

once, and our having died with Him, that we may be free, and wholly, for faith in this new relationship. Now there may be faith in the efficacy of that work of Christ; that He has set us in the place where redemption brings us, and in favour under grace, and delivered us from the responsibility of making out righteousness to meet God, without that experimental acquaintance with what we are delivered from, which results through grace in deliverance, in practical reality, in the conscious state of the soul. This is not mere forgiveness and justification from guilt. That applies to the old standing in the flesh, and to its works. That is needed for the possession of the Spirit and deliverance, but is not its fruit and consequence; it is the clearing away the guilt of the old man, not the position of the new. But there is a more general aspect of redemption, in which it exists in the minds of many, in which it mixes itself up with the new.

We read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Now this, where there is no definite apprehension of truth as to the sealing of the Spirit, leads the mind into the feelings and peace which the sealing of the Spirit gives the definite consciousness of, in our relationship with the Father and the Son. I do not doubt that many sealed ones remain in this true but indefinite sense of grace, and count on divine love; for you have more than forgiveness, you have the riches of His grace, and you have redemption through His blood -- not merely forgiveness -- a rescue from a state you were in, and introduction into eternal blessings. But it is not, after all, conscious sonship, and being conscious in Christ, and Christ in us.

Having noticed and guarded these collateral questions, I turn to the direct point which is connected with the failure in practical deliverance from the law of sin which is in our members -- namely, the state of a soul which enjoys the liberty of its new position in grace, but does not find power against evil as it would wish. Now, we have already noticed that there are the two things: the presence of the Holy Ghost, by which we know we are under grace, and enjoy the relationships into which we are brought-- the Spirit of adoption, and that work by which the deliverance has been wrought; not forgiveness, or the blessed Lord's dying for our sins, but His dying to sin, and rising again. This last was closing all association with the first Adam place, and law, its rule from God, which could bind no longer than a man lived and the entering into a new place and standing with God, based on redemption and divine righteousness. The place is now according to the riches of God's grace, and past all that separated us from God, accomplished for us on the cross, and according to this place in sonship through redemption -- "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." The Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness, shedding withal abroad in our hearts the love of God. Blessed be His name, we are in Christ before God, and we know it.

But then Christ is in us. But it is not difficult to understand that the soul which, through grace, has believed in redemption and the grace that gave it, should know and have the consciousness of this acceptance. This depends on our being in Christ, and this known by the Spirit; it is objective, our standing in faith; and the new man acquainted with redemption cannot but know its place in Christ, though it may be little realized. But when I speak of Christ in me, it applies to my actual state -- is subjective. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." Now I fully admit that we are brought into this place by Christ's work. Still, the state of the soul is connected with it, not simply relationship. With whom does death put us in relationship? It puts us out of relationship with all a living man is connected with -- sin, the world, and all in it; and that is a very great thing indeed, but it is what has happened to us if Christ is in us. Of this more in a moment. But if knowing that I am in Christ, and Christ in me, I look up. Is there any flaw, or something wanting to my position? Why, Christ (and I am in Him) is the very object and perfection of God's delight; I lack nothing; acceptable according to God Himself, I have nothing unacceptable to what He is. I may realize it more or less, but what I realize is perfection itself. But Christ is in me- I look down. Is all perfect, nothing wanting here? Not in Him abstractedly; but if I am true, earnest, loving holiness, loving Christ, I find what displeases me, how much more God! No excuse, for Christ is power as well as life; but all is not what I would have it to be, even according to the light I have.

The Christian's responsibility is here to walk as Christ walked, to manifest the life of Jesus in his mortal flesh. Without Christ he can do nothing, and diligence, a heart exercised in dependence, prayer, the word, watchfulness--all have their place; exercising oneself day and night to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, not grieving the Holy Spirit of promise by which we are sealed, so that He be not a rebuker, but the spring of joy in that which is heavenly. It is not now a question of righteousness or imputation. As to that, Christ has borne our sins, and we are in Him, according to His acceptance before God. The question is now brought into one of holiness, of acceptableness, not acceptance; and with a true heart this is of the utmost moment. For though God's sovereign grace has found a way in the unspeakable gift of Jesus on the cross, of meeting our sins according to His glory, so that grace should reign through righteousness, and guilt be no longer in question, yet what is really acceptable to Him is the basis of this very judicial estimate, and as partakers of the divine nature, His judgment is ours.

But this leads us to the very point in question. We hate the evil, yet the flesh is in fact there, and the practical question of deliverance is, how far we are free from it, or how far it has still power in us. I may writhe under cords which bind me, and yet not be able to

break them and be free; and we have to learn our own weakness and want of power as well as our guilt. But, being renewed, born of God, I hate the evil, I groan under its power. I earnestly seek and strive to live free from it. I do not succeed. I learn that there is no good in me; I learn that it is not I, for I hate it, but I learn it is too strong for me when I do.

Into the detail of this I do not enter: it has been treated of elsewhere; it is in principle always law, the thought of God's judgment of us depending on our state. This is not -- in its grosser form--guilt; for that is through sins committed; but being lost through what we are, perhaps a terrible question of self-deception, if we have made profession. We may writhe under the cords that bind us, and rub ourselves sore, but the cords are not broken, but a most useful lesson has been learned -- what we are, and that we have no strength. And now comes deliverance, through the working and power of the Holy Ghost, but in the faith of what the blessed Lord has wrought. He has not only borne our sins, redeemed us, and cleared us from guilt, but He died unto sin. The full result will be the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, but the work itself is done. He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. See Heb. 9:26, and what follows as to our sins: and John 1:29. Now thus as a sacrifice to put away sin, we find its practical application in Rom. 8:3. When Christ was for sin, that is, a sacrifice for sin, God condemned sin in the flesh, not that Christ surely had any, but that He was made sin for us, Him who knew no sin, and died to it on the cross. I have part in the efficacy of His cross, and this hateful sin in the flesh, condemnable in me and everywhere, has been condemned there, condemned in Christ's death. He died unto sin once; and while the condemnation is accomplished, and most solemnly and fully for me, in that blessed One, who was made sin for me in grace, it was so in death, so that, as done effectually for me, there is no condemnation, but I reckon myself dead. I have been crucified with Christ, my old man is crucified with Him. We are not actually dead, of course; but faith, according to the word, appropriates this truth.

Up to this point I had been as a quickened soul in the position of a child of Adam, and practically under the law, labouring to have done with the old man, with sin in the flesh, but without success. Now I have died with Christ, and so do not belong to the old position of a child of Adam. Death clearly closes all relationship and bond with it.* I cannot speak of a man who is lying dead as having evil lusts and a perverse will. The law might show [*In Romans this is applied to sin in the flesh; in Colossians, to the world.]

me the evil, but could not remedy it. But I have died with Christ, and am delivered from the law; the condemnation is passed, being accomplished on the cross; but that was in death, so that I reckon myself dead, and no condemnation there. Up to that it was effort to over-

come what remained untouched there in its vital strength. But God has dealt for us with this in Christ, Himself sinless. And we have not overcome but been delivered, having died in that wherein we were held, for Christ has died for us. Hence in Col. 3, God pronounces on our position: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

With God the question is settled. I am not in the flesh, not in the standing of a child of Adam. I have died in that when Christ died. The judgment of God, declared in Col. 3, is deliverance; for that which I was hopelessly struggling under is dead and gone -- the old "I" of my corrupt and sinful nature; not only that I have received divine life in power in Christ (Rom. 8:2), but that the sin of the old man has been condemned in the cross, and I, as such, died there. My standing is in Christ, not in Adam or flesh at all. It is not that the flesh is not in me, but it is not my standing and place before God. I am in Christ, or in the Spirit: in Christ, consequent on His having died and risen, and gone up beyond sin and death and judgment; or in the Spirit, which is the power of it down here.

Faith, in Rom. 6, takes up the judgment of God in Col. 3, and I reckon myself dead to sin, and alive to God; not in Adam, but in Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence, while "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," this liberty has a double aspect -- conscious liberty in the light before God as in Christ, and a son; and liberty from the law of sin in the flesh. I have got into the new place in Christ, in that I have died to the old thing -- Adam -- and am alive in Christ. Had I to die, or to get free, by my own victory, I should not succeed, but I have found the need of a deliverer, as unable myself to set aside flesh, and have by grace found one -- in, by faith, having died and risen with Christ. I have not to die; I reckon myself dead, because by the Holy Ghost Christ who died is in me as my life. The Holy Ghost gives me adoption, and the consciousness of being in Christ a son. It does give me faith as to having died with Christ; but it cannot give me the consciousness that the flesh is not there, but that I am not a debtor to it, nor that I am living after the Spirit when I am not. I know the conflict exists, that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, but that, the Spirit being there, I am not under the law. There I was captive to the law of sin. In the Spirit I am not; on the contrary, Christ's grace is sufficient for me, His strength made perfect in weakness. I am at liberty, because the sin I have discovered in my flesh has been condemned in the cross of Christ, and that was in death; so that for faith I am crucified with Him, and got into the new place of man before God, after the cross, and in resurrection, past sin, Satan's power, death and judgment. That place is liberty -- liberty before God and from the law of sin. I am dead to it, having died with Christ. Romans does not go farther than death in this doctrine, and Christ being our life. In Colossians, resurrection with Him is introduced; and we are dead also to the world.

As to our life, the old things are passed, and Christ is our life, we having with Him died to sin, and now alive to God with Him (my whole spiritual condition, in connection with sin in the flesh, having closed by death); and this is so perfect, that we could, if God's time were come, go, and be as the thief Christ's companion in paradise. But generally we are left here and have to do with the old man -- the flesh; free, redeemed out of the state and standing we were in, but having to do with the existence of flesh in us, with Satan and the world around. It is with the first I have to do now. Now in this state of things, that is, in a believer sealed with the Spirit, the conscious relationship is with God as sons, and true liberty is there. But there is more: when we have learned what it is to have died with Christ, the soul is set "free from the law of sin and death." He that is dead is justified from sin -- not sins. You cannot accuse a dead man of a perverse will or evil lusts. But the flesh is in me. Now, captive to the law of sin in my members is not the place of conflict nor of victory, any more than Israel had to fight in Egypt. There may be carelessness as regards our communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; but this is only deadness of soul, and the power of present things, the want of spiritual feeling. But if we do not mortify the deeds of the body, there is a positive evil power at work, positive evil rises up; if there be conscience, the sense of a bad state is there, and a worse one if there be not-the spiritual judgment is deteriorated. The flesh has a power which does not answer to deliverance, and we see persons who have not lost the sense of their standing with God, and are in that sense at liberty, in whom the flesh works as if spiritual power in Christ were not there.

Now, in such cases, the remedy is not to deny the deliverance; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Entangling the soul again in the yoke of bondage is not what gives power. Slaves are not combatants, the yoke has to be broken. Where there is liberty and spiritual power, there is conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Hence it is so beautifully put in the end of Rom. 6. Now you are free, dead to sin, and alive in Christ to God, to whom are you going to give yourselves? to sin, or to righteousness and God, with fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life? Such is God's way, by freeing us from the law of sin, and putting us in the liberty of adoption with Himself, to set us in the conflict, to realize fruit unto holiness here. Our standing is perfect, our state in no way; meet in Christ to be with Him, but exercised in daily spiritual life, if left here, how far we live up to the life which is ours in Christ, through Christ in us. God's view of our position, as noticed, is in Col. 2 and 3. Faith takes this up (Rom. 6), and the believer reckons himself dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ. In 2 Cor. 4:10 we have the practical carrying it out, and God's dealing with us in view of it. "Always bearing

about in the body the dying [not the death] of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body."

Theoretically there ought to be no movement of the flesh in us, being suppressed by this application of the dying of Jesus. This supposes the activity of the new man to keep our thoughts and ways up to the level of the blessing into which we have been introduced, practically the life of Jesus manifested in us. It supposes a lusting flesh, but always absolutely kept down. If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; if it lives of its own life and will, it will produce only that, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But, alas! this normal condition is not always maintained, as we know, if we know ourselves, and God disciplines us. We are delivered to death; well for us if it be for Jesus' sake. If we fail, we have an Advocate with the Father, or we may have a thorn in the flesh that we may not fail. Our normal condition is to be beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, and feeding by faith on Him in His humiliation as the bread come down from heaven, and so living by Him, abiding in Him, and growing up unto Him, who is the Head, in all things. When walking thus, the flesh has no power; it is there, but the heart is elsewhere. Still, down here, we are passing through temptations and snares, and watching and praying constantly is needed not to enter into them, because the disposition of nature, if not will, is there. Power is there in Christ for us. We are not under the law of sin, but spiritually free, and there is no excuse for failure, but we do all fail. Where there is not diligence in watching and praying, we do not lose the sense of our position, but we act inconsistently with it. A son may never for a moment have such a question rise in his mind, but he may be a naughty, rebellious son.

So sin has power over the unwatchful unpraying believer, who yet never doubts of his place in Christ when he has been set free. He is not a slave, but a son, but more faulty than if he were a slave. He is not under the law of sin, but he is practically governed by it in his ways, because he is not profiting by the grace and power of Christ, his conscience and heart keeping far away from Him. The standard of his Christianity becomes frightfully lowered, and he sees "no harm" in things from which, in times past, he would have shrunk -- not because they were prohibited, but because the life and Spirit of Christ in him found no food or attraction in them, but the contrary. Yet he may not have lost the sense of his place before God; in that sense he has deliverance, as a child goes on in the sense that he is a child, though heedless of his father's will, and of his father's pleasure. But this is a sad state. The remedy is not making him doubt of his adoption, but pressing with the claim of Christ's love his walking worthy of the calling wherewith he is called.

But it is of all moment to see that deliverance in the sense of known relationship with God, our place in

Christ, not in Adam or in flesh, is a distinct thing from deliverance in the sense of the realization of death and resurrection with Christ. This is the basis of that, known by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. But one is the place we are in, the other the experimental power of walking according to that place, and, as the flesh is in us, requiring diligence of heart in seeking grace and strength (for without Christ we can do nothing), seeking Him, and the things which are above, where He is seated, and bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

But it is of all moment that we recognize deliverance from the law of sin as the Christian state. Here only is power, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the power of the Spirit of God working in the life of Christ. There is true liberty, and that based on Christ's dying to sin once, and for sin; Rom. 6 and 8. There is, for such, a grace sufficient for us, and strength made perfect in weakness; so that there is no excuse for the commission of sin, though the flesh be in us. And here spiritual exercises have their place, to the acquisition of heavenly things in spirit, and a heavenly character down here. It is evident that the grace and strength of Christ only can enable us to walk in the path in which He walked, but that grace is sufficient for us. But His strength -- it is its nature and character -- is made perfect in weakness; and there must be known weakness in us to find this strength. Hence those exercises of heart before deliverance, in which we learn our weakness, that we cannot get the victory (even when we desire it), which lead to the felt need of deliverance. This we find in the death of Christ, and are thus free -- "free from the law of sin and death." Consequent on this there is victory, and, if kept in the sense that we have no strength in ourselves, the peaceful though watchful consciousness that He is with us, as well as that without Him we can do nothing. Deliverance is His dying to sin once, and we in Him, and, while thus free, having the strength in Him which is made perfect in weakness in us. Till we have learned that we cannot free ourselves, we do not get freedom. Freedom is the portion of every Christian so taught of God; strength, of him who abides in the sense that he has none, and looks to Christ; only there are the Lord's gracious dealings with us to keep us in this position.

J. N. Darby

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Deliverance from the Law of Sin

... intercourse with others, and some passages of scripture, have re-aroused the desire to dwell a little on some points which present difficulty, even where in theory all is plain, and especially the want of deliverance from the law of sin where liberty with God is known. It is very evident that deliverance from the law of sin and death ought not, indeed cannot, remain in theory. Yet we find those who avow they are sealed, and have the consciousness of the effect of the Spirit's dwelling in them, are not delivered from that law of evil which works in the flesh. That conflict will remain to the end, though perhaps in a more subtle form, is certain. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We deceive ourselves; the truth, in the inward effect of its presence on our conscious state, has not produced its effect. Where the truth of Christ is in the heart, there is the consciousness that there is that which is not Christ. Where this is not so, the conscience has not been so wrought on as to give in the new man begotten by the word the sense of that which is contrary to Christ, who is the life of the new man, the spring of its sensibilities and moral feelings. Where this has been wrought in us, it gives its own consciousness of anything and everything that is contrary to it. There is no need of yielding to it, for Christ's grace is sufficient for us, and His strength is made perfect in weakness; but the being out of its power supposes the power of Christ, and diligence in looking to Him, that we may have that power to use, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body."

But let us weigh the effect of the sealing with the Spirit. Scripture is plain that it is consequent on faith in redemption, as His coming is the consequence of the accomplishment of redemption. Acts 2:38 gives us the plain declaration that it is in having part in the forgiveness of sins that the Holy Ghost is given. (So Eph.1:13.) Hence liberty is there at once for the forgiven soul. It has remission of its sins, is conscious of it, and is before God, with a purged conscience, in peace. Rom. 5 is the expression of this -- the general normal state of a redeemed soul. It enjoys that favour which is better than life.

But there are two things consequent on this, connected more immediately with deliverance -- our new relationships, and power over sin in the flesh. The presence of the Holy Ghost is the power of the new relationship and liberty with God, but there was a work done by Christ to bring us into it -- His dying unto sin