

The Freedom of the Christian Excerpt from a New Life, ch. 49 by Andrew Murray Wellington, 1882.

"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Being made free from sin, Ye have your fruit unto holiness" Romans 6:18,22.

"But now we are delivered from the law" Romans 7:6.

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

Freedom is counted in Scripture as one of the greatest privileges of the child of God. Throughout history, there is nothing for which nations have made great sacrifices except freedom. Slavery is the lowest condition into which man can sink, for in it he can no longer govern himself. Freedom is the deepest need of his nature.

To be free, then, is the condition in which anything can develop itself according to the law of its nature--according to its own disposition. Without freedom nothing can attain its destiny or become what it should be. This is true of the animal and man, of the worldly and the spiritual alike. It was for this reason that God chose the redemption of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt and into the glorious liberty of the promised land as the everlasting example of redemption out of the slavery of sin and into the liberty of the children of God.¹ On this account, Jesus said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). And the Holy Scriptures teach us to stand firmly in the freedom with which Christ made us free. Complete insight into this freedom opens up to us one of the greatest glories of the life that the grace of God has prepared for us.²

There are three passages from the Epistle to the Romans which speak of our sanctification through a threefold freedom. There is freedom from sin in the sixth chapter, freedom from the law in the seventh, and freedom from the law of sin in the eighth.

There is freedom from sin (Romans 6:7,18,22). Sin is represented as a power that rules over man, and under which he is brought and taken captive: It urges him to be a slave to evil.³ By the death of Christ and in Christ, the believer--who is one with Him--is made entirely free from the dominion of sin. It has no more power over him. If, then, he still sins, it is because he permits sin still to rule over him, not knowing his freedom by faith. But if by faith he fully accepts what the Word of God thus confirms, then sin has no power over him. He overcomes it by the faith that he is made free from it.⁴

Then there is freedom from the law. This leads us deeper into the life of grace than freedom from sin. According to Scripture, law and sin always go together. "The strength of sin is the law" (I Corinthians 15:56). The law does nothing but make the offence greater.⁵ The law reveals our sinfulness. It cannot help us against sin; rather, with its demand for perfect obedience, it hopelessly gives us over to the power of sin. The Christian who does not realize that he is made free from the law will still always abide under sin.⁶ Christ and the law cannot rule over us together. In every endeavor to fulfill

the law as believers, we are taken captive by sin.⁷ The Christian must know that he is entirely free from the law--from the *you must* that stands around us and over us. Then, for the first time, he will know what it is to be free from sin.

Then there is also freedom from the law of sin--actual liberation from the power of sin in our members. What we have in Christ, freedom from sin and from the law, is inwardly appropriated for us by the Spirit of God. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The Holy Spirit in us takes the place of the law over us. "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Galatians 5:18). Freedom from the law is not anything external. Instead, it takes place according to the amount of dominion and leading of the Spirit within us. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Accordingly, as the law of the Spirit rules in us, we are made free from the law, and from the law of sin. We are then free to do what we, as God's children, would gladly do--serve God.

Free expresses a condition in which nothing hinders me from being what I could and should be. In other words, *free* is to be able to do what I desire. The power of sin over us, the power of the law against us, and the power of the law of sin in us, hinder us. But he who stands in the freedom of the Holy Spirit--he who is then truly free--cannot be prevented or hindered from being what he could and should be. As it is the nature of a tree to grow upwards--free from all hindrances--so a child of God then grows to what he should and will be. As the Holy Spirit leads him into this freedom, the joyful consciousness of his strength for the life of faith springs up. He shouts joyfully, "I can do all things through Him which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

A Prayer --- Son of God, anointed with the Spirit to announce freedom to the captives, make me also truly free. Let the Spirit of life in You, my Lord, make me free from the law of sin and of death. I am Your ransomed one. Let me live as Your freed one, who is hindered by nothing from serving You. Amen.

Footnotes

1) Ex. 1:14; 4:23; 6:5; 20:2; Deut. 24:18

2) John 8:32; Gal. 4:21,31; 5:1

3) John 8:34; Rom. 7:14,23; 2 Pet. 2:19

4) Rom. 5:21; 6:13,14

5) Rom. 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:13

6) Rom. 6:15; 7:5

7) Rom. 7:23

1. The freedom of the Christian extends over his whole life. He is free in relation to the institutions and teachings of men: "Ye are bought with a price: be ye not the servants of men" (1 Cor. 7:23; Col. 2:20). He is free in relation to the world and in the use of what God gives. He has power to possess it or to dispense with it, to enjoy it or to sacrifice it (1 Cor. 9:1).

2. This freedom is no lawlessness. We are free from sin and the law to serve God in the Spirit. We are not under the law, but give ourselves, with free choice and in love, to Him who loves us (Rom. 6:18; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). Not under the law, also not without the law, but in the law--a new and higher law. "The law of the Spirit of life," "the law of liberty," (1 Cor. 9:21; Jas. 1:1.5; 2:12), the law written in our hearts, is our rule and measure. In this last passage the translation ought to be, "bound by a law to Christ."

3. This freedom has its subsistence from and in the Word. The more the Word abides in me and the truth lives in me, the freer I become (John 8:31,32,36).

4. Freedom manifests itself in love. I am free from the law and from man and from institutions to be able now, like Christ, to surrender myself for others (Rom. 14:13,21; Gal. 5:13; 6:1).

5. This glorious liberty to serve God and our neighbour in love is a spiritual thing. We cannot by any means seize it and draw it to us. It becomes known only by a life in the Holy Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). It is the Holy Spirit who makes us free. Let us allow ourselves to be introduced by Him into the effectual, glorious liberty of the children of God. "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

6. exemption from the presence of anything specified (usually fol. by *from*): *freedom from fear*.

The law of Moses pointed out the cases in which the servants of the Hebrews were to receive their freedom (Ex. 21:2-4, 7, 8; Lev. 25:39-42, 47-55; Deut. 15:12-18). Under the Roman law the "freeman" (*ingenuus*) was one born free; the "freedman" (*libertinus*) was a manumitted slave, and had not equal rights with the freeman (Acts 22:28; comp. Acts 6:37-39; 21:39; 22:25; 25:11, 12).

freedom." *Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary*. 04 Jan. 2007. <Dictionary.com

John 8: 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.
36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Romans 5: 15-18

15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they

which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life

Rom. 6:20-23

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ISAIAH 61:1

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound;

2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

1 Pet. 2: 16,17 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king