



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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The Spiritual Jubilee

by Richard Sibbes

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

There are four things especially that trouble the peace of a Christian, and indeed of any man, in this world.

The first is, *sin, with the guilt of it*, binding them over to the wrath of God, and the expectation of misery, which is a heavy bondage.

The second is, besides the guilt of sin, *the remainders of corruption*, with the conflict that accompanies them while we live in this world; and that conflict must needs be tedious.

The third is, the *miseries of this life* that accompany always both the guilt and remainders of sin in this world. We are condemned to a great deal of trouble here, and this doth much exercise and perplex God's children. And then the finishing up of all, death and damnation.

The thought of these things doth much disquiet and disturb the peace of a Christian's soul.

Now, in this Epistle we have comfort against all these. First, *for the guilt of sin*, that binds us over to eternal judgment and the wrath of God; we are freed by the obedience of Christ, the second Adam, as is excellently shewed in the fifth chapter.

And for the *remainders of corruption* that we struggle with in this world, we are assisted against that by the Spirit of Christ. For as by the obedience of Christ we are freed from the guilt, so by the Spirit of Christ we are helped and assisted against the remainders of our corruptions.

For the third, *the miseries of this life*, we have victory in Christ: 'In him we are more than conquerors,' as you have it in this chapter, Rom. 8:37. They can do

us no harm. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.’ We have many singular comforts in this chapter against all the troubles that can befall us, and this is one that triumphs over all: ‘All things shall work for the best to them that love God.’ What should I speak of hurt from anything that befalls us, when all shall work for the best, by the over-ruling of him that commands all? ver. 28.

And for death itself: ‘Neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God.’ And for damnation which accompanies death: ‘It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn?’ There are contrasting comforts in God’s book, nay, in this epistle and in this chapter, to set against all that may any way trouble our peace. ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,’ saith the apostle; and then he goes on after to shew how, by the help of the Spirit, ‘all things work for the best,’ &c. In this very verse likewise, you have this comfort set down, of our freedom by Christ from any thing that may hurt us. ‘For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.’

The words are not absolute, as we see in the particle ‘for;’ *for* the law of the Spirit of life,’ &c. They depend upon the first verse thus; as a reason why, however there be sin in God’s children, yet there is no damnation to them. ‘There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus.’ He proves it thus. Those that are free from the law of sin and of death, which brings in condemnation, those undoubtedly are free from damnation. But those that are in Christ Jesus, they are freed from the law of sin and of death; therefore there is no condemnation to such. But how shall we know that we are in Christ Jesus? Those that have the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit of Christ, they are in Christ. ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.’ So I say, the words are especially a reason of the former, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;’ because by the ‘Spirit of Christ they are freed from the law of sin, and of death;’ and consequently, they are freed from damnation; for what brings in damnation but sin?

In the words, then, there is an opposition. There is law against law. ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ,’ and ‘the law of sin and of death.’ Now, where there are contrary laws, if there be contrary lords, as there must be, new lords will have new laws; especially if they be lords by conquest, they will alter the very fundamental laws that were before; as you know the old conquerors have done in this kingdom. Here is law against law, and lord against lord; Christ against sin and death. Here is a Lord by conquest over all other lords and laws. Therefore, here must needs be an alteration of laws upon it; the very fundamental laws must be altered. But to come more particularly to the words,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.’

The words are much vexed by expositors. I will rather speak my own judgment of them, and reconcile them, than dash one man’s judgment against another; for that tends not to edification. ‘The law of the Spirit of life,’ &c. The meaning of the words is plain, if we compare it with other Scriptures.

‘The law.’ It is nothing but a commanding power; for so the word written the law, in the apostle’s meaning, is but a power forcing and commanding. So the ‘law of the Spirit of life’ is the commanding and forcing power of the ‘Spirit of life in Christ Jesus;’ and so the ‘law of sin,’ it is either the tyrannical command and forcing power of sin, or else the condemning for sin afterwards, as we shall see hereafter. For we shall unfold the words better in the particulars.

First, then, here we have set down what estate we are in by nature: ‘We are under the law *of sin and of death.*’

And then, here is our freedom and deliverance from that: ‘*We are made free* from the law of sin and of death.’

And then the author of it, Christ Jesus: ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.’ In the words, and those that go a little before, there are these three main fundamental points of religion:

The misery and bondage of man.

The deliverance of man.

And his duty.

Here you have his *misery*. He is under ‘sin and death.’

Here is his *deliverance*. He is ‘free from this by Christ.’

And for his *duty*; you have it in the last verse of the former chapter, speaking of his deliverance. ‘Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ Then it follows, ‘Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Thankfulness is due, not verbal thankfulness only. Indeed, the whole life of a Christian, after his deliverance, is a real thanksgiving. But that is not in my text.

To speak, therefore, of our estate by nature, and of our deliverance; our estate is, that we are under the law of sin and death.

‘We are under the law of sin.’

Obs. We are *under sin*. What sin? We are under a threefold sin.

1. We are under the *first sin* of our *first father*; for as Levi paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec, so we all sinned in the loins of Adam our first parent; and the guilt of that first sin lies upon us.

2. Secondly, There is another sin that is derived and springs from that first sin; which is the *marring of the image of God*, the privation of our nature. We call it original sin, whereby we are stripped of that good we had in our first creation, and have the contrary image, the image of Satan stamped upon us. So we are under the first sin, the guilt of it; and we are under the sin of nature, which we call original sin, because it is derived to us even from our birth and first original we had in Adam.

3. And then we are under *actual sins*, which are so many bonds to tie us fast under sin. We are dead by nature; but we are dead and rotten by actual sins. We superadd to the guilt of our sin by our daily activities. We are blind by nature; but we are blinded indeed much more by our custom of life. Every sin doth, as it were, tie us faster to damnation, and keeps us more tightly under the bondage of sin. Every new sin takes away some part of the light of the understanding, and takes away some freedom of the will. It darkens the judgment more and more, and enthralls the will and affections; and binds a man more and more to the just sentence of God, that, as it is Prov. 5:22, ‘the sinner is tied with the bonds of his own sins.’ He is under the chains of an habituated wicked course of life, as well as of the sin of nature, which is the spring of all.

This is the miserable state of man; and these chains of his sins hold him over him to further chains. Even as the devil is reserved in chains; that is, in terrors of his conscience, which as chains bind him till he be in hell, the place he is destined to; so we being in the chains and bondage, vexed with our sins, we are at the same time in the chains of terrors of conscience, the beginnings of hell, and reserved to chains of damnation and death world without end. It is another manner of matter, our estate by nature, than it is usually taken for. If men had but a little supernatural light, to see what condition they are in, till they get out into Christ Jesus, they would not continue a minute in that cursed estate.

And we have deserved to be cast into this estate by reason that we left our subordination and dependence upon God, which, being creatures, we should have

had. Therefore we turning from God to the creature, God punisheth our rebellion to him with rebellion in ourselves; because we withdrew our subjection from him, that therefore there should be in us a withdrawing of the subjection of sin and of the whole soul to God. So this captivity to and giving up to sin in us, it is penal and sinful; but as it comes from God, it is altogether judicial. Therefore we have it oft in the New Testament, in Rom. 1:21 and 2 Thes. 2:10. The Gentiles, because they would not receive the truth that they might have had by the light of nature, 'God gave them up to their sins.' And then the Christians after the apostles' times, they set slight by the good word of God, the gospel. Therefore 'God gave them up to believe lies.' It was sin in them; but as God gave them up, it was justice. So this captivity and giving men up to their own lusts, it is justice; as it comes from God, it is a horrible judgment. It is worse than to be given up to the devil himself; for by being given up to our lusts we increase our damnation. To be given up to be tormented of the devil, it is not such a mischief as this spiritual captivity under sin. We are guilty ourselves of our own thralldom. And this will increase both the shame and the punishment. The shame, that a man shall say in hell afterward, 'I have brought myself hither, I had means enough, prohibitions enough; I had sometimes chastisements of God, sometimes motions of his Spirit, sometimes one help from God, sometimes another; yet notwithstanding I thrust through all oppositions that God set between me and the execution of my lusts, and to hellward I would, and hither I have brought myself.' So that indeed the greatest part of hell-torments, the shame of them especially, it will be that men have brought themselves by their own wits and carnal lusts thither. And indeed all the wit a carnal man hath, that is not sanctified by God's Spirit, it is to work himself to misery, to be a drudge to his lusts; that sets all the parts he hath on work, not how he may serve God and be happy in another world, but how he may prowl and provide for his own carnal lusts. This is the estate of all men by nature. They are under sin, under the power of sin. The blind judgment leads the blind affections, and both 'fall into the ditch,' into hell, Luke 6:89.

1. The fearfulnes and odiousness of this condition, to be in prison and thralldom and bondage to all kind of sin, natural and actual, it will appear further by this, that being in subjection to our base lusts, by consequence we are *under the bondage of Satan*; for he hath power over death by sin, because he draws us to sin, and then accuseth us and torments us for sin. By sin we come to be under his bondage. So that we are under the fearful captivity of the devil while we are under the captivity of sin; for all the power that he hath over us it is by sin. He is but God's executioner for sin. First, God gives him power to draw us to sin, to punish one sin with another; and then he suffers him to accuse and to torment us afterward: What a fearful bondage is this, that being under sin we are under Satan!

We are servants to our enemy, as God threatened his people that they should serve their enemies. But this is a greater judgment, to be slaves to this enemy. This is the condition of every sinner. To be a slave to a man's enemy, it is a judgment of judgments; yet notwithstanding this is the case of every man by nature; he is a servant to his enemy, to Satan and his own lusts. He is a right Ham, a 'servant of servants;' for Satan useth him as the Philistines did Samson: he puts out his eyes; he puts out his judgment, his wits; he besots him; and so he goes blind in Satan's blind work and business: he is in a maze all his life long, till at length he sink into hell. So this is the aggravation of a man's estate by nature, he is a slave to his enemy. You know blessed Zacharias saith, Luke 1:74,75, 'That, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of our life.' There is no wicked man, but he is manipulated by the devil. Oh that we would consider of it! We think we are led only by our own lusts and sins, as men; but until a man be in Christ, 'he is ruled by the command of the prince of the air,' Eph. 2:2, and in 2 Tim. 2:26, 'he is ruled by Satan, according to his will.' Even as a bird in a snare, it may move up and down, but it is still in the snare, and he that hath it there cares not: he knows he hath it safe, and he goes about to catch other birds; so when we are in our lusts and follow them, the devil hath us in his snare: he is secure of us, and goes about getting more and more still. The devil acts, and moves, and leads all carnal men.

But how chanceth it that they do not know and perceive it?

It is because he goeth with the stream of their own corruptions. Indeed, we must make some limitation of this. In some cases the devil doth not move carnal men. They are better than the devil would have them be for the good of the commonwealth and state; but yet take them as they stand in relation to religion, they may be devilish, secret, bitter, dark enemies to that. Though they may have strong heads for the good of the state, yet it is not from any intrinsic good in themselves; but God useth them and makes them do that. For the devil would have all wicked; he is an enemy to the very swine; therefore much more to the good of a state. Therefore there are many civil moral virtues, as we see in Ahithophel and Judas, which no question is more than the devil would have. He would not have civil men so good; he would not have them do that they do for the common good oftentimes. Yet the devil will be sure to be at one end of the good they do, to taint them, that their aim shall not be good. It shall not be to the glory of God; it shall not be in reference to salvation.

And so, as the good is temporal, they have a reward suitable to their desire; they care for no more. For they believe not heaven but in a general notion. It may be there is such things, it may be not. Therefore the good they do is some little

petty obedience. And what do they desire? To be well esteemed and respected; to be venerable, and to have honourable opinions in the hearts of men, that men may stoop in their conceits to them as men of respect. This they deserve indeed, and this they have; God gives them that they would have. But as Christ tells the Pharisees, who did excellent good things, but it was to be 'seen of men,' he tells them 'they had their reward,' Mat. 6:2. They had all they looked for, for they were atheists; they looked not for heaven. So a man may say of all that are out of the state of grace: though they do more than the devil would have them, and for divers degrees of what they do they are not subject to the devil, yet he taints their actions one way or other in the end; he joins himself in the action first or last; he hath a hand in all their actions. So that, notwithstanding there be many good things, yet this hinders not a whit but that they may be under the power of the devil; for it is but in reference to civil government and state, which is but for a time. 'The fashion of this world passeth away,' 1 Cor. 7:31. Here will be no magistrates to govern, nor no people to be governed ere long.

I speak it, because many men are ready to propound such and such, to imitate them in their courses; and to say, I will be no more religious than he; when, perhaps, all may be but formality and common graces for this world. God will honour some so much, to be instruments for common good here; but what is that to eternal salvation? He may be a slave to his lusts, and an enemy to the power of grace, for all that. Therefore, unless we see men wrought upon thoroughly, to be of the mind of Christ, to have the Spirit of Christ, to judge of things as Christ judgeth, to judge the service of God and doing his will to be the best things, and to 'go about doing good, Acts 10:38, and that with reference and obedience to God, all is nothing else. A man may be under the bondage of his corruptions, and so by them to Satan.

Again, When we are under our lusts and sins, it is about earthly things; *we are in slavery to that which is worse than ourselves*. Sin is the vilest thing in the world, and the things whereabout sin is occupied are the profits and pleasures and trifles of this world—mean petty things. It is a base slavery to consider whom we serve.

3. And to consider what it is that is in bondage, *the immortal soul of man*, that had the image of God stamped upon it; and in the soul of man, the most excellent part, the will, that is most free, yet being under sin, it is most bound. Our will was given us to cleave to God and the best things; to make choice of the best things, and to cleave to them undivided in life and death, and for ever; and so by cleaving to things better than ourselves, to advance ourselves to a higher condition. For when the soul of man that is under better things, that is under God

and Christ, and doth cleave to God and Christ in his affections, and to the things of a better life, these be things bettering a man's condition, even raising the soul from its own present estate to a glorious condition; for we are as we love. Our wills and our affections do transform us. Therefore wicked men are called the world, because they love it; and holy men are called heavenly, because they are carried in their affections and wills to heavenly things. Our affections and wills do denominate us, they give us the name; nay, that is too little, they do give us the reality, the state. When God so alters and changes our dispositions, that out of a sanctified judgment we make a right choice of things, and then cleave to them in our wills and affections constantly, this raiseth our nature to be higher than itself: 'He that cleaveth to the Lord is one spirit,' as the apostle saith, Acts 10:38. Indeed, our affections transform us anew. As it is with the fire, it transforms cold and gross bodies to be all fiery; so God and heavenly things work upon our hearts, they transform us to be like themselves.

Now, for this inward soul of man, which is so excellent a thing, fitted by God to cleave to better things, for communion with himself and everlasting happiness, for this to be a drudge to base pleasures and profits, to the windy empty things of this world, to vain titles and such like empty things, and to place its happiness in these things, it is a pitiful degeneration that so excellent a thing as the immortal soul of man, that shall never die, should join with those things that shall make him miserable, that it shall be better for a man that he had never been; as it is said of Judas, 'It had been better for that man that he had never been born,' Mat. 26:24.

4: In the next place, consider that *that follows this thralldom and baseness to our lusts*. There is a double fruit of it. (1.) The one is *uncertain*. I mean, for our yielding to our base affections, what do we profit? 'The pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. 11:25; a little pleasure or profit, perhaps not that neither; but if we have it, it is a fading commodity, that goes away quickly. When they are gotten, what are they? Vanity. They promise more before we get them than they perform when we have them. But then (2.) There is another wages, that God injustice hath appointed for it, that is, *damnation*: 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. 6:28. It cries for wages. When we are under sin we can look for nothing but death, and therefore he joins them together here: 'the law of sin and of death,' an expectation of eternal misery. This a man hath that is wedded to himself, that hath not learned the first lesson in the gospel, to deny himself. He is a wretched slave to the devil in his best part and power; his lusts imprison his will and affections; his wit, that should devise how he should be happy for eternity, it is only a drudge to his base lusts. There are a company of men that are the shame and blemish of the gospel,

that get their wits a-work only how to devise to satisfy their base lusts; and then the issue and conclusion of all this is eternal misery; and in the meantime, the expectation of misery in terrors of conscience. This is the estate of every man till he be translated by the Spirit of God to a better condition in Christ, that he spends out his time in a base and miserable thralldom, worse than the thralldom of the Israelites in Egypt or in Babylon.

5. And it is so much the more fearful, because *men are insensible of it*, like inmates in an insane asylum, that make nothing of their chains, that laugh in their chains. A frantic man, when he is bound in chains, he laughs, when they that are about him weep at his misery. So you have men frolicking in sin. They will swear at liberty, and besot themselves at liberty, and corrupt their consciences, even for base trifles. They think they are in no bondage, and they do all wondrous cheerfully and well; whenas indeed the more cheerfully and readily any man performs the base service of sin, the more he is in bondage. Freedom is opposite to bondage. Notwithstanding, such is the nature of sin, that the more freely we do it the more we are bound; because the more freedom we have, the more we are entangled. We ran into guilt upon guilt, till after guilt comes execution, an eternal separation from the presence of God, and an adjudging to eternal torments for ever.

So that it is a false judgment that the world hath. They think great men happy men. Why? They do as they desire. Ay, they may do so, and ofttimes they take the liberty to do so. They will be under no laws. They are so far from obeying the law of God, that they are loath to be hampered with the laws of the state, or with any laws, but they will be above all. A miserable condition! Why? The more will a man hath in evil, the more miserable; for the more freely and with less opposition he tangleth himself. Let his place be never so great, the deeper he sinks in rebellion, and the deeper he sinks into guilt upon guilt; which will all come to a reckoning at the hour of death and day of judgment. So the men that we admire and envy most—out of credulity and lack of judgment—they are the most miserable creatures in the world, if they be out of Christ and have not grace. For they have nature let loose in them without restraint; and nature being under the captivity of sin, becomes out of measure sinful in such. The less a man is curbed either from laws above him or the law within him to check him, the more wretched man he is. For the deeper he goes in rebellion and sin, the deeper his torment shall be afterward.

Great persons have a great privilege. What privilege is that? They shall be greatly tormented. That is all the privilege that I know if they be wicked. Those that shake off all bonds, any earthly privilege and prerogative is so far from exempting them from misery, that it makes them more miserable; for unless they

have grace to use those things that might be an advantage to better things, they sink deeper and deeper into sin, and so into terrors of conscience first or last; and, by consequence, to damnation. Oh it is a fearful condition to be the greatest monarch in the world and not to be in Christ, and under the law of ‘the Spirit of life in Christ’! They are the objects of pity more than any other kind of men to truly judicious souls, that know from God’s truth, and by the light of the Spirit, what is to be judged of the state of men. You see then what kind of misery it is that natural men are under, being under the law of sin.

6. To declare it a little further, for men will hardly think it is such a bondage to be under sin. Therefore, I beseech you, do but consider *how sin tyranniseth where it gets strength*. See it in some instances. The covetous worldly man that is under the law of that lust, he hath the law of other lusts, but that is predominant—see how it tyranniseth. It takes away his rest; the use of God’s blessings; the good things he hath given him to enjoy. It makes him a slave to the creature. We see it in carnal pleasure. Amnon, when he lusted after his sister Tamar, it took away his rest, 2 Sam. 13:2, *seq.* And how doth this degrading affection tyrannise in some men? It makes them forget their bodies so, that they overthrow their health and hasten death temporal. It hurts the natural man. It makes them forget their reputation; it makes them forget their souls; it makes them stink, by living in that carnal noisome sin. The judicious heathen were sensible of it, by the strength of natural judgment; yet sin where it is in any strength uncurbed, it so tyranniseth, that it makes men forget both health and life and reputation and estate in this world, that they come to nothing. What should I speak of forgetting life eternal and damnation? They have no faith to believe that. But such is the tyranny of sin, that it makes them forget things sensible; that by experience, after they see how dearly they have bought their base pleasures, with the loss of reputation, and health, and comfort; with the loss of the estate that God hath trusted them withal in this world.

Take a man that is under the degrading law of ambition, a proud person. See how it tyranniseth over him. It makes him forget blood and kindred, all the bonds of nature. He will kill his brethren to make his way; as you know in our own stories such tyrants. If there were not stories enough in this kind, daily experience shews it. Where the law of ambition and pride reigns, it makes the heart wherein this tyrant sets up his throne, to forget all bonds whatsoever, of nature and justice. You know whose speech it was, ‘If the law must be violated, it must be for a kingdom’ [Shakespeare]. But men will do it for far less. We see what men will do for a despicable place to command others in this world, when they are conscious of their own evil courses, and commanding corruptions; and all to give way to the

base affection of ambition. A touch is enough of these things, for experience witnesseth and goes along with me. All men that are not in Christ, they have some predominant sin; either some degrading sin, or some more refined sin and lust, that keeps them from Christ and salvation; and this tyranniseth over them.

And this is the nature of this tyrant sin. It hath such possession of a man till he be got out of it and be in Christ, that it takes away the perception of itself. It hinders the knowledge of itself; it puts out a man's eyes. For that whereby a man should judge of corruption, it is corrupt itself. 'The wisdom of a man is death, it is enmity to God,' Rom. 8:7. The wit that he hath that should discern of his degrading courses, it tangles him more and more to his own lusts; so that wit and wisdom, the highest part of the soul, it is imprisoned by base affections; and that power that should discern corruption, it is set on work to satisfy corruption. What is the wit of a man that is not in Christ occupied about all his lifetime? It is nothing but a drudge and a slave, to devise means to satisfy his degrading lusts. Take a worldly man: he is exceeding witty to contrive worldly plots and business, though he be a dunce and a sot in matters that are spiritual. In his own tract and course, he hath a shrewd wit. Why? Because his lusts to the world, they whet his wit. So we see the best thing in man now is enthralled to sin, his very wisdom itself; therefore it is enmity to God.

Every man hath some Herodias (Matt. 14:3), some sin or other that he is in bondage to, till he be in Christ. He cannot in a like measure be given and enthralled to all sins. It is unnecessary; because one sin serves another. Many sins serve one great one. Corruption doth not run in all streams in one equality: but it runs violently in one way unchecked and uncontrolled and unhindered, in all men that are not in Christ, and subdues the soul to itself, that it can devise and plot for nothing, but to satisfy that base lust. This is the state of man by nature.

Obj. But some will say, it is not our state and condition. We are baptized, and receive the sacrament, and hear sermons, and read good books; and therefore we are not under sin.

Ans. But saith the apostle, 'His servants ye are to whom ye obey,' Rom. 6:16. You may know the state of your service and subjection, by the course of your life. And as Christ saith to the Jews, John 8:83, they bragged that they were free. Alas! proud people! They were neither free for soul nor state; for they were under the Romans. They thought they were free because they were 'Abraham's children.' Were they not in captivity to the Egyptians, and under the Babylonians, and in present captivity under the Romans? Yet they forget themselves out of pride. 'If the Son make you free, ye are free indeed,' John 8:86; but because they

were in a sinful course, they were slaves of sin. So it is no matter what privileges men are under, that they receive the sacrament, and are baptized, and live in the church, &c. 'His servants ye are, whom ye obey.' If there be prevailing lusts that set up their throne and tyrannise in our hearts, and set our wits on work, to devise how to satisfy them more than to please God, it is no matter what privileges we have. It is no matter whose uniform we wear, but whom we serve. We may wear God's uniform, that shall be pulled over our heads afterward and we be left unclothed; that it shall appear that we are the devil's servants under the profession of Christ.

There is no man that is not in Christ, that denies his corrupt nature anything. If revenge bid him take revenge, he will if he can; if he do not, it is no thanks to him, but to the laws. If any sin rise in the heart, all the parts of the body, and powers of the soul, are ready weapons to this tyrant to keep a man in slavery. As if anger and wrath keep a man in bondage, you shall have it in his countenance; his hand will be ready to execute it; his feet will be ready to carry him to revenge. If it be a proud heart that a man is kept under, you shall have it in his looks and expressions outward. If it be the base affection of lust, you shall have adultery in the eye; an unchaste and uncircumcised ear and filthy rotten language. Men you see upon all occasions are ready to execute the commands of these tyrannical lusts, in some kind or other. Therefore never talk of thy freedom, when lusts are raised up within thee, either ascending from thine own corruption, or cast in by Satan, and so joining with thy heart. Presently thy tongue will speak wickedly, and thine eyes, and looks, and countenance, shew that there is a wicked heart within; and the whole man is ready to execute it, further than a man is curbed bylaw, or respect to his reputation or the like, which is no thanks to him. Yet a man cannot act the part of a civil man so well, but the corruption of his vile heart will betray itself in his looks or language. One time or other this tyrant will break forth. Therefore let us look to our hearts and courses; for if we be not in Christ, we are under the 'law of sin.'

'And of death.'

We are not only under the law of sin, but also 'of death.' Now, 1, there is a death in this world, the separation of the soul from the body. But that is not so much meant here. For when we are in Christ we are not free from this death. But there is, 2, a worse death, which is a separation of the soul from the favour and love of God, and from the sanctifying and comforting Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God doth not comfort and sanctify the soul, it is a death. For as the soul is the life of the body, the body hath but a communicated life from the union it hath

with the soul. The soul hath a life of its own, when it is out of the body, but the body hath its life from the soul. So it is with the soul in this world.

1. *When there is an estrangement of the soul from the Spirit of God and Christ*, sanctifying, and comforting and cheering it, then there *is a death of the soul*. The soul can no more act anything that is savingly and holily good, than the body can be without the soul. And as the body without the soul is a noxious, stinking carcass, offensive in the eyes of its dearest friends, so the soul without the Spirit of Christ quickening and renewing it, and putting a comeliness and beauty upon it, it is odious. All the clothes and flowers you put upon a dead body cannot make it but a stinking carcass; so all the moral virtues, and all the honours in this world put upon a man out of Christ, it makes him not a spiritual living soul; he is but a loathsome corpse, a dead carcass, in the sight of God, and of all that have the Spirit of God. For he is under death. He is stark and stiff, unable to stir or move to any duty whatsoever. He hath no sense nor motion. Though such men live a common natural civil life, and walk up and down, yet they are dead men to God and to a better life. The world is full of dead men, that are dead while they are alive, as St Paul speaks of the ‘widow that lives in pleasures,’ 1 Tim. 5:6. A fearful estate, if we had spiritual eyes to see it and think of it.

2. But then after the death of the soul in this world, there is another degree of spiritual death; which is, *when the soul leaves the body*. Then the soul dies. For then it goes to hell. It is severed for ever from the comfortable and gracious presence of God, and likewise it lacks the comforts it had in this world.

3. And the third degree of it is, when body and soul shall be joined together; then there is an eternal separation of both from the presence of God, *and an adjudging of them to eternal torments in hell*. This is the state of all men that are not in Christ. They are dead in soul while they live; dead after the separation of the soul and body, and after to be adjudged to eternal damnation, world without end. Life is a sweet thing, and we know death is terrible. When we would set out our hatefulness to anything, we often say, ‘I hate it as death.’ Do we love life, and do we hate death? We should labour then to be out of that condition that we are all in by nature, wherein we are under sin and death, in regard of spiritual life, I mean; for, for civil life, and government, and policy, men may have life and vigour enough, that are hypocrites. But I speak of a better life, an eternal life, that is not subject to death.

Now, mark the joining of both these together. We are under sin and death by nature. Where a man is under sin he is under death; for as the apostle saith, Rom. 5:12, ‘Sin entered into the world, and by sin death.’ They were neither of

both God's creatures, neither sin nor death. But sin entered into the world by Satan, and death by sin. 'Oh, ye shall not die,' saith Satan. He was a liar always from the beginning. So now he saith to men, you shall not die; you may do this and do well enough. But he is a liar and a murderer. When he solicits to sin he is a murderer. Let us take heed of solicitations to sin, from our own nature or from Satan. Mark how God hath linked sin and death, 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. 6:28. When we are tempted to sin, we think, I shall have this honour, or profit, or contentment, or preferment, and advancement in the world. Ay, but that that you get by sin, it is not so great as you look for, when you have it, if you get it at all. But afterwards comes death, the beginnings of eternal death, terrors of conscience, universally follow, if a man be himself, if he be not stupified. The more a man is a man, and enjoys the liberty of his judgment to judge of things, the more he sees the misery that is due after sin, with a fearful expectation of worse things to come. Sin and death are an adamant chain and link that none can sever. Who shall separate that which God in his justice hath put together? If sin go before, death *will* follow. If the conception go before, the birth will follow after; if the smoke go before, the fire will follow. There is not a more constant order in nature than this in God's appointment: first sin, and then death and damnation after.

Use. Therefore when we are tempted to sin let us reason with ourselves, 'There is death in the pot,' 2 Kings 4:40. Let us discern death in it. It will follow. And if a man after repent of it, it will be more sharp repentance and grievous than the sin was pleasant; that a man shall have little joy of his sin, if he do repent. If he do not repent, what a fearful estate is a man in, after he hath sinned! Sin and death go together. No human power can sever them; for take the greatest monarch in the world, when he hath sinned, conscience is above him as great as he is, for conscience is next under God. It awes and terrifies him, and keeps his sleep from him; as we see of late in our bloody neighbour country, after that great massacre, he could not sleep without music and the like. All that they have and enjoy in the world, all their greatness, it will not satisfy and stop the mouth of conscience; but when they sin, they feel the wrath of God arresting, and they are as it were shut up in prison, under the terrors of an accusing conscience, till they come to eternal imprisonment in the chains of hell and damnation. This is the estate of the greatest man in the world that is not in Christ. They are not so happy as we think they are. They are imprisoned in their own hearts, though they walk at never so much liberty abroad, and do what they wish; for sin and death goes together, and before eternal death comes, the expectation and terrors of it seize on them for the present. So that whatsoever our first birth be, though it be noble and great, yet by it we are bond-slaves under sin and death, unless our second birth, our new birth, make amends for sin, for the baseness of our first birth. This prerogative, our spiritual

nobleness, is such an estate wherein we are not born, but are born again to it, ‘to an inheritance immortal,’ &c., 1 Peter 1:4. But by nature we are all bondmen, though we be born never so nobly. Therefore let us never brag of our birth, as the Jews did, that they were the children of Abraham. No, saith Christ, you are of your father the devil, John 8:44. Let none stand upon the gentry and nobility of their birth, unless they be taken out of the condition they are in by nature, to be in a better condition in Christ; for we see all men naturally are under the law of sin and death.

These things are slighted, because we enjoy ‘the pleasures of sin for a season,’ Heb. 11:25. Men think to be enthralled to sin, it is pleasant thralldom, they are golden fetters; for I shall have the pleasures of sin all my lifetime, &c.; and for death, I will set a Roman spirit against death. Saith a Roman, What! is it such a matter to die? It is nothing to die: They set a good face on the matter. And this is the conceit of many men till they come to it. But, alas! To be in bondage to death, it is another matter, for behind death there is a gulf. A man may break the hedge well enough with a strong resolution to die; it is nothing to die if there were an end. But there is a gulf, there is damnation and destruction behind; there is eternal torment behind; to be adjudged from the presence of God for ever: to be separated from all good and all comfort, and to have society with the devil and his angels in hell, and that for ever and for ever. Thou mayest, perhaps, make slight of the service of sin, because thou hast the present allurements to delight thee, but thou shouldst regard death. Thou mayest neglect death, but then regard eternal death. This word ‘eternal’ it is a heavy word, ‘eternal’ separation from all good; and eternal communion with the devil and his angels; and for the wrath of God to seize on thy soul eternally, world without end. Methinks men should not set light by that. Therefore considering that this is our estate by nature,—we are all slaves to sin and death,—let us labour to get out of this cursed estate by all means, which is by:

‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.’

Now, I come to speak of our freedom: ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath *freed me* from the law of sin and death.’ This is good news indeed, to hear of freedom: good news to the Israelites to hear of freedom out of Egypt, and for the Jews to hear of Cyrus’s proclamation for their freedom out of Babylon. Freedom out of bondage is a sweet message. Here we have such a message of spiritual freedom, from other manner of enemies than those were. The year of jubilee, it was a year of consolation to servants that were kept in and were much vexed with their bondage. When the year of jubilee came they were all freed. Therefore there was great expectation of the year of jubilee. Here we have a spiritual jubilee: a manumission and freedom from the bondage we are in by nature.

‘The Spirit of life in Christ makes us *free* from the law of sin and death.’ There is life in Christ, opposite to death in us. There is a Spirit of life in Christ and a law of the Spirit of life in Christ, opposite to the law of sin and of death in us. So that this is our happiness while we live here (Oh, it is the blessedness of men to make use of it while they have time and space and grace to repent, and to cleave to Christ), that whatsoever ill we are under by nature, we may have full supply in Christ for all the breaches that came by the first Adam. There came the wrath of God, the corruption of our nature, terrors of conscience, death and damnation. All these followed the sin and breach of the first Adam. All these are made up in the second. He hath freed us from all the ill we received from the first Adam, and that we have added ourselves; for we make ourselves worse than we come from Adam by our voluntary and daily transgressions. But we are freed from all by the ‘law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.’

How comes this freedom?

1. There can no freedom be *without satisfaction to divine justice*. For why are we under sin? God gives us up to sin. Why are we under death? God gives us up to death. Why are we under Satan’s government? He is God’s executioner, God’s serjeant. He gives us up to him here because we offend him. Why are we under damnation and wrath? Because God is offended. All our slavery comes originally from God. However it be sinful in regard of Satan that keeps us, yet the power whereby he keeps us is good, for he doth it from God. His will is always naught, but his power is always lawful. Therefore the power whereby the devil keeps us, if we look up to God under whom the power is, it is a lawful power; for God hath a hand in giving us up to sin: it is a judicial giving up, and then by lusts and sin, to Satan and death and damnation. So if we speak of freedom, we must not begin with the executioner: the wrath of God must be satisfied. God must be one with us, so as his justice must have contentment. Satisfaction must be with the glory of his justice, as well as of his mercy. His attributes must have full recompense. One must not be destroyed to satisfy another. He must so be merciful in freeing us as that content must be given to his justice, that it complain not of any loss. Now, reconciliation always supposeth recompense. It is founded upon it.

2. And satisfaction for sin, it must be in *that nature that hath sinned*. Now man of himself could not satisfy divine justice, being a finite person; therefore God the second person became man, that in our nature he might satisfy God’s wrath for us, and so free us by giving payment to his divine justice. The death of Christ, God-man, is the price of our liberty and freedom.

But why doth the apostle speak here of ‘a law of the Spirit of life in Christ’ which frees us? But here is no mention of satisfaction by death.

Oh, but death is the foundation of all, as we shall see afterwards. To unfold the point, therefore, because it is a special point, and the words need unfolding.

Here it is said there is life in Christ.

‘A Spirit of life,’ and a law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

1. There is life *in Christ*, not only as God, for so indeed he is life. God his life is himself; for life is the being of a thing, and the actions and moving and vigour and operations of a thing answerable to that being. So the life of God is his being: ‘As I live, saith the Lord;’ that is, ‘As I am God, I will not the death of a sinner,’ Ezek. 18:82. Now, Christ hath life in him as God, as the Father hath. But that is not especially here meant.

2. There is life in Christ as *God-man*, as mediator. Now, this life is that life which is originally from the Godhead. Indeed, it is but the Godhead’s quickening and giving life to the manhood in Christ; the Spirit quickening and sanctifying the manhood. And we have no comfort by the life of God, as it is in God’s life alone severed; for, alas! What communion have we with God without a mediator? But our comfort is this, that God, who is the fountain of life, he became man, and having satisfied God’s justice, he conveys life to us. He is our head; he hath life in himself as God, to impart spiritual life to all his members; so there is life in Christ as mediator.

And there is a Spirit of life. That life it is a working life, for spirit is an emphatical word. Spirit added to a thing increased the thing. Again, he saith, ‘The law of the Spirit of life.’ Law is a commanding thing. To shew that the life in Christ is a commanding life, it countermands all opposing laws whatsoever, of sin and death; and this law is a countermand to all other laws. ‘The law of the Spirit of life ‘frees us from all other laws. So here is life, the Spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit of life—all words of strong signification.

But for the clear understanding of this sweet and consoling point, first, consider how the law of the Spirit of life is in Christ, what it doth in him, and then how it is derivatively in us.

First of all, We must know this for a foundation, whatsoever is done to us *is done to Christ first*; and whatsoever we have, Christ hath it first. Therefore life is first in Christ, and then in us; resurrection first in Christ, and, then in us; sonship first in Christ, and then in us; justification from our sins first in Christ—he is freed from our sins—and then in us; ascension first in Christ, and then in us; glory in

heaven first in Christ, and then in us. We have nothing in us, but it is derived from Christ. Therefore, this being laid as a ground, we must consider how the Spirit of life works in Christ, what it doth in Christ, and then what it doth as it is in us; for whatsoever Christ hath, it is not only for himself, but for us.

What doth it in Christ?

1. The Spirit of life in Christ, first of all, it did *quicken* and *sanctify his human nature*. That nature that Christ pleased to take upon him it stopped sin, it made a stop of original sin, in sanctifying that blessed substance out of which his body was made. For the foundation of his obedience actual, that it was so holy, it was hence that his nature was purified by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin. The foundation that his death and sufferings was satisfactory and acceptable, it was that his holy nature was sanctified by the Spirit of God. So the first work of the Spirit of life in the Son of God, it was to sanctify and quicken that blessed human body that he took upon him.

2. And the Spirit of life that quickened and sanctified our nature in Christ did likewise *ennoble our nature*; for even as a common woman is ennobled when she is taken in marriage with a great man,—she hath his dignity accounted hers—so our nature, by the Spirit being sanctified, is knit into the union of person with Christ, that our nature and the second person make one Christ. So our nature by the Spirit is ennobled by this union. And:

8. Also *enriched it with all grace* that our nature is capable of; for the nature of Christ had this double prerogative above ours: first of all, that blessed mass of flesh, it was knit to be one person with God; and then, that nature was enriched and ennobled with all graces above ours. And this the Spirit of life did to Christ himself, to his human nature that he took upon him, that he might be a public person. For God, the second person, took not upon him any man's particular person, of Peter, or Paul; or John, for then there should have been distinct persons, one person should have died, and another rise; but he took our nature into his person. So that the same person that did die was God, though he died in our nature, that he might be a public person. So we must consider Christ sanctifying our nature, that he might fit and sanctify all our persons. But did the Spirit of life do nothing else but sanctify and enrich the human nature of Christ with grace?

4. Yes. For the Spirit of life in Christ did sanctify him *for his sacrifice*, as he saith, John 17:19, in that blessed prayer, 'I sanctify myself for them.' It prepared him for his death, and made him a fit sacrifice. When he entered upon his calling, he had more of the Spirit: the Spirit of life, as it were, was increased. For it

is no heresy to think, that the gifts of Christ, for the manifestation of them, were increased. For in every state he was in, he was perfect; and when he set upon his office; and was baptized, he was made more full of the Holy Ghost: as it were, there was a fuller manifestation than before, when he did not set upon his office openly.

5. In his death, what did the Spirit of life then? It *supported him in his very death*; for there was an union of the Spirit. When there was a separation of his soul and body, there was not a separation of the union. That which gave dignity, and strength, and value, and worth to his death, it was the Spirit. Though there was a suspending of the comfort a while, yet there was no separation of the union. But I speak no more of that, being not especially meant here.

6. But especially *in his resurrection* (which we are now to think of by reason of the day, and it is not amiss to take all occasions), especially then, the Spirit of life that had sanctified Christ, and quickened him, and enriched his nature, and supported him, and done all, that Spirit of life quickened the dead body of Christ. 'And he was mightily declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of sanctification, by his resurrection from the dead,' Rom. 1:4. The Spirit of life raised him from the dead, and put an end to all that misery that he had undergone before for our sakes. For until his resurrection, there was, as it were, some conflict with some enemies of Christ, either with Satan, or the world, or with death itself. He lay under death three days. Until Christ's body was raised, our enemies were not overcome. God's wrath was not fully satisfied. It was not declared to be satisfied at least. For he being our surety, till he came out of the grave, we could not know that our sins were satisfied for. But now, when the Spirit of life in Christ comes, and quickens that body of his in the grave, and so doth justify us, as it is, Rom. 4:25, 'He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification:' that is, by the Spirit of life in Christ quickening his dead body, he declared that we are fully discharged from our sins, because he was fully discharged from our sins; being our surety, he shewed by his resurrection that he was fully discharged from all that he took upon him. When a man comes out of prison that is a surety, his very coming out of prison shews that he hath a full discharge of all the debt he undertook to pay. So the Spirit of life, raising Christ's body the third day, manifestly declared that the debt he took on him was fully discharged. And so as he died for sin, to satisfy God's justice for them, so he rose again for our justification, to shew that he had a full discharge for all.

Now, since the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath quickened his body, the soul may make a bold demand to God, as it is in 1 Pet. 3:16. It may make that demand, Rom. 8:83, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is

Christ that died, nay rather, that is risen again,' and ascended into heaven, and makes intercession for us. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's people? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn?' Our sins? Christ hath taken our sins upon him, and satisfied divine justice for them; and by the Spirit of life hath quickened that dead body of his, that was surety for us himself. We may well say, 'Who shall lay anything to our charge?' He that is our surety is dead. Dead? Nay, risen again; nay, ascended, and sits at the right hand of God. Therefore now the conscience of any Christian may make that interrogation and bold demand there. It may stand out any that dares to oppose the peace of his conscience, now that he may say, Who is it? It is God-man that died. It is Christ that died in our nature, and hath raised that nature of ours again, and is at the right hand of God. Who shall lay anything to our charge? The Spirit of life in Christ, quickening him, hath quickened us together with him; so that now we may boldly demand we are freed from our sins, because our Surety is freed from all.

All this was for our good. What Christ did, it was not for himself, but for us. And in his birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, we must consider him as a public person, and so go along with all that he did as a public person. Whatsoever may be terrible to us, we must look upon it first in Christ. If we look upon the corruption and defilement in our nature, look upon the pure nature of Christ. His nature was sanctified in his birth, and he is a public person: therefore this is for me; and though I be defiled in my own nature, and carry the remainders of corruption about me, yet the Spirit of life in Christ sanctified his nature, and there is more sanctity in him than there can be sin in me. When we look upon our sins, let us not so much look upon them in our consciences, as in our surety, Christ. When we look upon death, look not upon it in ourselves, in its own visage, but as it is in Christ, undergone and conquered: for the power of the Spirit of life in Christ overcame death, in himself first, and for us, and will overcome in us in time. When the wrath of God is on our consciences, look not upon it as it is in ourselves, but as undergone by Christ, and as Christ, by the Spirit of life now in him, is raised up, not from death alone, but from all terrors. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' See Christ, by the Spirit of life, quickened from all; not only bare natural death, but from all enemies thou needest to fear. From the law: it is nailed to his cross; he now triumphs over it; and from sin: he was a sacrifice for it; and from the wrath of God: he hath satisfied it, or else he had not come out of his grave. So whatsoever is terrible, look on it in Christ first, and see a full discharge of all that may affright thy conscience, and trouble thy peace any way. See him in his death, dying for every man that will believe. Consider him in his resurrection as a public person, not rising himself alone, but for all us. Therefore in 1 Pet. 1:8, there is an excellent place, 'Blessed be God, the Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance immortal, undefiled,' &c.; and so go along with him to his ascension, and see ourselves 'sitting with him in heavenly places,' as St Paul speaks, Eph. 2:6. Oh this is a sweet meditation of Christ! To see ourselves in him, in all the passages of his birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension to glory in heaven; for all that he did was as a public person, as the second Adam. But now, before the Spirit of life in Christ come to free me, I and Christ must be one; there must be a union between me and Christ; I must be a member of Christ mystical. For as Christ quickened his own body, every joint when it was dead, because it was his body, so he quickens his mystical body, every member of it. But I must be a member first; I must not be myself severed from Christ. Christ by his death obtained all good, and by his resurrection he declared it; but there must be an application to me. Now this Spirit of life which is in Christ, which quickened him and raised him up, and all for my good, must apply this to me.

The grace of application it is faith. Therefore this must be wrought in the next place. How doth the law of the Spirit of life free me? Because first it freed Christ, therefore me. But that is not enough, except there be application. Therefore the law of the Spirit of life works faith in me, to knit me to Christ, to make me believe, that all that he hath done is mine; and the same power that raised Christ from the dead, works the power of faith and application. For we must not think that it is an easy thing for a carnal man to believe, to go out of himself, that it is salvation enough to have salvation, by the obedience of another man. No. Both in the Ephesians and Colossians, in divers places, it is St Paul's phrase, that the same power 'that raised Christ from the dead;' must raise our hearts, and work faith in them. For as the good things that faith lays hold on are wondrous good things, even above admiration almost; that poor flesh and blood, a piece of earth, should be an heir of heaven, a member of Christ; that it should be above angels in dignity. And just as these things are super-excellent things, even above admiration in a manner, so the grace that believes these things, is also astonishing and excellent, and admirable grace, that is faith. Therefore faith must be wrought by the law of the Spirit of Christ by the ministry of the gospel. This is the grace of application, when a man goes out of himself; when he sees himself first in bondage to his corruptions, to Satan, and to death; and then sees the excellent way that God hath wrought in Christ to bring him out of that cursed estate; then he hath faith wrought in him by the Spirit. And indeed the same power and Spirit that quickened Christ from the dead, must quicken our hearts to believe in Christ. It is a miracle to bring the heart of man to believe. We think it an easy matter to believe. Indeed, it is an easy matter to *presume*, to have a conceit, but for the soul in the time of

temptation, and in the hour of death, for the guilty soul to go out of itself, and cast itself upon the mercy of God, who is justly offended, and to believe that the obedience of Christ is mine, as verily as if I had obeyed myself, here must be a strong sanctified judgment and a mighty power to raise the soul, to cast itself so upon God's mercy in Christ. So that besides the obtaining salvation by Christ, there must be a grace to apply it; and this is what faith accomplishes.

Faith is said to do that that Christ doth, because faith lays hold upon Christ. What faith doth, Christ doth; and what Christ doth, faith doth. Therefore it hath the same actions applied and given to it that Christ hath. Faith is said to save us. You know it is Christ that saves us. But faith lays hold on Christ that saves us. Faith purgeth the heart, and overcomes the world. Christ by his Spirit doth all this. Because faith wrought by the Spirit is such a grace as lays hold on the power of Christ, it goes out of itself to Christ, therefore what Christ doth, faith is said to do. So then the law of the Spirit of life in Christ not only freed Christ himself by his resurrection, but likewise by the same power whereby he raised himself, he raiseth our hearts to believe what he hath done, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation, and makes all that Christ did ours.

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, working faith in us, and by faith other graces, work together to free us from the law of sin and death. Christ doth it, and faith doth it, and grace, which issues from faith, doth it subordinately. Christ doth it by way of merit; and by his Spirit working faith in us, to lay hold upon whatsoever Christ hath done or suffered, as if we had done it ourselves. So it frees us from the law of sin and death, because it lays hold of the freedom wrought by Christ for us. But besides, and next to faith, there is a Spirit of sanctification, by which we are free from the commanding law of sin and death. But to clear all this, consider there is a freedom in this life, and in the life to come from sin and from death.

I. A freedom in this life, in calling, in justification, in sanctification; and in the life to come a freedom of glory.

1. There is a freedom *in effectual calling*, by the ministry of the gospel. The gospel being preached and unfolded, faith is wrought, whereby we know what Christ hath done for us; and we see a better condition in Christ than we are in by nature. Seeing by the Spirit of God the cursed estate we are in, we are convinced of sin in ourselves, and of the good that is in Christ; and hereupon we are called out of the thraldom we are in by nature, by the Spirit of Christ and the word of God, unfolding what our condition is; for man by nature having self-love in him, and that self-love being turned the right way, he begins to think, Ay, doth the word

of God say I am a slave to sin and damnation? The word of God can judge better than myself; and then the Spirit of God sets it on with conviction, that undoubtedly this is true. And together with the cursed kingdom and slavery that I am under, there is revealed a better estate in Christ; for the gospel tells us what we are in Christ; freed from hell and death, and heirs of heaven. Oh the happy estate of a Christian to be in Christ! The gospel, with the Spirit revealing this, a man is called out of the cursed estate he is in by nature to the fellowship of Christ by faith, which is wrought in this calling. So that now he comes to be a member of Christ by faith. So that whatsoever Christ hath, or is, or hath done or suffered, it is mine by reason of this union with him by faith, which is the grace of union that knits us to Christ, and the first grace of application. So there is the first degree of liberty and freedom wrought by the Spirit of God, together with the gospel in effectual calling.

2. The second is *in justification*. That faith and belief in Christ that was wrought in *effectual calling*, it frees me from the guilt of my sins. For when the gospel, in effectual calling, reveals that Christ is such a one, and that there is such an estate in Christ, and there is faith wrought in me, then that faith lays hold upon the obedience of Christ to be mine. For Christ in the gospel offers his obedience to be mine, as if I had done it in mine own person. Whatsoever Christ did or suffered is mine; for he is made of God to be 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. 1:30, to be all in all. The gospel sets him forth to be so. Now faith laying hold of Christ, to be made of God all in all, obedience, righteousness, &c., whatsoever is needful, hereupon this faith justifies me; hereupon I come to be free from the guilt of my sins, because my sins were laid upon Christ. Christ's death was the death of a surety. It was as if I had died myself, and more firm. Thus I come to be free in justification; for what my surety hath done I have done.

3. Again, There is a freedom *in sanctification*; that is, when a man believes that Christ is his, and that his sufferings are his, then the same Spirit that reveals this to be mine, it works a change and alteration in my nature, and frees me from the dominion of sin. The obedience of Christ frees me from the condemnation of sin, and the Spirit of sanctification frees me from the dominion of sin. This is the freedom of sanctification, which faith lays hold on. 'Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his,' Rom. 8:9. Christ as a head communicates to me the Holy Spirit to sanctify my nature; and 'of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John 1:16. So the Spirit of sanctification in Christ frees me from the dominion of sin and death.

It is said here, that by Christ we have spiritual liberty and freedom, not from sin and death, but from *the law* of sin and of death. It is one thing to be freed from sin and death, and another thing to be freed from the law of them; for we are

not indeed freed from sin and death, but from the law of sin and death, that is, from the condemning power of sin; that though sin be in us yet it doth not condemn us; and though we die, yet the sting is pulled out. Death is but a passage to a better life. So I say in justification, we are freed from the condemning power of sin; and in sanctification, from the commanding power of sin. When we are knit once to Christ, we have the obedience of Christ, ours in justification; and the holiness of Christ is derived to us, as from the head to the members in sanctification; and so we are freed from the law of sin.

To understand this a little better, the same Spirit that sanctified the natural body, the human nature of Christ, whereby he ‘became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,’ Eph. 5:30: the same Spirit doth sanctify the mystical body of Christ, that it may be ‘bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.’ For before we come to heaven, Christ must not only ‘be bone of our bone,’ &c., that is, in his incarnation, but we must be ‘bone of his bone,’ &c.; that is, we must have natures like Christ, not only flesh and blood—for so a reprobate hath flesh and blood, as Christ hath—but we must have his Spirit altering and changing our nature: that instead of a proud, disobedient, rebellious nature, now it must be a holy and humble and meek nature, together with human frailty, for that we carry about with us. Then the Spirit of life derived from Christ makes us ‘bone of his bone.’ For indeed, in his human nature being ‘bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,’ he made us ‘bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.’ He became man that we might partake of the divine nature, being partakers of the divine Spirit. So that now the Spirit of life in Christ, when we are knit to him, is a Spirit of sanctification, altering our natures and working in our hearts a disposition like Christ’s: that we judge as Christ judgeth, and choose as Christ chooseth, and aim at God’s glory as Christ did; for there is ‘the same mind in us that was in Christ,’ Philip. 2:5—in our proportion, growing still more and more to conformity with Christ, till we be in heaven, till ‘Christ be all in all,’ 1 Cor. 15:28, when he will change our nature to be holy as his own.

II. Besides this liberty from sin and death in this life, there is a glorious liberty and freedom that we have by the Spirit of Christ when we are dead; for then the Spirit of life that raised Christ’s dead body will raise our bodies; and that Spirit of Christ that raiseth his body and raiseth our souls in this world from sin to believe in him, will raise our dead bodies. The same virtue and power that works in Christ works in his members. This is called ‘the glorious liberty of the sons of God.’ Then we shall be freed indeed, not only from the law of sin, but from sin itself; and not only from the law of death, but death itself; and we ‘shall live for ever with the Lord,’ 1 Thess. 4:17. Christ then ‘shall be all in all by his Spirit.’ Christ will never leave us till he have brought us to that glorious freedom. We are

freed already from sin and death. He hath 'set us in heavenly places together with himself' now, Eph. 1:3. In faith we are there already: but then we shall be indeed. Thus you see how we come to have the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, to free us from the law of sin and death, and all the passages of it.

Use. You see here that there is law against law—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ against the law of sin and death. I beseech you, consider that God hath appointed law to countermand law; the Spirit of Christ to overcome sin in us, not only in justification but in sanctification. Oh let us therefore to our comfort think there is a law above this law. I have now cold, dead, base affections; but if I have the Spirit of Christ, he can quicken and enliven me. He will not only pardon my sin, but by the law of his Spirit direct, guide, and command me a contrary way to my lusts. And this is an art of spiritual prudence in heavenly things, whensoever we are beset with dangers, to set greater than that against it. The devil is an angel; but we have a guard of angels about us. The devil is a serpent; but we have a brazen serpent that cures all the stings of that serpent. We have principalities and powers against, but we have greater principalities and powers for us: the law of life against the law of sin and death. We have a law of our lusts tyrannizing over us and enthraling us. It is true. But then there is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to overcome and subdue that law of our lusts, if so be that we use the prerogatives we have, if we use faith and go to God and Christ, in whom are all the treasures of grace. He is the treasury of the church: 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John 1:16. Are we troubled with any corruptions? Go to the Spirit of liberty in Christ, and desire him to set us at liberty from the bondage and thralldom of our corruptions. And remember what Christ hath done for us, and where he is now, in heaven. Let us raise our thoughts that we may see ourselves in heaven already; that we maybe ashamed to defile our bodies and souls with the base drudgery of sin and Satan, that are sanctified in part in this world, and shall be glorified in heaven. Certainly faith would raise our souls so. We betray ourselves, when, being once in the state of grace, we are enthralled basely to any sin. 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, because you tare under grace,' saith the apostle, Rom. 6:14. Being under grace, if we do but use our reasoning and use faith and exercise the grace we have given us, we cannot be in thrall to corruptions. We shall have remainders to trouble us, but not to rule, and reign, and domineer. For sin never bears sway, but when we betray ourselves, and either believe not what Christ hath done for us, or else exercise not our faith. A Christian is never overtaken basely, but when he neglects his privileges and prerogatives, and doth not stir up the grace of God in him.

Learn this then, when we are troubled with anything, set law against law: set the law of the Spirit of life in Christ against all oppositions whatsoever; and let the temptation lie where it will.

1. Let it lie in justification, *as when we are tempted by Satan to despair for sins, for great sins*. Oh, but then consider, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath 'freed me from the law of sin and of death.' Christ was made sin, to free me from sin. Consider that Christ was God-man. He satisfied divine justice. 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John 1:7, 'though they be as red as crimson,' Isa. 1:18. Thus set Christ against our sins in justification, when the guilt of them troubles our souls.

2. And so likewise, *when we are set on by base lusts*, set against them the power of Christ in sanctification. What am I now? A member of Christ; one that profeseth myself to be an heir of heaven. There is a Spirit of life in Christ my head. There is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ; that is, there is a commanding power in his Spirit; and that Spirit of his is not only in the head, but in the members. If I go to him for grace, I may have grace, answerable to the grace that is in him, grace that will strengthen me with his power. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' Eph. 6:10, and in 'Christ I can do all things,' Philip. 4:18, by his Spirit, though in myself I can do nothing.

8. And *so in deadness and desolation of spirit*, when the soul is cast down with discomfort, let us think with ourselves, the Spirit of life in Christ is a quickening Spirit. If I can believe in Christ, he hath freed me from the guilt of sin; and he hath by his Spirit given me some little enlargement from the dominion of my corruptions: why should I be cast down? I am an heir of heaven. Ere long Satan shall 'be trodden under my feet,' Luke 10:19. Ere long I shall be free from the spiritual combat and conflict with sin, that I am now engaged with. Therefore I will comfort myself; I will not be cast down overmuch.

4. *In the hour of death*, let us make use of this freedom of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. When the time comes that there must be a separation of soul and body, Oh let us think with our ourselves: Now I must die, yet Christ hath died; and I must die in conformity to my head; and here is my comfort—'The law of the Spirit of life hath freed me from the law of death.' It hath freed me from spiritual and eternal death. So that now through Christ death is become friendly to me. Death now is not the death of me, but death will be the death of my misery, the death of my sins; it will be the death of my corruptions. Death now will be the death of all that before troubled me. But death will be my birthday in regard of happiness. 'Better is the day of death than the day of birth,'

Eccles. 7:1. When a man comes into this life he comes into misery; but when he dies, he goes out of misery and comes to happiness. So that, indeed, we never live till we die; we never live eternally and happily till then. For then we are freed from all misery and sin. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours,' Rev. 14:18. They rest from their labours of toil and misery; they rest from the labours of sin, from all labours whatsoever. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' and of all times then blessed, more blessed than before. They rest from their labours, and then begins their happiness that shall never end. So you see what comfort a Christian's soul sprinkled with the blood of Christ may have, if it go to God in Christ, and beg of Christ to be set at liberty from all enemies, to serve God in holiness and righteousness.

I speak too poorly when I say, the law of the Spirit of life hath freed us from sin and death. This is not all. The Spirit of life not only frees us from ill, but advanceth us to the contrary good in every thing wherein this freedom is. For we are not only called out of misery, but to a kingdom. We are not only freed from sin, but entitled to heaven in justification; and in sanctification we are not only freed from corruption, but enabled by the Holy Spirit of liberty to run the ways of God's commandments, and make them voluntary; to serve God cheerfully, 'zealous of good works,' Titus 2:14. We are not only freed from the command and condemnation of sin, and the rigour of the law, but we have contrary dispositions, ready and willing, and voluntary dispositions, wrought by the Spirit of Christ, to every thing that is good. And so we are not only free from death and misery (for so things without life are, they suffer no misery), but we are partakers of everlasting life and glory, the liberty of glory. God's benefits are complete; that is, not only privative, freeing us from ill, but positive, implying all good; because God will show himself a God: he will do good things as a God, fully. For the law of the Spirit of life not only frees us from the law of sin and of death, but 'writes the law of God in our hearts.' He not only frees us from the law of death, but advanceth us to everlasting life, to the glorious life we have in heaven, 'to live for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thes. 4:17. Oh happy condition of a Christian, if we could know our happiness!

Let us often meditate deeply of Christ, and of ourselves in him; let us see all our ill in him, and all our good in him: see death overcome, and sin overcome by his death, he being 'I made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:13: see the law overcome, he being 'made under the law for us,' Gal. 4:4,5. When the wrath of God vexeth and terrifieth us, see it upon him. 'He sweat water and blood in the garden,' Luke 22:44. It made him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mark 15:34. See all that may trouble us in him, as our surety. And all the good we hope

for, see it in Christ first. Whatsoever he hath in his natural body, it is for his mystical body; for he gave his natural body for his mystical. God in the world, to humble us, exerciseth us with troubles and calamities, as he did Christ. We must be conformable to our head. But consider, the poison and sting of all ills we need to fear is swallowed up and taken away by Christ. And, as I said, let us see all our good in him. We are sons in him, raised in him, blessed in him, 'set in heavenly places with him,' Eph. 1:3, and shall be fellow-heirs and kings with him; for we are his members, his spouse. The wife shall enjoy the same condition as the husband; whatsoever he hath she shall have. What a comfortable estate is this We can fear no ill, nor lack any good. Whatsoever he hath, it is for us. He was born for us. He died for us. He is gone to heaven for us; for us and our good. He did and suffered all these things. We cannot exercise our thoughts too much in these meditations.

The Lord's supper is a sacrament of union and communion. Hence it hath its name; and by receiving the sacrament, our communion and union with Christ is strengthened. What a comfort then is it to think, if I have fellowship with Christ it is sealed by the sacrament! When I take the bread and wine, at the same time I have communion with the body and blood of Christ shed for my sins; and as Christ himself was freed from my sins imputed to him, and by his resurrection declared that he was freed, so surely shall I be freed from my sins. So that this communion, taking the bread and wine, it seals to us our communion and fellowship with Christ, and thereupon our freedom from sin and from the law, and sets us in a blessed and happy estate. We should labour therefore by all means to strengthen our union and communion with Christ; and amongst the rest, reverently and carefully attend upon this blessed ordinance of God, for the body of Christ broken doth quicken us, because it is the body of the Son of God. 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,' John 6:55. And he calls his body broken the bread of life.' Why? Because it was the body of the Son of God, 'who is life,' John 6:35. All life comes from God. Now, Christ taking our nature upon him, his death is a quickening death, and by reason of the union with the divine nature, now it is the body of God broken and the blood of God shed for us. There is our comfort; and he was declared to be so by his resurrection, that declared that he was God, and that he was freed from our sins. Powerful must that Saviour needs be that was so strong in his very death, when his very body was broken and his blood let out. Then he did work the foundation of all comfort, for then he satisfied the wrath of God. Christ was strongest when he was weakest. The resurrection was but a declaration of the worth of that he had done. Now, in the sacrament we have communion with Christ dying, especially as his body is broken and his blood shed, for that is the foundation of all comfort by his resurrection. And because the Spirit of life was in Christ, and did quicken his body while he was alive, and was a Spirit

of life even when he died, and gave worth and excellency to his death, therefore, when we take the communion, we ought not to meditate merely of the death of Christ, as his blood was shed and his body broken, but of the death of such a person as had the Spirit of life in him, as was God and man. And so set the excellency of his person against all temptations whatsoever. Set the excellency of Christ so abased, his body broken and his blood shed, against all temptations. If it be the greatest, the wrath of God upon the conscience, yet when conscience thinks this, God, the party offended, gave his own Son to be incarnate, and the Spirit of life in him did quicken man's nature, and in that nature did die for satisfaction, now God will be satisfied by the death of such a surety as his own Son. So that the excellency of the person having the seal of God upon him, 'For him hath God the Father sealed,' John 6:27, doth wondrously satisfy conscience in all temptations whatsoever: What need a man fear death, and damnation, and the miseries of this life, and Satan? What are all? If God be appeased and reconciled in Christ, then a man hath comfort, and may think of all other enemies as conquered enemies. Now, we cannot think of the death of Christ, who was a 'quickening Spirit,' but we must think of the death of an excellent person, that gave worth to his death, to be a satisfactory death for us. Therefore let us receive the communion with comfort, that as verily as Christ is mine, so his quickening Spirit is communicated to me, and whatsoever he hath is mine. If I have the field, I have the pearl in it; his obedience, his victory over death, his sonship, is mine; his sitting in heaven is for me; he sits there to rule me while I am on earth, and to take me up to himself when I am dead. All is for me. When we have communion with Christ we have communion with all. Therefore 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' when I am one with him, it quickens me, and 'frees me from the law of sin and death.'

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