The perishing millions are crying for deliverance, and the Power of God is waiting to work it. Let us not be content with the prayer for God to visit and to bless them, or with the effort to do the best we can for them.

Let us give up ourselves, each individual believer, wholly and undividedly, to live as witnesses for Jesus. Let us plead with God to show His people what it means that they are Christ's representatives just as He was the Father's. Let us live in the faith that the Spirit of power is within us, and that the Father will, as we wait on Him, fill us with the power of the Spirit. Most Blessed Father! we thank Thee for the wonderful provision Thou hast made for Thy children,--that out of weakness they should be made strong, and that just in their feebleness Thy Might Power should be glorified .

We thank Thee for the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Power, coming down to make Jesus, to whom all Power is given, present with His Church, and to make His disciples the witnesses of that Presence. I ask Thee, O my Father, to teach me that I have the power, as I have the Living Jesus. May I not look for it to come with observation. May I consent that it shall ever be a Divine strength in human weakness, so that the glory may be Thine alone. May I learn to receive it in a faith that allows the Mighty Lord Jesus to hold the power and do the work in the midst of weakness.

And may, by the Holy Spirit, He be so present with me, that my witness may be of Him alone. O my Father! I desire to submit my whole being to this Holy Power. I would bow before its rule every day and all the day. I would be its servant, and humble myself to do its meanest command. Father I let the Power rule in me, that I may be made meet for it to use. And may my one object in life be that Thy Blessed Son may receive the honour and the glory. Amen.

Chapter five

The Outpouring of the Spirit

"May Thy wisdom flow into me and out to the world around me, creating in me a vessel for Thy glory." - A.W. Tozer

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak, as the Spirit gave them utterance.'-Acts 1:1-4. In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ culminates. The adorable mystery of the Incarnation in Bethlehem, the great Redemption accomplished on Calvary, the revelation of Christ as the Son of God in the power of the Eternal Life by the Resurrection, His entrance into glory in the Ascension--these are all preliminary stages; their goal and their crown was the coming down of the Holy Spirit.

As Pentecost is the last, it is the greatest of the Christian feasts ; in it the others find their realization and their fulfilment. It is because the Church has hardly acknowledged this, and has not seen that the glory of Pentecost is the highest glory of the Father and the Son, that the Holy Spirit has not yet been able to reveal and glorify the Son in her as He fain would. Let us see if we can realize what Pentecost means. God made man in His own image, and for His likeness, with the distinct object that he should become like Himself.

Man was to be a temple for God to dwell in ; he was to become the home in which God could rest. The closest and most intimate union, the indwelling of Love in love : this was what the Holy One longed for, and looked forward to. What was very feebly set forth in type in the temple in Israel became a Divine reality in Jesus of Nazareth: God had found a man in whom He could rest, whose whole being was opened to the rule of His will and the fellowship of His love. In Him there was a human nature, possessed by the Divine Spirit; and such God would have had all men to be.

And such all would be, who accepted of this Jesus and His Spirit as their life. His death was to remove the curse and power of sin, and make it possible for them to receive His Spirit. His resurrection was the entrance of human nature, free from all the weakness of the flesh, into the life of Deity, the Divine Spirit-life. His ascension was admittance as Man into the very glory of God; the participation by human nature of perfect fellowship with God in glory in the unity of the Spirit.

And yet, with all this, the work was not yet complete. Something, the chief thing, was still wanting. How could the Father dwell in men even as He had dwelt in Christ ? This was the great question to which Pentecost gives the answer. Out of the depths of Godhead, the Holy Spirit is sent forth in a new character and a new power, such as He never had before. In creation and nature He came forth from God as the Spirit of Life. In the creation of man specially He acted as the power in which his god-likeness was grounded, and which, even after his fall, still testified for God.

In Israel He appeared as the Spirit of the theocracy, distinctly inspiring and fitting certain men for their work. In Jesus Christ He came as the Spirit of the Father, given to Him without measure, and abiding in Him. All these are manifestations, in different degrees, of one and the same Spirit. But now there comes the last, the long-promised, an entirely new manifestation of the Divine Spirit. The Spirit that has dwelt in Jesus Christ, and, in His life of obedience, has taken up His human spirit into perfect fellowship and unity with Himself, is now the Spirit of the exalted God-man.

As the Man Christ Jesus enters the glory of God and the full fellowship of that Spirit-life in which God dwells, He receives from the Father the right to send forth this Spirit into His disciples, yea, in the Spirit to descend Himself, and dwell in them. In a new power, which hitherto had not been possible, because Jesus had not been crucified or glorified, as the very Spirit of the crucified and now glorified Jesus, the Spirit comes. The work of the Son, the longing of the Father, receives its fulfilment.

Man's heart is now indeed the home of his God. Said I not truly that Pentecost is the greatest of the Church's feasts ? The mystery of Bethlehem is indeed incomprehensible and glorious, but when once I believe it, there is nothing that does not appear possible and becoming. That a pure, holy body should be formed for the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that in that body the Spirit should dwell, is indeed a miracle of Divine Power. But that the same Spirit should now come and dwell in the bodies of sinful men, that in them too the Father should take up His abode, this is a mystery of grace that passeth all understanding.

But this, glory be to God! is the blessing Pentecost brings and secures. The entrance of the Son of God into our flesh in Bethlehem, His entrance into the curse and death of sin as our Surety, His entrance in human nature as First-begotten from the dead into the Power of the Eternal Life, His entrance into the very Glory of the Father--these were but the preparatory steps: here is the consummation for which all the rest was accomplished. The word now begins to be fulfilled: 'Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them.'

It is only in the light of all that preceded Pentecost, of all the mighty sacrifice which God thought not too great if He might dwell with sinful men, that the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit can be understood. It is the earthly reflection of Christ's exaltation in heaven; the participation He gives to His friends of the glory He now has with the Father. To be apprehended aright, it needs a spiritual vision; in the story that is so simply told the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom are unfolded, and the title-deeds given to the Church of her holy heritage until her Lord's return. What the Spirit is to be to believers and the Church, to the ministers of the word and their work, and to the unbelieving world, are the three chief thoughts.

Christ's Promise Christ had promised to His disciples that in the Comforter He Himself would again come to them. During his life on earth, His personal manifested Presence, as revealing the unseen Father, was the Father's great gift to men, was the one thing the disciples wished and needed. This was to be their portion now in greater power than before. Christ had entered the glory with this very purpose, that now, in

a Divine way, 'He might fill all things,' He might specially fill the members of His body with Himself and His glory-life.

When the Holy Spirit came down, He brought as a personal Life within them what had previously only been a Life near them, but yet outside their own. The very Spirit of God's own Son, as He had lived and loved, had obeyed and died, had been raised and glorified by Almighty power, was now to become their personal life. The wondrous transaction that had taken place in heaven in the placing of their Friend and Lord on the throne of heaven, this the Holy Spirit came to be the witness of, yea, to communicate and maintain it within them as a heavenly reality.

It is indeed no wonder that, as the Holy Ghost comes down from the Father through the glorified Son, their whole nature is filled to overflowing with the joy and power of heaven, with the presence of Jesus, and their lips overflow with the praise of the wonderful works of God. Such was the birth of the Church of Christ; such must be its growth and strength. The first and essential element of the true succession of the Pentecostal Church is a membership baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, every heart filled with: the experience of the Presence of the glorified Lord, every tongue and life witnessing to the wonderful work God had done, in raising Jesus to the glory of His Throne, and then filling His disciples with that glory too.

It is not so much the Baptism of Power for our preachers we must seek; it is that every individual member of Christ's body may know, and possess, and witness to, the Presence of an indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is this will draw the attention of the world, and compel the confession to the Power of Jesus. It was amid the interest and the questionings which the sight of this joyous praising company of believers awakened in the multitude that Peter stood up to preach.

The story of Pentecost teaches us the true position of the ministry and the secret of its power. A church full of the, Holy Ghost is a power of God to awaken the careless, and attract all honest, earnest hearts. It is to such an audience, roused by the testimony of believers, that the preaching will come with power. It is out of such a church of men and women full of the Holy Ghost that Spirit-led preachers will rise up, bold and free, to point to every believer as a living witness to the truth of their preaching and the Power of their Lord.

Peter's preaching is a most remarkable lesson of what all Holy Ghost preaching will be. He preaches Christ from the Scriptures. In contrast with the thoughts of man, who had rejected Christ, He sets forth the thoughts of God, who had sent Christ, who delighted in Him, and had now exalted Him at His right hand. All preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit will be thus. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of His personal life, taking possession of our personality, and witnessing with our spirit to what Christ has won for us.

The Spirit has come for the very purpose of continuing the work Christ had begun on earth, of making men partakers of His redemption and His life. It could not be otherwise; the Spirit always witnesses to Christ. He did so in the Scriptures; He does so in the believer; the believer's testimony will ever be according to Scripture. The Spirit in Christ, the Spirit in Scripture, the Spirit in the Church; as long as this threefold cord is kept intertwined, it cannot be broken.

Power of Jesus The effect of this preaching was marvellous, but not more marvellous than might be expected. The Presence and Power of Jesus are such a reality in the company of disciples; the Power from on High, from the Throne, so fills Peter; the sight and experience he has of Christ, as exalted at the right hand of God, is such a spiritual reality; that power goes out from him, and as his preaching reaches

its application: 'Know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified,' thousands bow in brokenness of spirit, ready -to acknowledge the Crucified One as their Lord.

The Spirit has come to the disciples, and through them convinces the world of unbelief. The penitent inquirers listen to the command to repent and believe, and they, too, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The greater works Christ had promised to do through the disciples He has done. In one moment lifelong prejudice, and even bitter hatred, give way to surrender, and love, and adoration; from the glorified Lord power has filled his body, and from its power hath gone forth to conquer and to save.

Pentecost is the glorious sunrise of 'that day,' the first of 'those days' of which the prophets and our Lord had so often spoken, the promise and the pledge of what the history of the Church was meant to be. It is universally admitted that the Church has but ill fulfilled her destiny, that even now, after eighteen centuries, she has not risen to the height of her glorious privilege. Even when she strives to accept her calling, to witness for her Lord unto the ends of the earth, she does it too little in the faith of the Pentecostal Spirit, and the possession of His Mighty Power.

Instead of regarding Pentecost as sunrise, she too often speaks and acts as if it had been noonday, from which the light must needs begin to wane. Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him. The promise is waiting; the Spirit is now in all His fulness. Our capacity of reception needs enlargement. It is at the footstool of the throne, while believers continue with one accord in praise and love and prayer, while delay only intensifies the spirit of waiting and expectation, while faith holds fast the promise, and gazes up on the exalted.

Lord, in the confidence that He will make Himself known in power in the midst of His people,--it is at the footstool of the throne that Pentecost comes. Jesus Christ is still Lord of all, crowned with power and glory. His longing to reveal His presence in His disciples, and to make them share the glory life in which He dwells, is as fresh and full as when He first ascended the throne. Let us take our place at the footstool. Let us yield ourselves in strong, expectant faith, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and to testify for Jesus.

Let the indwelling Christ be our life, and our strength, and our testimony. Out of such a Church Spirit-filled preachers will rise, and the power go forth that will make Christ's enemies bow at His feet. O Lord God! we worship before the Throne on which the Son is seated with Thee, crowned with glory and honour. We thank and bless Thee that it is for us, the children of men, that Thou hast done this, and that He in whom Thou delightest belongs as much to earth as to heaven, to us as to Thee. O God! we adore Thy love: we praise Thy Holy Name.

We beseech Thee, O our Father, to reveal to Thy Church how our Blessed Head counts us as His own body, sharing with Him in His life, His power, and His glory, and how the Holy Spirit, is the bearer of that life and power and glory, is waiting to reveal it within us. Oh, that Thy people might awake to know what the Holy Spirit means, as the real Presence within them of the glorified Lord, and as the clothing with Power from on high for their work on earth. Oh that all Thy people might learn to gaze on their exalted King until their whole being were opened up for His reception, and His Spirit fill them to their, utmost capacity!

Our Father, we plead with Thee, in the name of Jesus, revive Thy Church. Make every believer to be indeed a temple full of the Holy Ghost: Make every church, in its believing members, a consecrated company ever testifying of a present Christ, ever waiting for the fulness of the power from on high. Make

every preacher of the word a minister of the Spirit. And let throughout the earth Pentecost be the sign that Jesus reigns, that His redeemed are His body, that His Spirit works, and that every knee shall bow to Him. Amen.

Chapter six

The Newness of the Spirit

"Here is the path to the higher life: down, lower down! Just as water always seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds men abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless." - Andrew Murray

But now we have been discharged from the law, having died, to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.'-Rom. 7:6.

If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.'-Gal. 5:18

THE work of the indwelling Spirit is to glorify Christ and reveal Him within us. Corresponding to Christ's threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, we find that the work of the Indwelling Spirit in the believer is set before us in three aspects, as Enlightening, Sanctifying, and Strengthening. 'Of the Enlightening it is that Christ specially speaks in His farewell discourse, when He promises Him as the Spirit of Truth, who will bear witness of Him, will guide into all Truth, will take of Christ's and declare it unto us. In the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians His work as Sanctifying is especially prominent: this was what was needed in Churches just brought out of the depths of heathenism. In the Epistles to the Corinthians, where wisdom was so sought and prized, the two aspects are combined; they are taught that the Spirit can only enlighten as He sanctifies (1 Cor.2 , 3:1-3, 16 ; 2 Cor. 3). In the Acts of the Apostles, as we might expect, His Strengthening for work is in the foreground; as the promised Spirit of Power He fits for a bold and blessed testimony in the midst of persecution and difficulty.

The Righteous Will Live by Faith In the Epistle to the Church at Rome, the capital of the world, Paul was called of God to give a full and systematic exposition of His gospel and the scheme of redemption. In this the work of the Holy Spirit must needs have an important place. In giving his text or theme (Rom 1: 17), 'The righteous shall live by faith,' he paves the way for what he was to expound, that through Faith both Righteousness and Life would come. In the first part of his argument, to v. 11, he teaches what the Righteousness of faith is.

He then proceeds (v. 12-21) to prove how this Righteousness, is rooted in our living connection with the second Adam, and in a justification of Life. In the individual (6: 1-13) this Life comes through the believing acceptance of Christ's death to sin and His life to God as ours, and the willing surrender (6: 14-23) to be servants of God and of righteousness. Proceeding to show that in Christ we are not only dead to sin, but to the law too as the strength of sin, he comes naturally to the new law which His gospel brings to take the place of the old, the law of the Spirit Of life in Christ Jesus.

We all know how an impression is heightened by the force of contrast. Just as the apostle had contrasted (6: 13-23) the service of sin and of righteousness, so he here (7: 4) contrasts, to bring out fully what the power and work of the Spirit is, the service in the oldness of the letter, in bondage to the law, with the service in newness of the Spirit, in the liberty and power which Jesus through the Spirit gives. In the following passage, Rom. vii. 14-25, and Rom. 8:1-16, we have the contrast worked out; it is in the light of

that contrast alone that the two states can be rightly understood.

Each state has its key-word, indicating the character of the life it describes. In Rom. 7 we have the word Law twenty times, and the word Spirit only once. In Rom. 8, on the contrary, we find in its first sixteen verses the word Spirit sixteen times. The contrast is between the Christian life in its two possible states, in the law and in the Spirit. Paul had very boldly said, not only, 'You are dead to sin and made free from sin that you might become servants to righteousness and to God (Rom.6), but also, 'We were made dead to the law, so that, having died to that wherein we were holden, we serve in newness of spirit, and not in, oldness of the letter.'

We have here, then, a double advance, on the teaching of Rom. 6. There it was the death to sin and freedom from it, here it is death to the law and freedom from it. There it was newness of life' (Rom. 5: 4), as an objective reality secured to us in Christ; here it is ' newness of spirit' (Rom.7: 6), as a subjective experience made ours by the indwelling of the Spirit. He that would fully know and enjoy the life in the Spirit must know what life in the law is, and how complete the freedom from it with which he is made free by the Spirit.

In the description Paul gives of the life of a believer, who is still held in bondage of the law, and seeks to fulfil it, there are three expressions in which the characteristic marks of that state are summed up. The first is, the word flesh. ' I am carnal (fleshly), sold under sin. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing' (14, 18). If we want to understand the word carnal, we must refer to Paul's exposition of it in 1 Cor. 3: 1-3. He uses it there of Christians, who, though regenerate, have not yielded themselves to the Spirit entirely, so as to become spiritual.'

They have the Spirit, but allow the flesh to prevail. And so there is a difference between Christians, as they bear their name, carnal or spiritual, from the element that is strongest in them. As long as they have the Spirit, but, owing to whatever cause, do not accept fully His mighty deliverance, and so strive in their own strength, they do not and cannot become spiritual. St. Paul here describes the regenerate man, as he is in himself. He lives by the Spirit, but, according to Gal.5: 25, does not walk by the Spirit.

He has the new spirit within him, according to Ezek.36:26, but he has not intelligently and practically accepted God's own Spirit to dwell and rule within that spirit, as the life of His life. He is still carnal. The second expression we find in ver. 18 'To will is present with me, but how to do that which is good, is not.' In every possible variety of expression Paul (7: 15-2 1) attempts to make clear the painful state of utter impotence in which the law, the effort to fulfil it, leaves a man : ' The good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise.', Willing, but not doing such is the service of God in the oldness of the letter, in the life before Pentecost (see Matt. 26: 41).

The renewed spirit of the man has accepted and consented to the will of God ; but the secret of power to do, the Spirit of God, as indwelling, is not yet known. In those, on the contrary, who know what the life in the Spirit is, God works both to will and to do ; the Christian testifies, ' I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.' But this is only possible through faith and the Holy Spirit. As long as the believer has not consciously been made free from the law with its, 'He that doeth these things shall live through them,' continual failure will attend his efforts to do the will of God. He may even delight in the law of God after the inward man, but the power is wanting.

The Living Jesus It is only when he submits to the law of faith, 'He that liveth shall do these things,' because he knows that he has been made free from the law, that he may be joined to another, to the living

Jesus, working in him through His Holy Spirit, that he will indeed bring forth fruit unto God (see Rom. 7: 4). The third expression we must note is in verse 23 'I see a different law in my members, bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.'

This word, captivity, as that other one, sold under sin, suggests the idea of slaves sold into bondage, without the liberty, or the power to do as they will. They point back to what he had said in the commencement of the chapter, that we have been made free from the law; here is evidently one who does not yet know that liberty. And they point forward to what he is to say in chap. 8: 2: 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

The freedom with which we have been made free in Christ, as offered to our faith, cannot be fully accepted or experienced as long as there is ought of a legal spirit. It is only by the Spirit of Christ within us that the full liberation is effected. As in the oldness of the letter, so in the newness of the Spirit, a twofold relation exists: the objective or external, the subjective or personal. There is the law over me, and outside of me, and there is the law of sin in my members, deriving its strength from the objective one. Just so, in being made free from the law, there is the objective liberty in Christ offered to -my faith, and there is the subjective personal possession of that liberty, in its fulness and power, to be had alone through the Spirit dwelling and ruling in my members, even as' the law of sin had done.

This alone can change the plaint of the captive: 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from -the bondage of this death?' into the song of the ransomed: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' 'The law of the Spirit made me free.' And how now have we to regard the two states thus set before us in Rom. 7: 14-23 and via. 1-16? Are they interchangeable, or successive, or simultaneous? Many have thought that they are a description of the varying experience of the believer's life.

As often as, by the grace of God, he is able to do what is good, and to live well -pleasing to God, he experiences the grace of chap. 8, while the consciousness of sin or shortcoming plunges him I again into the wretchedness of chap. 7. Though now the one and then the other experience may be more marked, each day brings the experience of both. Others have felt that this is is not the life of a believer as God would have it , and as the provision of God's grace has placed it within our reach.

And as they saw that a life in the freedom with which, Christ makes free, when the Holy Spirit dwells within us, is within our reach, and as they entered on it, it was to them indeed as if now, for ever they had left the experience of Rom. vii far behind, and they cannot but look upon it as Israel's wilderness life, a life never more to be returned to. And there are many who can testify what light and blessing has come to them as they saw what the blessed transition was from the bondage of the law to the liberty of the Spirit.

And yet, however large the measure of truth in this view, it does not fully satisfy. The believer feels that there is not a day that he gets beyond the words, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' Even when kept most joyously in the will of God, and strengthened not only to will but also to do, he knows that it is not he, but the grace of God: 'in me dwelleth no good.' And so the believer comes to see that, not the two experiences, but the two states are simultaneous, and, that even when his experience is most fully that of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making him free, he still bears about with him the body of sin and death.'

The making free of the Spirit, and the deliverance from the power of sin, and the song of thanks to God is the continuous experience of' the power of the endless life as maintained by the Spirit of Christ. As I am led of the Spirit, I am not under the law. Its spirit of bondage, its weakness through the flesh, and the

sense of condemnation and wretchedness it works, are cast out by the liberty of the Spirit. If there is one lesson the believer needs to learn, who would enjoy the full indwelling of the Spirit, it is the one taught in this passage with such force: that the law, the flesh, that self-effort are all utterly impotent in enabling us to serve God.

It is the Spirit within, taking the place of the law without, that leads us into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' Beloved Lord Jesus! I humbly ask Thee to make clear to me the blessed secret of the life of the Spirit. Teach me what it is that we are become dead to the law, so that our service of God is no longer in the oldness of the letter. And what that we are married to Another, even to Thyself, the Risen One, through whom we bring forth fruit unto God, serving in the newness of the Spirit.

Blessed Lord! with deep shame do I confess the sin of my nature, that 'in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' that 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' I do bless Thee, that in answer to the cry, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Thou hast taught me to answer, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.' Blessed Master ! teach me now to serve Thee in the newness and the liberty, the ever-fresh gladness of the Spirit of life.

Teach me to yield myself in large and wholehearted faith to that Holy Spirit, that my life may indeed be in the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the power of an indwelling Saviour working in me both to will and to do, even as the Father did work in Him. Amen.

Chapter seven

The Spirit of Prayer

"Let us thank God heartily as often as we pray that we have His Spirit in us to teach us to pray." - Andrew Murray

In like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity - for we know not how to pray as we ought but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.'Rom. 8:26, 27.

Of the offices of the Holy Spirit, one that leads us most deeply into the understanding of His place in the Divine economy of grace, and into the mystery of the Holy Trinity, is the work He does as the Spirit of prayer. We have the Father to whom we pray, and who hears prayer. We have the Son through whom we pray, and through whom, in union with whom, we receive and really appropriate the answer. And we have the Holy Spirit in whom we pray, who prays in us according to the will of God, with such deeply hidden, unutterable sighings, that God has to search the hearts to know what is the mind of the Spirit. Just as wonderful and real as is the Divine work of God on the Throne, graciously hearing, and, by his,-mighty power, effectually answering prayer; just as Divine as is the work of the Son interceding and securing and transmitting the answer from above, is the work of the Holy Spirit in us in the prayer which waits and obtains the answer. The intercession within is as Divine as the intercession above. Let us try and understand why this should be so, and what it teaches.

In the creation of the world we see how it was the work of the Spirit to put Himself into contact with the dark and lifeless matter of chaos, and by His quickening energy to impart to it the power of life and fruitfulness. It was only after it had been thus vitalized by Him, that the Word of God gave it form, and called forth all the different types of life and beauty we now see. So, too, again in the creation of man it was the Spirit that was breathed into the body that had been formed from the ground, and that thus united itself with what would otherwise be dead matter. Even so, in the person of Jesus it is the Spirit through whose work a body was prepared for Him, through whom His body again was quickened from the grave, as it is through Him that our bodies are the temples of God, and the very members of our body the members of Christ. We think of the Spirit in connection with the spiritual nature of the Divine Being, far removed from the grossness and feebleness of matter; we forget that it is the very work of the Spirit specially to unite Himself with what is material, to lift it up into Its own Spirit nature, and so to develop what will be the highest type of perfection, a spiritual body.

The Spirit's Work This view of the Spirit's work is essential to the understanding of the place He takes in the Divine work of redemption. In each part of that work there is a special place assigned to each of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. In the Father we have the unseen God, the Author of all. In the Son God revealed, made manifest, and brought nigh, He is the Form of God. In the Spirit of God we have the Indwelling God- the Power of God dwelling in human body and working in it what the Father and the Son have for us.

The weakness and humiliation, yea, the very grossness of the flesh is the sphere for the operation of the Holy Spirit. Not only in the individual, but in the Church as a whole, what the Father has purposed, and the Son has procured, can be appropriated and take effect in the members of Christ who are still here in the flesh, only through the continual intervention and active operation of the Holy Spirit. This is specially true of intercessory prayer. The coming of the kingdom of God, the increase of grace and knowledge and holiness in believers, their growing devotion to God's work and power for that work, the effectual working of God's power on the unconverted through the means of grace,--all this waits to come to us from God through Christ.

But it cannot come except as it is looked for and desired, asked and expected, believed and hoped for. And this is now the wonderful position the Holy Ghost occupies, that to Him has been assigned the task of preparing the body of Christ to reach out and receive and hold fast what has been provided in the fulness of Christ the Head. For the communication of the Father's love and blessing, the Son and the Spirit must both work. The Son receives from the Father, reveals and brings nigh, as it were, descends from above; the Spirit from within wakens the soul to come out and meet its Lord.

As indispensable as the unceasing intercession of Christ above, asking and receiving from the Father, is the unceasing intercession of the Spirit within, asking and accepting from the Son what the Father gives. Very wonderful is the light that is cast upon this holy mystery by the words of our text. In the life of faith and prayer there are operations of the Spirit in which the word of God is made clear to our understanding, and our faith knows to express what it needs and asks.

But there are also operations of the Spirit, deeper down than thoughts or feelings, where He works desires and yearnings in our spirit, in the secret springs of life and being, which God only can discover and understand. Of this nature is the real thirst for God Himself, the Living God, the longing to know the love 'that passeth knowledge,' and to be 'filled with all the fullness of God,' the hope in 'Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think,' even 'what hath not entered the heart of man to

conceive.'

When these aspirations indeed take possession of us, we begin to pray for what cannot be expressed, and our only comfort is then that the Spirit prays with His unutterable yearnings in a region and a language which the Heart Searcher alone knows and understands. To the Corinthians Paul says, 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.' Under the influence of the moving of the Holy Spirit and His miraculous gifts, their danger was to neglect the understanding.

Our danger in these latter days is in the opposite direction: to pray with the understanding is easy and universal. We need to be reminded that, with the prayer with the understanding, there must come the prayer with the Spirit, the 'praying in the Holy Spirit' (Jude ver.20; Ephesians 6:18). We need to give its due place to each of the twofold operations of the Spirit. God's Word must dwell in us richly; our faith must seek to hold it clearly and intelligently, and to plead it in prayer.

To have the words of Christ abiding in us, filling life and conduct, is one of the secrets of acceptable prayer. And yet we must always remember that in the inner sanctuary of our being, in the region of the unutterable and inconceivable (1 Cor.2:6), the Spirit prays for us what we do not know and cannot express. As we grow in the apprehension of the divinity of that Holy Spirit who dwells within, and the reality of His breathing within us, we shall recognise how infinitely beyond the conceptions of our mind must be that Divine hunger with which He draws us heavenward.

We shall feel the need of cultivating not only the activity of faith, which seeks to grasp and obey God's word, and from that to learn to pray, but its deep passivity too. As we pray we shall remember how infinitely above our conception is God and the spirit-world into which by prayer we enter. Let us believe and rejoice that where heart and flesh fail, there God is the strength of our heart, there His Holy Spirit within us in the inmost sanctuary of our spirit, within the veil, does His unceasing work of intercession, and prays according to God within us. As we pray, let us at times worship in holy stillness, and yield ourselves to that Blessed Paraclete, who alone, who truly is, the Spirit of Supplication.'

Praying for all Believers 'Because He maketh intercession for the saints.' Why does the apostle not say for us ; as he had said, 'We know not how to pray as we ought'? The expression, the saints, is a favourite one with Paul, where he thinks of the Church, either in one country or throughout the world. It is the special work of the Spirit, as dwelling in every member, to make the body realize its unity. As selfishness disappears, and the believer becomes more truly spiritual-minded, and he feels himself more identified with the body as a whole, he sees how its health and prosperity will be his own, and he learns what it is to 'pray at all seasons in the Spirit, watching thereunto in all perseverance for all saints.'

It is as we give up ourselves to this work, in a large heartedness which takes in all the Church of God, that the Spirit will have free scope and will delight to do His work of intercession for the saints in us. It is specially in intercessory prayer that we may count upon the deep, unutterable, but all-prevailing intercession of the Spirit. What a privilege ! to be the temple out of which the Holy Spirit cries to the Father His unceasing Abba! and offers His unutterable intercession, too deep for words.

What blessedness! that as the Eternal Son dwelt in the flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and prayed to the Father as man, that even so the Eternal Spirit should dwell in us, sinful flesh, to train us to speak with the Father even -as the Son did. Who would not yield himself to this blessed Spirit, to be made fit to take a share in that mighty Intercession work through which alone the Kingdom of God can be revealed ? The path is open, and invites all. Let the Holy Spirit have complete possession.

Let Him fill you. Let Him be your life. Believe in the possibility of His making your very personality and consciousness the seat of His being. Believe in the certainty of His working, and praying in you in a way that no human mind can apprehend. Believe that in the secrecy and apparent weakness and slowness of that work, His Divine Almighty Power is perfecting the Divine purpose and the Divine Oneness with your blessed Lord. And live as one in whom the things that pass all understanding have become Truth and Life, in whom the Intercession of the Spirit is part of your daily life in Christ.

Most Holy God! once more I bow in lowly adoration in Thy Presence, to thank Thee for the precious privilege of prayer. And specially would I thank Thee for the Grace that has not only given us in Thy Son the Intercessor above, but in Thy Spirit the Intercessor within. O my Father! Thou knowest that I can scarce take in the wondrous thought, that Thy Holy Spirit in very deed dwelleth in me, and prays in my feeble prayers. I do beseech Thee, discover to me all that hinders His taking full possession of me, and filling me with the consciousness of His Presence.

Let my inmost being and my outer life all be so under His leading, that I may have the spiritual understanding that knows to ask according to Thy will, and the living faith that receives what it asks. And when I know not what or how to pray, O Father, teach me to bow in silent worship, and keep waiting before Thee, knowing that He breathes the wordless prayer which Thou alone canst understand. Blessed God ! I am a temple of the Holy Spirit. I yield myself for Him to use me as the Spirit of Intercession. May my whole heart be so filled with the longing for Christ's honour, and His love for the lost, that my life may become one unutterable cry for the coming of Thy Kingdom. Amen.

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