THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ROMANS 8:1-17

M. R. BROWN

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
AVONDALE CAMPUS

WESTCLIFF LIBRARY COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

IN ROMANS 8:1-17

by

Martin R. Brown

Chairman: Arthur J. Ferch

76241

NOT FOR CIRCULATION

AVONDALE LIBRARY COLLEGE

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

School of Graduate Studies

Avondale Campus

Title: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ROMANS 8:1-17

Name of researcher: Martin R. Brown

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Norman H. Young, Ph.D.

Date completed: December 1983.

Problem

There is an emphasis in Rom 8:1-17 that is not always seen in its proper dimensions. It is Paul's emphasis on the involvement of the Spirit in every aspect of the Christian life. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine Rom 8:1-17 in order to bring out this emphasis on the work of the Spirit.

Procedure

In considering the emphasis on the Spirit in Rom 8:1-17, it seems that Rom 8:2 presents a basic statement of the work of the Spirit in the Christian life. The main idea is that the Spirit of life has delivered the believer in Christ Jesus from the power of sin and death.

The approach of this thesis is to deal thematically with vss. 3-17 to demonstrate that the theme of Rom 8:2 is in fact developed by Paul in these verses. The Spirit does deliver the believer from the power of sin, according to vss. 12-14. The positive side of this is introduced in Rom 8:4 where the Spirit is seen to enable the believer to live a righteous life.

In the face of the inevitability of death, the assurance of life can be the present possession of the believer because of the indwelling Spirit of God (vss. 14-16). The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives more than assurance. He is life, now and eternally, as stated in vss. 10-11.

Conclusions

Examination of Rom 8:1-17 does show that Paul develops the theme of Rom 8:2 in the following verses of this passage. There it can be seen that Paul sees the Spirit involved in every aspect of Christian living.

It is also noted that the experience of the Spirit is only available to those who are in a faith-relationship with Jesus Christ. The understanding of this is vital to a successful Christian life.

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies
Avondale Campus

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ROMANS 8:1-17

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

76241

by
Martin R. Brown

December 1983

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ROMANS 8:1-17

A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Religion

by

Martin R. Brown

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Arthur J. Ferch, Th.D., Chairman

Norman H. Young, Ph.D.

Laurence A. Turner, M.Div., Th.M

December 5, 1983
Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. A SURVEY OF ROMANS 8:1-17 3

Introduction 3
Presuppositions 4
Literature : A General Comment 5
Romans 8:2: A Basic Proposition. 6
The Spirit and Deliverance from Sin 8
The Spirit and the Practice of Righteousness 10
The Spirit and the Assurance of Life 14
The Spirit and Eternal Life 20
Conclusions 21

III. ROMANS 8:2: PAUL'S THESIS 23

In Christ Jesus 24
The Law of the Spirit of Life 25
The Law of Sin and Death 28
Freedom by the Spirit 31

IV. DELIVERANCE FROM SIN BY THE SPIRIT 34

The Spirit of God: The Enabler 34
By Flesh or By Spirit? 36
Summons or Description? 38
Definitions of "Putting to Death" 42
Progress or Process? 46

V. THE SPIRIT AND THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 49

Some Differing Opinions 49
A Broader Base 53
Acts or Attitudes? 55
Walking by the Spirit 61
The Indwelling of the Spirit 65
The Spirit in the Community 69
Abba! Father! 71
Conclusion 73

VI. THE SPIRIT AND THE ASSURANCE OF LIFE 75

If the Spirit of God Dwells in You 76
Assurance in Sonship 79
The Spirit of Adoption 80
The Witness of the Spirit 85

VII. THE SPIRIT AND ETERNAL LIFE 91

The Spirit Is Life 91
The Spirit and the Resurrection 95

VIII. THE SPIRIT AND JESUS 99

IX. CONCLUSION 104

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 107

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rom 8:1-17 is worthy of a good deal of study and meditation. It deals with matters that are essential to an understanding of the Christian life. These matters include Christian conduct, the conflict with sin in the life of the believer, the present gift of eternal life, and assurance for the believer that he is a child of God.

As Paul discusses these he presents the Spirit of God as vitally involved in all of them. The believer, the person in a faith-relationship with Jesus Christ, has none of these without the presence and the activity of the Spirit of God.

Although these important matters are dealt with in this passage, it seems that the attitudes generally displayed to this scripture do not give it its due importance. It is in some cases ignored. Mostly, it is treated on the same level as everything else. It is not often seen as the high point that it is.

Furthermore, in studying this passage, it seems to this writer that Paul had a definite purpose in mind that is only rarely mentioned by commentators. In Rom 8:2 Paul makes a basic statement about the Spirit of God and the person in Christ Jesus. Vss. 3-17 develop the themes introduced in vs. 2. An understanding of this gives greater impact to Paul's thought.

In developing this theme of the Spirit's work, Paul shows how

essential the work of the Spirit is to the Christian life. It is this emphasis on the Spirit's role in Christian living that this thesis seeks to bring out. It does this because the work of the Spirit for the believer is not optional. Any person who does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ.

Even among those who are in fact Christians, there is a good deal of neglect of the Spirit. The desire to look to Jesus who is more easily known, and the mystery surrounding the Spirit who is not so easily known, make this understandable. However, this does not change the fact that Christians need to know and recognise the Spirit of God as the great Enabler. He is the means by whom God actually gives what is necessary for living in Christ Jesus. The Spirit is thus neglected at considerable spiritual loss. He needs to be sought and known, even by Christians. Wrote Ellen White: "Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death."[1]

---

[1]Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1958), p. 50.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF ROMANS 8:1-17

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is not to attempt a systematic exegesis of Rom 8:1-17. It is to examine carefully the emphasis on the Spirit that is evident in this passage, and particularly as it relates to the Christian life.

Throughout the New Testament the Spirit is referred to frequently. Such passages as John 14-16, Acts, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Galatians, and Ephesians can be seen as areas of emphasis concerning the Spirit and different aspects of his work. However, nowhere else in the Bible is there such an intense concentration of references to the Spirit as in Rom 8:1-17. This in itself should signal to us the importance of the study of this area of Scripture.[1] When it is seen that the thrust of this passage relates to the fundamental issues of living the Christian life, it takes on a greater importance.

> The principal themes of the section are New Life in the Spirit and Sonship with God. Both are timely today in view of man's sense of frustration and defeat, and the danger of losing the individual in the crowd. . . . In presenting these themes the doctrine of the Spirit demands study and calls for an exposition of Biblical teaching concerning the Spirit, as the personal life-giving power of God, raising men above themselves and their

---

[1] "The key-word of this whole chapter is the word spirit." C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), p. 116.

circumstances, banishing the sense of futility, and witnessing to the reality of divine sonship.[1]

Presuppositions

The presupposition of this writer relating to the Spirit in Rom 8:1:17 is that He is the personal Spirit of God, a supernatural power working for and in the believing Christian. It seems, then, that this can be presupposed because commentators in the main, with more or less clarity of definition, do accept that "Spirit" here refers to the Holy Spirit of God. For example, Cranfield writes that "in the majority of its occurrences in Rom 8 it [πνεῦμα] quite certainly denotes the Holy Spirit."[2] Käsemann says that "the Spirit . . . is the power which works in all the baptized and which also empowers for ecstasy and miracle."[3] And Dodd explains that ". . . by "Spirit", Paul means the supernatural or divine element in human life."[4]

There are some particular references in Rom 8:1-17 where it is debated as to whether Spirit refers to the Spirit of God or the human spirit. These are noted and elucidated in the appropriate contexts.

One warning should be sounded. The work of the Spirit in relation to the Christian life is not, and never should be seen as, something separate from the saving work of Jesus Christ. This is not

---

[1]Vincent Taylor, The Epistle to the Romans, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries (London: Epworth Press, 1955), pp. 52-53.

[2]C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical And Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, International Critical Commentary, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:371.

[3]Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 212.

[4]Dodd, p. 118.

just a theological convention; it is a Biblical fact that is evident throughout Rom 8:1-17. Kasemann rightly indicates that the Pauline doctrine of the Spirit is indissolubly linked with Christology.

> In the Spirit the risen Lord manifests his presence and lordship on earth. Conversely the absolute criterion of the divine Spirit is that he sets the community and its members in the discipleship of the Crucified.[1]

The believer's relationship with his Lord is the key to the availability of the Spirit in his life.

Literature: A General Comment

In considering the available literature dealing with this emphasis on the Spirit in Rom 8, little that is specific has been found outside of commentaries. Even the commentaries do not always deal appropriately with the Pauline emphasis. It is possible that this reflects a certain neglect of pneumatology in general. Writing an introduction to a monograph on the general theme of "The Spirit in Paul," Du Plessis says:

> As one reviews the material at one's disposal and current theological literature one is astounded at the scantiness of thought on the theme. One comes inevitably to the realisation that Pneuma is the stepchild of N.T. Theology. Abounding in meditation on Christology, the field yields a poor crop as far as Pneuma is concerned.[2]

It may be instructive to note that, while Du Plessis himself does refer to Rom 8, the following pages of this monograph do not. In looking for journal material one finds the same problem; there are many general articles about the Holy Spirit, but very few specifically on Rom 8 and the Spirit. Books on the Holy Spirit

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 213.

[2]P. J. Du Plessis, "The Concept of Pneuma in the Theology of Paul," Neotestamentica 3 (1969):9.

present the same picture. A general topical or thematic presentation passes over the ground without picking up Paul's emphasis. Three books have been found written on Rom 8. Two of them highlight the emphasis on Spirit, one emphasizes the importance of Rom 8.[1] The first two are probably not well known, although their authors are not unknown. All three are popular, rather than scholarly works.

Because of the recognised importance of Romans there is a large number and a wide variety of commentaries available. It is from these that the bulk of reference material must come.

Romans 8:2: A Basic Proposition

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).[2]

It is the contention of this thesis that this statement lays down a principle that is expanded in the following paragraphs.

Cranfield says that "the law of the Spirit of life" has been given various explanations, such as: faith, the law of God, spiritual life resulting from union with Christ, and the religion which is possible in Christ.[3] Most commentators today seem to be happy to see this as a direct reference to the Spirit of God active in the believer. This has been stated well by Käsemann: "The law of the Spirit is nothing other than the Spirit himself in his ruling function

---

[1]E. F. Kevan, The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1953); A. Skevington Wood, Life by the Spirit (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.); Marcus L. Loane, The Hope of Glory: An Exposition of the Eighth Chapter in the Epistle to the Romans (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968).

[2]All Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

[3]Cranfield, 1:375-76.

in the sphere of Christ."[1] Murray understands it as "the regulating and actuating power of the Holy Spirit."[2] Cranfield sees the phrase referring to "the authority and constraint exercised upon believers by the Holy Spirit."[3]

However, from what does the Spirit deliver us? There are different opinions here. "The law of sin and death" is interpreted by Barrett as "the law of Moses, seized and perverted by sin and consequently leading to death."[4] Calvin says, however, "I would not dare, with some interpreters, take the law of sin and death to mean the law of God. This seems too harsh an expression."[5] Dodd, considering from what the Spirit delivers, says: "It is not the Mosaic Law that is in view, but that 'other law in my members which conflicts with the law of my mind.'"[6] He means deliverance from the power of sin.

While many commentators would go along with this basic position, some of them seem bound also to see that there is deliverance from the law, even though it is not mentioned in this verse. For example, the Spirit "separates not only from sin and death but also

---

[1]Käsemann, pp. 215-16.

[2]John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, New International Commentary on the New Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960), 1:276.

[3]Cranfield, 1:376.

[4]C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1957), p. 155.

[5]John Calvin, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), p. 157. (Italics in quotations are to be understood as appearing in the original, unless specifically indicated otherwise.)

[6]Dodd, p. 119.

from their instrument, the irreparably perverted law of Moses."[1] Depending on the direction that is taken from such a statement, this could lead either to Christian freedom or license. This is something that must be resolved. The Spirit not only frees the believer from sin, but empowers him for righteousness. The following verses show that life in Christ is characterised by the continuing work of the Spirit. But what does that mean? It means freedom from sin, which must involve the practice of righteousness. It means freedom from death, which must involve the gift of life.

The Spirit and Deliverance from Sin

Probably the most important statement relating to Christian living in Rom 8:1-17 is that of 8:13: "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." In Rom 6 and 7, Paul has been dealing with the problem of the Christian and his sinful nature. Rom 8 is the ultimate solution, with vs. 13 as its finest definition. But what are its secrets concerning freedom from sin? First of all, Käsemann points out that "the pneumatic life provisionally authenticates itself in the overcoming of temptation, not as an inalienable possession."[2] Is vs. 13, then, a summons to a particular life-style, or a declaration regarding life-style, as Harrisville maintains.[3]

Sanday and Headlam see the reference to the Spirit in vs. 13 to be "the human πνεῦμα, but it is the human πνεῦμα, in direct contact

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 216. [2]Ibid., p. 226.

[3]Roy A. Harrisville, Romans, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), p. 126.

with the Divine."[1] Most commentators, however, see a direct reference to the Spirit of God and a constant work of dealing with sin by dependence on the power of the Spirit.[2] Does this introduce a real supernaturalism into dealing with sin? If it does, what does it mean to the believer?

It seems to this writer that there is a lack in the literature at this point. It is a lack of practical definition of what really is involved in this concept of putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. Best may well write: "The presence of the Spirit is not the end of the struggle against sin; it is really the beginning, for only now can it be undertaken successfully."[3] Kevan may speak of "our own believing act through the indwelling Holy Spirit."[4] But the question still remains, how does it come together in the believer's life and give him actual deliverance from sin? Does this deliverance involve eradication of sinfulness, or eradication of sinful practice? And to what extent?

The continuing experience of vs. 13 is underlined by vs. 14. It is not merely a statement of assurance, although there is assurance that those who fit this description are sons of God. The continual leading of the Spirit is seen by some as the same as the continual

---

[1]William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 202.

[2]For example, Cranfield, 1:394; Murray, 1:294; Käsemann, pp. 226-27; Franz J. Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), pp. 211-12; James D. G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 147.

[3]E. Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 94.

[4]Kevan, p. 61.

putting to death in vs. 13. "The daily, hourly putting to death of the schemings and enterprises of the sinful flesh by means of the Spirit is a matter of being led, directed, impelled, controlled by the Spirit."[1] The activity of the Spirit is highlighted as the key factor. The strength of his control in the believer's life is indicated by the language. "The word (ἀγεσθαι) is not infrequently used of the passions."[2] Käsemann translates it as "driven by the Spirit" which, he says, "should not be weakened to 'be led by.'"[3] Brunner, on the other hand, says the exact opposite. "We ought not to translate with Luther 'driven by the Spirit' but 'led by the Spirit.'"[4]

On the basis of the language, Harrisville states, "there is no mistake as to where the initiative lies--they are 'led by the Spirit of God.'"[5] If vs. 14, then, is closely linked with vs. 13, as some commentators believe, this link is of considerable importance in rightly understanding vs. 13. Rather than talking only about the identification of God's sons, it also contributes to understanding how believers deal with sin in the freedom given them by the Spirit of God.

The Spirit and the Practice of Righteousness

There is, however, another side to the fact that the Holy Spirit delivers from sin. The freedom of God's people from the dominating

---

[1]Cranfield, 1:395. See also Murray, 1:295; Hermann Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans, Clark's Foreign Theological Library, vol. 13 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864), p. 277.

[2]Barrett, p. 162. See also Cranfield, 1:395.

[3]Käsemann, p. 226.

[4]Emil Brunner, The Letter to the Romans: A Commentary (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), p. 72.

[5]Harrisville, p. 127.

influence of sin surely is to allow them to practice righteousness. The Pauline emphasis in Rom 8:1-17 is that the Spirit does not leave his people in a vacuum, he initiates righteous living.

When the practice of righteousness, enabled by the Spirit, is considered, Rom 8:4 seems to come immediately into focus. Yet there are various ideas about the meaning of this statement.

> Because God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh that "the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk . . . according to the Spirit," to walk according to the Spirit and thus to be free from the law does not mean to be quit of what the law requires.[1]

Harrisville thus sets forth his ideas on what many commentators accept, that walking according to the Spirit has some reference to conduct in harmony with the law of God.

Nygren disagrees: "When we are 'in Christ', the law's positive purpose, its δικαίωμα, is fulfilled in us, not by our keeping of the law, but through Christ, and by the fact that we 'are in Him.'" He warns that Paul "has never considered it the mission of the gospel to make possible 'righteousness by the law.'"[2] Käsemann says "the Spirit evokes the new obedience" but he sees Rom 8:4 referring to a continuing justification.[3] Karl Barth speaks of the Spirit as "nothing but the validity and the power of the law of grace."[4] Calvin sees forgiveness and regeneration as the issues of Rom 8:4. The Catholic writer, Byrne,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 124.

[2]Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp. 319, 317.

[3]Käsemann, pp. 218-19.

[4]K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 91.

[5]Calvin, p. 160.

sees the righteousness produced by the Spirit as "that which holds away the katakrima mentioned in v.1."[1]

The key to the meaning of Rom 8:4 is probably walking "according to the Spirit." This is further defined in vs. 5. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit." Murray says, "the interest is not simply to contrast these opposing elements but to show why the persons in view do not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit."[2] The statement of vs. 5, then, is not seen as a merely philosophical one, but as very practical. Commentators, though differing in definition, generally agree on the activity of the Spirit and the practical effects of his activity.

Now this understanding provides a clue to what follows. A casual reading of this passage may leave the impression that Rom 8:4 is the only reference to the practice of righteousness by the Spirit. It is easy to move through vs. 9 and think of some mystical indwelling of the Spirit. But what does this mean? Sanday and Headlam's classic definition, "a settled permanent penetrative influence,"[3] is all very well, but what is its meaning? Should the mystical be grappled with, or should something more concrete be sought? Was Calvin looking in a more realistic direction when he spoke of "regeneration by the Spirit of God to innocence and holiness"?[4] And Käsemann looks in the same direction when he says: "One cannot belong to the Lord without manifesting

---

[1]Brendan Byrne, "Living out the Righteousness of God: the Contribution of Rom 6:1-8:13 to an Understanding of Paul's Ethical Presuppositions," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 43 (1981):569.

[2]Murray, 1:284. [3]Sanday and Headlam, p. 196.

[4]Calvin, p. 164.

his lordship with one's own existence."[1] He is saying that the Spirit gives gifts that are evident in life and service which show that humans have the Spirit of Christ. This indicates that while the indwelling Spirit of vs. 9 may be difficult to define, to define his effects may be easier and more important. The potential of the indwelling Spirit for the practice of righteousness needs further examination.

Black raises another area of investigation when he claims this "was essentially a social, not an individualistic, phenomenon."[2] Does the Spirit dwell and work in the individual only, or in the church only? Does the practice of righteousness transcend individual performance? What relationships exist between the Spirit, the community, and the individual in the practice of righteousness? These same questions arise in seeking a correct understanding of Rom 8:15, 16. Is this a congregational, liturgical setting, or does it refer to the experience of individuals? Does it have to be one or the other?

Reference to vss. 15 and 16 with the idea of practising righteousness by the Spirit is not irrelevant when the implications of "Abba! Father!" are considered. Most commentators consider only the witness of the Spirit, but is there not something to be said of the work of the Spirit? Murray sees the Spirit at work, creating "in the children of God the filial love and confidence by which they are able to cry, 'Abba, Father.'"[3] Käsemann represents a number of writers when he sees the congregation "uttering an ecstatic cry in response to

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 224.

[2]Matthew Black, Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), p. 117.

[3]Murray, 1:296.

the message of salvation."[1] This, too, is the work of the Spirit. Cranfield would probably be happier with Murray's idea, but in his discussion he deals with the significance of this cry.

> This then is what it means to live after the spirit, to mortify by the Spirit the deeds of the body, and to be led by the Spirit of God--simply to be enabled by that same Spirit to cry, 'Abba, Father'. . . . All that must be said about the Christian's obedience has been already said in principle when this has been said.[2]

T. M. Taylor and Karl Barth take a similar position to that of Cranfield.[3] If they are correct, then "Abba! Father!" has great implications for the practice of righteousness by the enabling power of the Spirit.

The Spirit and Assurance of Life

The other aspect of the deliverance of the Spirit for those in Christ Jesus is that of deliverance from death. The natural end-result of the life of sin is death. The logical connection in the statement of Rom 8:2, "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin <u>and death</u>," is part of the Spirit's liberating work. (Emphasis supplied.) It is an aspect of the Christian life that the believer is to have now, by the Spirit, as well as eternally. The importance of this to the Christian life is best stated by Paul who said, in another connection, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Cor 15:19 NIV). The Spirit of God, however, gives a present assurance of life by confirming that a Christian is of God. This theme is followed through by Paul

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 228. [2]Cranfield, 1:401.

[3]T. M. Taylor, "'Abba, Father' and Baptism," <u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u> 11 (1958):63; Barth, pp. 95-96.

as he presents the Spirit's work for the person in Christ.

The repetition of the alternatives "flesh" and "Spirit" in vss. 4-7 prepares the way for the declaration of vss. 8 and 9. "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him." Is this a warning, an assurance, or both?

Calvin was sure it was a warning "to arouse them to examine themselves more closely, in order that they may not make a vain pretence to the name of Christ."[1] Murray agrees with this.[2] While all the commentators agree that this is the sense of the second sentence in vs. 9, there are a number who see the first sentence as an assurance. "No doubt is expressed," says Taylor.[3] This statement "does not raise a suspicion. It introduces a simple condition which assumes the reality of the premise."[4] "εἴπερ does not have a conditional . . . and limiting sense but an affirmative sense."[5] These, and others, would take a great assurance from the fact of the Spirit indwelling the believer.

If they are correct as to Paul's intent here, there is surely good reason for the assurance. The contrasts between flesh and Spirit seem to be very practical.

> To confine oneself within the circle of this world is inevitably to cut oneself off from the only source of life, and therefore to court death. To be determined by that which is God and not

---

[1]Calvin, p. 164. [2]Murray, 1:287-88.

[3]Vincent Taylor, p. 51.

[4]Harrisville, p. 125. See also Cranfield, 1:388.

[5]Käsemann, p. 223.

> oneself means life and peace, not only as subjective experiences but as objective relationship with God.[1]

The indwelling Spirit then, if he brings life now, must be a great assurance to the believer. As has already been noted in discussing this statement earlier, the presence of the Spirit is obvious in a practical way and does provide grounds for assurance.

> It was the universal assumption of primitive Christianity, attested by all parts of the New Testament, that when a man came to Christ he received a supernatural gift of divine power; and this assumption must have corresponded with general experience. The effect of the gift might not go very far; Paul has cause to complain to his Corinthian converts: "I could not discuss things with you as spiritual persons" (1 Cor. iii.1); but his appeals always rest on the assumption that the gift is there, if a man will only make use of it.[2]

It should be noted also that ἐν πνεύματι is more likely instrumental than locative.[3] The Holy Spirit thus becomes less mysterious and more pragmatic in the life of the believer. The Spirit's presence is obvious. The Spirit's presence indicates the life of God already present. There can be assurance for the Christian in the work of the Spirit. These observations should help define Paul's following statements of the Spirit's assurance of life.

The concept of being "sons of God" or "children of God" is one of the major burdens of vss. 14-16. Barrett, commenting on vs. 14, speaks of "sonship as a relationship which guarantees future salvation, and is established in the present through the Holy Spirit, who anticipates the future (see on v. 23)."[4] These ideas are worthy of investigation. They raise the question as to the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's assurance in Christ. Is the work of the

---

[1]Barrett, pp. 157-58. [2]Dodd, p. 123.

[3]Leenhardt, pp. 206-7. [4]Barrett, p. 163.

Spirit something extra? Or, is this a challenge to understand correctly the relationship between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit? Best comments: "Their sonship depends not on the issue of the fight but on the presence of the spirit, and is therefore a consequence of their justification."[1]

This consideration of the work of Christ in connection with the work of the Spirit tends to raise the problems of Rom 8:15. Is there a specific work of the Spirit referred to in the phrase "spirit of adoption"? Indeed, is the phrase referring to the Spirit?

The RSV, in its translation of Rom 8:15, 16, does not think so.

> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

This departs from most translations, but Dodd, Best, and Barrett follow the sense of the RSV, although not the exact translation.[2] Cranfield, Murray, and Bruce are among those who follow the more usual translation.[3]

This is not merely a pedantic matter. Following the RSV rendering, there is simply a statement about the inner feelings of the believer. In the other view, there is a comment about the actual work of the Spirit. Black sees in vs. 15 two dispositions rather than "spirit" and "Spirit". He speaks of "the state of the man under

---

[1]Best, p. 94.

[2]Dodd, pp. 128-29; Best, pp. 93, 95; Barrett, pp. 163-64.

[3]Cranfield, 1:398, 402; Murray, 1:295-96; F. F. Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: Tyndale Press, 1963), p. 165.

the law" and a "status of full sonship."[1] Murray admits the possibility of such an understanding but he parallels Gal 4:6 and says the Spirit is definitely mentioned in Rom 8:15. His explanation of the somewhat difficult construct of vs. 15 is: "'Ye did not receive the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of bondage but as the Spirit of adoption.'" He is supported in this suggestion by Cranfield and Best.[2]

There is a further difference of opinion concerning the work of "the Spirit of adoption." Murray says: "He is called 'the Spirit of adoption', not because he is the agent of adoption but because it is he who creates in the children of God the filial love and confidence by which they are able to cry, 'Abba, Father.'"[3] By way of contrast, Cranfield speaks of "the Spirit who brings about adoption, uniting men with Christ and so making them sharers in His sonship."[4] Again, the question relates to subjectivity or objectivity. Is the work of the Spirit in vs. 15 merely an inner experience that expresses itself in the cry, "Abba! Father!"? Is it a special extra work beyond the believer's relationship with Christ as Saviour? Or, do the effects of the Spirit's work in the life of the believer simply reveal his status of sonship? Does the Spirit make the believer a son, or mark him as a son?

"Verses 15-16 are not . . . a parenthesis addressed to

---

[1]Black, p. 118.

[2]Murray, 1:296-97; Cranfield, 1:396-97; Best, p. 93.

[3]Murray, 1:296; cf. also Sanday and Headlam, p. 201.

[4]Cranfield, 1:397. See also Dunn, pp. 149-50.

doubters . . . but a proof of v. 14."[1] It is not hard to agree with Käsemann's assessment, but there is a difference of opinion as to how this proof is given. Is it personal or public?

Murray says that vs. 15 "is the witness borne by the believer's own consciousness in virtue of the Holy Spirit's indwelling as the Spirit of adoption. Now in verse 16 it is the witness borne by the Holy Spirit himself."[2] Cranfield, in similar vein, speaks of "the fact that no less an authority than God Himself in His Spirit has assured us--and continues to assure us--that we are His children."[3]

These statements express the view that the Spirit gives a subjective personal assurance to the believer, in his life and in himself, that he is God's child. But there are dissenting voices. Käsemann says that vs. 16 applies to "the situation of worship, not a process in the soul."[4] Barrett, Harrisville, and Dodd likewise see the setting as that of worship. "The prayers of the Church (cf.vs.26) confirm the personal conviction of the Christian."[5] "In the Body occurs the awareness of renewal."[6] There are also those who take this to mean "glossolalia or something similar."[7] If true, these views have implications for charismatic worship that need to be explored. The question still remains as to which view is correct, and

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 227. [2]Murray, 1:297.

[3]Cranfield, 1:402. [4]Käsemann, p. 228.

[5]Barrett, p. 164.

[6]Harrisville, p. 128; see also Dodd, pp. 128-29.

[7]Hermann Gunkel, The Influence of the Holy Spirit, trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Philip A. Quanbeck II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 79-80.

to posit one rather than the other may be limiting the Spirit.

In all of this, however, the point that must not be forgotten is the significance for the Christian life of the believer's being assured that he is a child of God. Paul's purpose here is to emphasise the contrast "between those who have no hope for the future, and those who can confidently look forward to life and glory."[1]

The Spirit and Eternal Life

The focus must now change to the goal of the Christian life, even eternal life. This seems to be the point of vss. 10-11, although there are differing opinions.

Rom 8:10 reads: "If Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness." This rendering (apart from the plurals) is acceptable to Dodd, Nygren, and Sanday and Headlam who all see "spirit" as the human spirit. It refers to the "real man;" or the tension that exists between flesh and spirit; or "the human πνεῦμα which has the properties of life infused into it by the presence of the Divine πνεῦμα."[2]

In opposition to this view is the position taken by Cranfield.

> The term πνεῦμα is here often understood anthropologically as denoting the Christian's inner life as opposed to his body, but Barrett rightly objects that, had Paul meant by πνεῦμα the human spirit, he would have said that it was alive, not that it was life. . . . Their being indwelt by the life-giving Spirit as the pledge of their future resurrection . . . is due to the fact of their justification.[3]

---

[1]Barrett, p. 163.

[2]Dodd, p. 125; Nygren, p. 322; Sanday and Headlam, p. 198.

[3]Cranfield, 1:390.

Murray, Käsemann, and Barrett (as Cranfield notes) are among those who would agree with this position.[1] There may be some question as to whether the life which the Spirit gives here is a matter of status or practice. The better question may be: Are they separable?

Byrne is quite clear that vs. 10 refers to the Spirit of God. However, like Calvin, he sees the work of the Spirit here as that of sanctification.[2] Cranfield suggests that any discussion of sanctification is more correctly reserved for vss. 12-14. The connection of vs. 10 with vs. 11 shows that the thought of eternal life and the resurrection is more appropriate.[3] Commentators in general would agree with this.

The major point of discussion in vs. 11 is the alternative readings in the Greek text. In the one, "the Spirit is obviously regarded as the true resurrecting force."[4] The other indicates that the presence of the Spirit in the believer is the reason he will be resurrected. In practical terms the end-result will be the same.[5] "This indwelling of the Spirit, since it is an indwelling of the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus, guarantees the resurrection from the dead of those thus indwelt."[6]

Conclusions

In this brief survey it can be seen that the theme of Rom 8:2 is followed through by Paul. The dependent ideas of deliverance by

---

[1]Murray, 1:289-90; Käsemann, p. 224; Barrett, p. 159.

[2]Byrne, p. 579; see also Calvin, pp. 165-66.

[3]Cranfield, 1:391. Cf. Gunkel, p. 109.

[4]Käsemann, p. 225. [5]Sanday and Headlam, p. 199.

[6]Murray, 1:292.

the Spirit from sin and from death are further defined in Rom 8:1-17. However, it can also be seen that there is a degree of confusion in certain areas as to what really is involved in the Spirit's work. The discussion of the following chapters contributes to some further definition of the Holy Spirit and the Christian life and of the importance of this theme in Rom 8:1-17.

CHAPTER III

ROMANS 8:2: PAUL'S THESIS

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).

It is hardly surprising, in view of the preceding line of thought in Rom 7, that Paul should make such a statement. He needs to do this, both on theological and practical grounds. While Rom 8:2 does expand Rom 6:14, and picks up the argument of Rom 7:6, the place to which his argument has brought him demands of Paul a definite statement as to how the believer can, and does, deal with the continuing presence of his sinful nature.[1]

"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom 7:25). But what does this mean in practical terms? It means that for those who are "in Christ Jesus" (those "who are vitally united to Him by faith"),[2] there is "now no condemnation" (Rom 8:1) and they are "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).

---

[1]The continuing presence of the sinful nature in the believer is not drawn solely from the writer's ideas about Rom 7, but also from Rom 8:12-13 and implied in Rom 8:4.

[2]John R. W. Stott, Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8 (London: Intervarsity Fellowship, 1966), pp. 79-80.

In Christ Jesus

The γάρ of vs. 2 should probably be taken as unfolding the implications of union with Christ,[1] rather than directly stating the reason why there is no condemnation for believers. In vs. 1 it is said that there is no condemnation for the man in Christ Jesus. Vs. 2 adds to the picture, showing that in Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life sets the believer free from the law of sin and death. Cranfield says: "The implication of the γάρ is that the fact that this further liberation [of vs. 2] has taken place is confirmation of the reality of the fundamental liberation described in vs.1"[2]

A key point in accepting this position seems to be what is done with "in Christ Jesus" (vs. 2). It is possible to take it as "the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus" (which may be inferred when "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is taken as a unit); or, "in Christ Jesus" may be related to the verb and could be translated "the law of the Spirit of life has set me free in Christ Jesus." It is the latter position that will be taken here. This is because any direct grammatical linking of "in Christ Jesus" with "the law of the Spirit of life" is open to question. This is indicated by some commentators who express their uncertainty as to what "in Christ Jesus" does qualify.[3] The above suggested meaning, "the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus," is not accurate as a translation.

However, because there is no direct link between "in Christ

---

[1]Murray, 1:275-76. [2]Cranfield, 1:374.

[3]For example, Murray, 1:276 and Vincent Taylor, p. 49.

Jesus" and the previous phrase, it seems to go more naturally with the following verb. It could be in an emphatic position because of the importance of the concept it conveys; faith-union with Christ is that in which the believer receives all that Christ has for him.[1] "We conclude that 'in Christ Jesus' should be connected with the verb and understood as indicating the basis of the action accomplished by 'the law of the Spirit of life'."[2]

Contextually, "in Christ Jesus" seems to relate to the believer, as in vs. 1, rather than to "the Spirit of life." This is supported by vs. 3 taking up the theme of Christ delivering from sin. The focus is on the work of Christ delivering from the condemnation of sin and, by "the law of the Spirit of life," delivering from "the law of sin and death." These are not separate, but there are differences. For example: "8:1, unlike 7:25a and 8:2, does not maintain deliverance from the body of death but from eschatological judgement."[3]

The Law of the Spirit of Life

What then is "the law of the Spirit of life"? Cranfield summarises various explanations that have been given. He includes faith, the gospel, the spiritual life resulting from union with Christ,

---

[1]See Barrett, p. 155; Best, p. 88; Gunkel, p. 122; Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), 2:42.

[2]C. E. B. Cranfield, "The Freedom of the Christian According to Romans 8:2," in New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World: Essays in Honour of Harry Sawyer, ed. Mark E. Glasswell and Edward W. Fasholé-Luke (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 92. Loane, p. 17: "The absence of a connecting particle before the phrase in Christ Jesus makes it clear that these words ought to go with the verb rather than with the subject." Also see Cranfield, Romans, 1:375.

[3]Käsemann, p. 214.

the religion which is possible in Christ, and even the law of God.[1] Most commentators today seem happy to see this as a direct reference to the work of the Spirit of God for the believer. Käsemann says: "The law of the Spirit is nothing other than the Spirit himself in his ruling function in the sphere of Christ. He creates life and separates . . . from sin and death."[2] Although he takes the view linking "the law of the Spirit of life" with "in Christ Jesus," the effect is on the believer. Cranfield, from the other view, states: "The most probable interpretation of ὁ νόμος here is that which understands it to refer to the authority and constraint exercised upon believers by the Holy Spirit."[3]

The idea that "the law" is seen here should be considered. Karl Barth says:

> The law <u>itself</u> breaks 'through' that perverted form of a law of sin and death, and shows itself in its true form as the Spirit which moves this man to seek God's grace. In so doing it also liberates this <u>man</u> from this perverted form of the law and from the distress which in that form it must cause him.[4]

While this may be an interesting philosophical approach, one does not have to be a philosopher to see that Paul is not saying here that the law has set man free from the law. Rom 8:3 makes that clear.[5]

Another approach is that the law functions under the Spirit

---

[1]Cranfield, <u>Romans</u>, 1:375-6. [2]Käsemann, pp. 215-16.

[3]Cranfield, <u>Romans</u>, 1:376. [4]Barth, p. 89.

[5]Cranfield, "Freedom of the Christian," pp. 92-93: "A statement to the effect that God's law has set the Christian free from the law of sin and death seems hardly to be in accord with the thought of this paragraph, the theme of which is God's establishment of his law by his gift of his Spirit to men [includes vs. 4], and which speaks of 'what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh' (vs. 3)."

to produce life.[1] This also is seen to be untrue in the face of Biblical statements that it is the Spirit who gives life directly. Vss. 6, 10, 11, and 13 either state or infer this. In addition, the idea seems to be that life depends on righteousness, i.e., salvation by sanctification, rather than the Biblical idea that both life and righteousness are given by the Spirit. The Spirit is the gift of Jesus Christ to the man who is already his by faith.[2]

It seems sufficient to notice Paul's use of "law" where he is not referring to "the law." In Rom 3:27 there is the "law of faith." νόμος is there translated "principle" by the RSV because this is its meaning at that place. "The law of sin" in Rom 7:23 and 25 refers to the power of sin, if not the principle of sin. The apposition of "the law of the Spirit" with the "law of sin" in Rom 8:2 indicates that this meaning, i.e., principle, should be applied to "the law of the Spirit." The lexicons support this idea.[3] The phrase "the law of the Spirit" simply balances "the law of sin" which Paul uses three times in this context. It refers to the work of the Holy Spirit.[4]

---

[1]Paul W. Meyer, "Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters: A Contextual Exploration." Interpretation 33 (1979):7.

[2]See Rom 5:1-2, 5.

[3]W. Gutbrod, "νόμος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964-76), 4:1071: "νόμος can sometimes be the claim or the will which comes from some source denoted by gen. auctoris and which controls my conduct." Rom 8:2a and b are examples. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 542 gives as its second meaning for νόμος, "a rule governing one's actions, principle, norm." One example given is 8:2b. Inconsistently (to this writer), it lists 8:2a under its fifth meaning, "fig. of Christianity as a 'new law.'"

[4]Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans. Help for Translators, vol. 14

The Law of Sin and Death

The presence of the Holy Spirit, for those in Christ Jesus, is such that he gives life. This life means that the believer has been set free from "the law of sin and death." These characteristics of life and liberty are marks of the Spirit's work in other writings of Paul. In 2 Cor 3:6, "the Spirit gives life," and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). This supports the contention that in Rom 8:2 Paul refers to the Holy Spirit by the phrase "the law of the Spirit."

> It is eminently appropriate that the Holy Spirit should be designated as the Spirit of life because the power he exercises is unto life as distinguished from the power of sin which is unto death. "The law of the Spirit of life" is, therefore, the power of the Holy Spirit operative in us to make us free from the power of sin which is unto death.[1]

This is not to make sanctification the basis of justification because the Spirit is only operative in this sense for the person in Christ Jesus.[2]

Although it has already been signalled that "the law of sin

(London: United Bible Societies, 1973), p. 145; "possibly . . . 'power of the Spirit'" or "'rule of the Spirit'" or "'being controlled by the Spirit.'" F. F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977), p. 197: "the law of the Spirit is the Spirit's vitalising power."

[1]Murray, p. 276.

[2]Heinrich Meyer, 2:42: "In Christ, the law of the Spirit has made us free; for out of Christ this emancipating activity could not occur. . . . The view which takes it of the objective basis that is laid down in the appearance and work of Christ, is unsuitable, because the discourse treats of the subjective ethical efficacy of the Spirit, which has the εἶναι ἐν Χριστῷ as the necessary correlative."

and death" is the principle of sin working in a person to produce death, this understanding is by no means unanimous.

"The law of sin and death" is interpreted by Barrett as "the law of Moses, seized and perverted by sin and consequently leading to death."[1] Emil Brunner bluntly says, "The law is now described in the very sharpest comprehensive terms: Law of sin and death."[2] Robinson and Käsemann see the law here as the instrument of sin and death.[3]

Calvin, however, protests, "I would not dare, with some interpreters, take the law of sin and death to mean the law of God. This seems too harsh an expression."[4] Calvin's sensitivity for the law of God seems well placed at this point. Paul has just exalted it as holy and spiritual (Rom 7:12, 14). It is good and something in which he delights (Rom 7:16, 23). Bruce, however, does not share this sensitivity.

> Can the law of God, which is by definition holy, be described as "the law of sin and death"? Yes, in so far as it stimulates sin and passes sentence of death on the sinner. As Paul has said in an earlier letter, "the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).[5]

Bruce's attempt to equate 2 Cor 3:6 with Rom 8:2 is quite wrong in view of the context of Rom 8. As Dodd says:

> In vii.6 he [Paul] has contrasted the "Spirit" with the "written code" of the Mosaic Law: here, however, it is not the Mosaic Law that is in view, but that "other law in my members which conflicts with the law of my mind."[6]

---

[1]Barrett, p. 155. [2]Brunner, p. 67.

[3]J. A. T. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (London: SCM Press, 1979), p. 93; Käsemann, p. 216.

[4]Calvin, p. 157. [5]Bruce, Paul, p. 197.

[6]Dodd, p. 119.

There is no reason why the "law of sin" in Rom 8:2 should be anything different to the "law of sin" in Rom 7:23 and 25. It is, there, the principle of sin, which according to Rom 7:13 is also the power that brings death.[1] Also, as Philippi points out, in Rom 7:23 the problem is one of captivity to the law of sin, while in Rom 8:2 there is its counterpart in deliverance from the law of sin.[2]

In commenting on "the law of the Spirit," Bruce says it "is the Spirit's vitalising principle or power."[3] Consistency would push him towards interpreting "the law of sin" also as "principle or power" rather than "the law." He would probably be treating the text more fairly if he stayed with the position he presented in his commentary. "'Law' here probably means 'principle'. . . . It is the 'law of the Spirit' by contrast with 'the law of sin which is in my members' (vii.23)."[4]

The ruling principle or power of the Spirit, then, effects a deliverance from the ruling principle or power of sin for those who are saved in Jesus Christ.

Most commentators would go along with this basic position, but there are those who want to include deliverance from the law at this point. For example, Käsemann writes that the Spirit "creates life and separates not only from sin and death but also from their instrument, the irreparably perverted law of Moses."[5] As a comment

---

[1]Heinrich Meyer, 2:41.

[2]Freidrich Adolph Philippi, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Clark's Foreign Theological Library, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878-79), 1:385.

[3]Bruce, Paul, p. 197. [4]Idem, Romans, p. 160.

[5]Käsemann, p. 216.

on Rom 8:2 this reads more into the text than is there. Käsemann's purpose is probably to highlight the ruling power of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. In this case it is better, and contextually correct, to see the ruling power of the Spirit breaking, or replacing, the ruling power of sin. The emphasis on the ruling power of the Spirit is, of course, correct for the believer. But it is probably expressed more accurately by Cranfield: "To say that we have been set free from the law of sin and death by 'the law of the Spirit of life' is another way of saying that we now serve in newness of the Spirit."[1]

Freedom by the Spirit

The meaning of Rom 8:2 cannot be limited to a declaration of legal standing. While Paul is making a statement about the standing of the person "in Christ Jesus," it is a standing that has its effects because of the involvement of the Spirit. The emphasis in vs. 1 is on "no condemnation," in vs. 2 it is on freedom. This is the believer's status in Christ, but the gift of the Spirit brings the reality of this freedom from sin into the life of the believer.

The aorist tense of ἠλευθέρωσεν (has set free) indicates the accomplished fact of the believer's initial liberation from the power of sin by the power of the Spirit.[2] The man in Christ is no longer ruled by sin, but by Christ, through the agency of the Spirit.

This does not mean that the believer experiences some kind of instant sanctification, a completed deliverance from the effects of

---

[1]Cranfield, "Freedom of the Christian," p. 91.

[2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:376: "The tense of ἠλευθέρωσεν is surely to be explained . . . as indicating that the reference is to the gift of the Spirit to the Christian as an event in the past. This liberation has actually been accomplished."

sin. It does mean that when a person enters into a faith-relationship with Christ Jesus, the gift of the Spirit brings life to the one who was previously under the authority of sin and death.[1] "The Spirit himself in his ruling function. . . . creates life and separates . . . from sin and death."[2] That this cannot be limited to a legal status is demonstrated by the following verses.

As Käsemann further says:

> In sharp contrast to 7:7-24 but in elucidation of 7:25a, vv. 2-4 characterise the new life of the Christian as grounded in the act of salvation and standing in the sphere of the Spirit, in which the will of God is actually fulfilled as it could not be under the rule of the law.[3]

Once it was sin that was fulfilled, and only sin (Rom 8:7-8). Now the power of sin has been broken by the Spirit, and in this new freedom of the Spirit the Christian begins to live a Christian life by the Spirit. In other words, being freed from the dominating control of sin, living for God is now a possibility as a result of the controlling power of the Spirit (Rom 8:12-14).

> While the Christian never in this life escapes entirely from the hold of egotism, that is, of sin, so that even the best things he does are always marred by its corruption, and any impression of having attained a perfect freedom is but an illusion, itself the expression of that same egotism, there is a vast difference which fully warrants, we believe, the ἠλευθέρωσεν of 8.2. The believer is no longer an unresisting, or only ineffectually resisting, slave, nor is he one who fondly imagines that his bondage is emancipation. In him a constraint even stronger than that of sin is already at work, which both gives him an inner freedom (cf. 7.22, 25b . . .) and also enables him to revolt against the usurper with a real measure of effectiveness.[4]

---

[1]Sanday and Headlam, p. 190: "τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς. The gen. expresses the 'effect wrought' (Gif.), but it also expresses more: the Spirit brings life because it essentially <u>is</u> life."

[2]Käsemann, pp. 215-16. [3]Ibid., p. 215.

[4]Cranfield, <u>Romans</u>, 1:377-78.

It must be noted that this "freedom" is the result of a power not his own. In Christian living, dealing with sin and practising righteousness, the Spirit is actively involved.[1] Paul's discussion of Christian life in Rom 8:1-17 constantly emphasizes the essential presence of the Spirit. The initial liberation is an historical act which resulted from the coming of the Spirit upon receiving Christ. The continuing Christian life "is the further development and consequence of this act."[2] Here, it should be remembered that the Spirit is "the Spirit of life." Thus, freedom is not only freedom from the power of sin and death, but freedom for the practice of righteousness and the enjoyment of the gift of life in the Spirit.

In vss. 3-17 Paul develops this theme of the Spirit enabling the man in Christ Jesus to live the Christian life.

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 213: "The 'ethical,' at least in the Christian life, is an eschatological possibility; thus it derives from the work of the Spirit, and can be paralleled with ecstatic and cybernetic possibilities."

[2]Heinrich Meyer, 2:42.

CHAPTER IV

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN BY THE SPIRIT

"If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live" (Rom 8:13).

Throughout Rom 6 and 7 Paul has been addressing the problem of Christian living and the continuing influence of the Christian's sinful nature. In chap. 6 he presents a picture of sin and righteousness jockeying for control. Along with the promise, "sin will have no dominion over you," he presents a number of imperatives that the Christian should not yield to sin (Rom 6:12-19). In chap. 7 he develops the believer's problem with sin to the point where he cries, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:25). It is in chap. 8:1-17 that Paul presents the "how" of Christian living, the Spirit. Rom 8:13 deals specifically with the problem of sin in the Christian's life.

The Spirit of God: The Enabler

Sandy and Headlam comment on the Spirit here: "The antithesis to σάρξ seems to show that this is . . . the human πνεῦμα, but it is the human πνεῦμα in direct contact with the Divine."[1] Few commentators

[1]Sanday and Headlam, p. 202. Philippi, 1:410, defines Spirit here as "the subjective, pneumatic character of the regenerate spirit."

would agree with this definition. More importantly, however, the context does not allow this definition. Vss. 9-11 speak of the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer. In the light of that, he is not to live according to the flesh, but by the Spirit of God. Again, it is reasonable to conclude that putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit is not entirely different from being led by the Spirit of God in vs. 14. The contention then is not between the believer's spirit and flesh. It is a matter of whether the Spirit of God or the flesh will control the practices of the body.

In presenting this need to "put to death the deeds of the body," Rom 8:13 must not be taken to mean that a person is to strive to do this by his own unaided efforts, overlooking the Spirit. It seems easy to say the believer must strive to put down his sinful practices, but this is certainly not what Paul is saying. In saying "by the Spirit," he is saying that there is an Enabler. This means that the believer needs an Enabler and cannot strive, much less put to death the deeds of the body, without the Spirit.

Vs. 13 also presents the fact that the deeds of the body must be done to death. This shows the problem of sin to be an ever-present menace. The deeds of the body are not rare occurrences but potentially constant practices, even for the Christian. The flesh is still capable of leading the believer to death (8:13a).

Moreover, Rom 8:13 implies that there is no help towards spiritual goals in unaided humanity. The constantly recurring sinful deeds of the body reveal the deep-seated sinfulness of humanity. Barth comments:

> The real point, however, is that the whole edifice of human life, including its modern attics and outhouses, is undermined and

> rendered questionable. . . . All human activity negative and positive, is radically questionable and insecure. . . . We must make it evident that no man, not even the humble, upright, broken man, has any right-ness; that all the busy deeds of the body must be, not checked, nor limited, nor directed into a new channel, but, in their full activity,--mortified.[1]

Hence, for any attainments in Christian living, the enabling of the Spirit of God is essential, not optional.

By Flesh or by Spirit

As has already been stated in chap. 3, Rom 8:2 speaks of an initial deliverance from the power of sin. In his relationship with Christ Jesus, in which he is delivered from sin, the believer has experienced an inceptive liberation from the power of sin by the Spirit of life. Rom 8:13 says the Christian can stay free from the dominating power of sin by the Spirit.

It should be pointed out that this kind of situation does not exist for the non-Christian, the one who is "in the flesh" rather than "in Christ." "The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:7, 8). The most striking thing about this statement is not its description of the condition, but the obvious inability of the flesh to be anything else.

However, when Paul describes those who are in Christ in Rom 8:13, the most striking fact is that there are two options. This is aptly illustrated by Whiteley.

> Christians [are] subject to two sets of 'forces', those of the old age of evil and those of the 'new age', just as a man

---

[1]Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 294.

> who has come out of the cold into a warm room is subject both to the cold which has numbed his hands and to the heat which is thawing them out.[1]

To the Christian, Paul says, "If you live according to the flesh you will die." The "if" signals an option for the Christian. Although he has been set free from sin, it is possible that he may not maintain that freedom. This statement, then, comes as a serious warning of the possibilities for ruin and of the power of the sinful nature in the Christian. It can even yet lead him to eternal death.

However, Paul can also say to the Christian what he could not say to the man in the flesh, "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." The man in Christ is not attempting to deal with the problem of sin by his own resources. Another agency has been introduced, and the language indicates that it is the Spirit.

> πνεύματι is an instrumental dative. The Spirit of God . . . is to be the means of the destruction of the flesh and its activities. But the dative is not to be taken to imply that the Holy Spirit is to be a tool in the hands of Christians, wielded and managed by them. A safeguard against such a misunderstanding is afforded by πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται in the next verse.[2]

The fact that the Christian can deal with the problem of sin is not due to his own inherent resources. He has been set free from the power of sin by the Spirit, and his continuing freedom is maintained by that same indwelling Spirit. This means that victory over sin, in other words, Christian living, is a continuing supernatural event.

Here it must be added, and probably rather quickly, that Paul does say, "By the Spirit, <u>you</u> put to death . . ." (Emphasis supplied.)

---

[1]D. E. H. Whiteley, <u>The Theology of St. Paul</u> (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), pp. 126-27.

[2]Cranfield, <u>Romans</u>, 1:394.

This refers to activity on the part of the Christian. While he does no spiritual work without the Spirit, where the Spirit is working the Christian is working too.

Summons or Description

This raises the question, Is Rom 8:13 a summons to a Christian life-style or a description of it? That is, does a Christian have to discipline himself to live by the Spirit, or does it just happen naturally? To this writer the answer appears to combine something of both options.

Harrisville says that Paul is not talking about obligation but compulsion, not a summons but a fact. He quotes Luther:

> The sun is not obliged to shine; it does so naturally. Three and seven are not obliged to make ten; they do so in any case. So, faith is not obliged to do good works; if it is faith, it simply does them.[1]

While Luther's statement is correct in essence, it may be that Harrisville has misused it here. His own comments do not accord with Paul's language in Rom 8:12, 13. The language of vs. 12, "We are debtors [obliged], not to the flesh, . . .," is that of obligation.[2]

Again, Harrisville's use of Luther here is rather simplistic in the light of what Rom 8:13 says. It has already been noticed that Paul places two possibilities before the Christian; the flesh and death, or the Spirit and life. These options contain a summons to the Spirit-controlled life. As with the obligation of vs. 12, the option to submit to the Spirit is heavily weighted for the Christian; but as long as the option to live according to the flesh

---

[1]Harrisville, p. 127. [2]Arndt and Gingrich, p. 598.

remains, there is a summons to live according to the Spirit. In other words the freedom of the Spirit is true freedom. God gives and respects the power to choose.

For the man in Christ, however, this choice is weighted by the imperatives of the gospel. "Just as you once yielded your members to impurity . . ., so now yield your members to righteousness" (Rom 6:19). According to Rom 8:13 the Spirit of God enables this effective choice.

Further indicating that Rom 8:13 is a summons to a life-style is the fact that Paul envisages a continuing process. The verb θανατοῦν in its present tense indicates, "You go on putting to death." In this way, Paul wants it understood that putting to death the deeds of the body has to go on as long as the believer is in the body. This brings to view continuing choices between what the flesh wants and what the Spirit wants.

> Possessing the Spirit is at the same time a fresh obligation to be loyal to the Spirit. Once more the wild thought ought to be dismissed that the new life is realised by a kind of natural necessity, that it comes off without a struggle. On the contrary, it is a life and death struggle. You are to kill the impulses of the flesh, the "deeds of the body".[1]

> The pneumatic life provisionally authenticates itself in the overcoming of temptation, not as an inalienable possession. As in 6.11f. only dogged service triumphs over our constant vulnerability.[2]

The weight of this "dogged service," however, must not be left to rest on the Christian. He cannot, and does not, accomplish it by himself.

> This activity is not apart from the Holy Spirit--it is "by the Spirit". The believer is not endowed with a reservoir of

---

[1]Brunner, p. 71. [2]Käsemann, p. 226.

> strength from which he draws. It is always "by the Spirit" that each sanctified and sanctifying activity is exercised.[1]

Rom 8:13, then, shows that deliverance from sin by the Spirit does not "just happen." It is a summons to let the Spirit control. In addition, vs. 13 tells us what does happen when the Spirit is in control. It is therefore descriptive of the Spirit-controlled life. By the very nature of things the Christian is indwelt by the Spirit (vss. 9 and 11). The options of vs. 13 are only possible because of the presence and power of the Spirit. Putting to death the deeds of the body can be, and is, done because of the Spirit's work.

This controlling and directing activity, the "natural" activity and initiative of the Spirit in the believer, is more clearly seen when Rom 8:13b and 14 are understood as the complementary statements that they are. "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit is at least included in, if not the same as, being led by the Spirit.

There seems little reason to doubt Cranfield's statement:

> ὅσοι . . . πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται interprets εἰ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε. The daily, hourly putting to death of the schemings and enterprises of the sinful flesh by means of the Spirit is a matter of being led, directed, impelled, controlled by the Spirit. Though the active participation of the Christian is indeed involved (θανατοῦτε), it is fundamentally the work of the Spirit (hence the passive ἄγονται).[2]

Murray agrees with Cranfield;[3] and Leenhardt adds: "Mortification is

---

[1]Murray, 1:294. [2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:395.

[3]Murray, 1:295: "Those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body are led by the Spirit of God. . . . 'Led by the

not the basis but the result of this divine initiative. . . . It flows from the renewed presence of the Spirit of God."[1]

All of these comments seem to be quite representative of Paul's meaning in Rom 8:13b, 14. This indicates a degree of "naturalness" in the control of the Spirit in the believer's life. However, because of the options presented in 8:13 it cannot be such a control as to deprive the Christian of his freedom.[2] It must rather be that the Christian identifies with the Spirit, and the Spirit with the Christian in such a way that the Christian is enabled by the Spirit to consent to the Spirit's will. "Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5).

As noted earlier, the verb ἄγω ("to lead") seems to cause a degree of agony to commentators.[3] Barrett and Cranfield both mention that ἄγω is used to refer to the influence of the passions on an individual.[4]

The NT usage of ἄγω generally involves some degree of compulsion. The passage most relevant to Rom 8:14 seems to be Luke 4:1. Jesus

---

Spirit' implies that they are governed by the Spirit and the emphasis is placed upon the activity of the Spirit and the passivity of the subjects. 'Put to death the deeds of the body' (vs. 13) emphasizes the activity of the believer. These are complementary. The activity of the believer, is the evidence of the Spirit's activity and the activity of the Spirit is the cause of the believer's activity."

[1]Leenhardt, p. 213.

[2]"ἄγονται] i.e. are determined in the activity of their inward and outward life. . . . though without prejudice to the freedom of the human will, as ver. 13 proves." Heinrich Meyer, 2:62.

[3]See p. 10 above.

[4]Barrett, p. 162; Cranfield, Romans, 1:395.

"was led by the Spirit." This conveys some idea of compulsion, of necessity without coercion, the idea of co-operation where one initiates and the other complies. Sanday and Headlam have a point worth considering when they say: "The analogy to be kept in view is the personal influence of one human being upon another. We know to what heights this may rise."[1]

Dealing with sin by the Spirit, then, involves the co-operation of the believer with the control of the Spirit. This co-operation is itself enabled and motivated by the Spirit. Rom 8:13-14 reveals both a summons to, and a description of, a life-style enabled by the Spirit.

Definitions of "Putting to Death"

The nature of this life-style now requires some definition. It is easy to talk rather vaguely about putting to death the deeds of the body and being led by the Spirit, but Rom 8:12-14 is referring to actual living. Paul "is affirming that life lived under the leadership of God's Spirit will show itself in the way that one conducts onself."[2] There is an ethical stress in these verses that emphasizes both positive and negative aspects of conduct.

As Best says: "Because the Christian has entered the life lived on the level of the Spirit, he must seek to live always on that level."[3] These points demand some attempt to understand what Paul's statements here mean in practice. The following are some suggestions seen here as explicit and implicit in the text.

---

[1]Sanday and Headlam, p. 202. [2]Newman and Nida, p. 153.

[3]Best, p. 93.

First, Rom 8:13 presents a conflict with sin. Griffith says that inner conflict is the sign of the Spirit's presence.[1] Best points out that "the presence of the Spirit is not the end of the struggle against sin; it is really the beginning, for only now can it be undertaken successfully."[2] The best comment, however, is that of Gal 5:17. "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh." Here is an acute awareness of sin that cannot exist without the presence of the Spirit. This awareness produces conflict in the believer as the sinful nature desires its way and the Spirit seeks his way in the believer's life. It must be seen, however, as part of the necessary process to deal with sin with the help of the Spirit.

A second point is hinted at by Käsemann's comment that Rom 8:13 has to do with "the maintaining of the new life against temptation."[3] Clearly the putting to death of the deeds of the body by the Spirit means to cease "habitual" sinning. In Rom 6:12 Paul admonishes: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions." Rom 8:13 shows how a sinful person can do this. Gal 5:16 states further: "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (NIV). When the believer allows the Spirit his way, his control; when he follows the promptings of the Spirit away from sin, he will not commit sin.

Further, in Rom 6:14 the simple statement is made, "Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."

---

[1]Gwilym O. Griffith, St. Paul's Gospel to the Romans (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), pp. 126-27.

[2]Best, p. 94. [3]Käsemann, p. 225.

This amplifies the prayer of David, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Ps 19:13). It is hard not to see that the grace of God actually works to restrain his people from sin. The role of the Spirit in this is brought out in Rom 8:13 and Gal 5:16.

John Stott comments on this aspect of Rom 8:13 "Mortification . . . means a ruthless rejection of all practices we know to be wrong."[1] From another point, Meyer says, "These we make dead when the Ego, following the drawing of the Holy Spirit, conquers the lusts that form their basis; so that they do not come to realisation, and are reduced to nothing."[2] These two comments reflect the two principles mentioned. With the help of the Spirit the believer avoids practising those things which he knows to be sin. At other times the Spirit actually gets to the root of the sin so that it does not even surface. The former emphasizes more the role of the believer, but not without the Spirit; the latter emphasizes the work of the Spirit in the believer in a preventative role.[3]

A third way in which the Spirit enables the believer to put sin to death is by calling him to repent for his sins. One of the great works of the Spirit is that "he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement" (John 16:8). The believer's awareness of his sin, either in practice or in condition, is a necessary part of his putting to death the deeds of the body. He does not come to this on his own, but by the Spirit fulfilling

---

[1]Stott, p. 91. [2]Heinrich Meyer, 2:62.

[3]That this does not mean perfectionism/sinless perfection is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

the role assigned to him in John 16:8. The desire to turn from sin (repentance) is of the Spirit.

The fourth point, dealt with more fully in the next chapter, needs to be mentioned here. To put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit is not just a negative process. As the Christian makes himself available to the Spirit, he is enabled to do God's will. In Gal 5:19-23 Paul contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. It has been noted above that those who live by the Spirit will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Gal 5:16, NIV). It also follows that the fruit of the Spirit will develop with the aid of the Spirit.

> In reality therefore we have not here a negative enterprise, as the idea of "putting to death the deeds of the body" might lead us to suppose; we have here the energy of the Spirit (πνεύματι) which breathes life into the "members of the body", the concrete personality, in order to orientate it in a new direction, and turn it aside from the old way of life which is governed by the thinking of the flesh (v.6).[1]

It has been said, then, that dealing with sin by the Spirit involves conflict with sin, overcoming the practice of sin, repentance for sin, and living a righteous life. These are not consequent to each other but concurrent with each other; they are the characteristics of being led by the Spirit.

The moment practice is introduced, however, it is easy for the believer to get his focus off the Spirit and on to his own performance. Olshausen's comment seems appropriate: "The mortifying of the deeds of the flesh is a being led by the Spirit, and therefore not . . . an anxious task of law."[2] The appropriate Biblical comment is Gal 5:18: "If you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law."

---

[1]Leenhardt, p. 212. [2]Olshausen, p. 277.

Bruce sees this leading of the Spirit "not a restraining, but a liberating, force."[1] It would be better to see it as both. It is certainly more than living by the rules, it is alien to legalism, and it is certainly not licence. It is life lived in, and by, the Spirit of God according to the willingness of the individual to make himself available to the leading of the Spirit.

> The real significance of the condition of believers is not to be measured by the results obtained. The "putting to death of the deeds of the body" is an every day undertaking and is every day renewed.[2]

The real question then is not what has been achieved. It is, Is this life in the Spirit being lived? Can it be said that, by the Spirit, the deeds of the body are being put to death?

Progress or Process

Under this regime of the Spirit, what actually happens to sin in the believer? Is it progressively eradicated, or simply kept subjugated by the Spirit?

Bruce writes:

> The Spirit is the sanctifying agency in the lives of believers: he wages perpetual warfare against the flesh, but he is more powerful than the flesh, and can put the flesh progressively out of action in those lives which are yielded to his control.[3]

In spite of all the truth this statement contains, it must be said categorically that Rom 8:13 does not say that the flesh is progressively put out of action. It does say that the believer must constantly, by the Spirit, be putting to death the sinful practices of his body.

---

[1]Bruce, Paul, p. 208. [2]Leenhardt, p. 212.

[3]Bruce, Paul, p. 210.

Having said this, it is clear that 8:13 is talking about the eradication of sinful practice. Comparison of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5 is a further indication that the Spirit is to have a definite effect on the life practices. And who can say anything other than that sinful practice is constantly put away when Rom 8:14 is considered? This verse indicates a constant influence of the Spirit, leading in the ways of God, overcoming the deeds of the body. "Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5).

At the same time, any talk of progressively putting away sin has inherent dangers. If the idea of progress means that the believer, in himself, is getting better and better, it brings the danger of thinking that he needs less of the Spirit. This idea can even develop to the place where the believer is supposed to be able to attain to sinlessness and no longer needs the Spirit. Paul's description of dealing with sin in Rom 8:13 is in terms of the constant agency of the Spirit.

This implies the continuity of the power of the flesh from which sinful practice springs. "We are never exempt from the elements and conditions of evil in 'the body of sin' (6:6), and can never dispense with the Holy Spirit as the mighty 'counter-agent' to its doings."[1]

Rather than speaking of progress, then, it is better to see this putting to death of sin as a continuous process in the life of the Christian. It is better to talk of sin being controlled or dominated by the Spirit, even challenged by the Spirit to replace

---

[1]Loane, p. 48.

sinful practice with the practice of righteousness, rather than eradicated. This eradication of the practices of the body, sin and sinfulness, takes place only when the body is finally and fully redeemed at Christ's return. "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23). It is of more than passing interest to note that those who have the Spirit in Rom 8:13, 23 have to contend with their "bodies" continuously. Rom 8:23 signals when the end of that contention will be. "'From the side of God's grace and gift, all is perfect, but from the human side, because of the effects of the Fall, there will be imperfect receptivity, and therefore imperfect holiness, to the end of life.'"[1]

Rom 8:13, then, does not point to sinlessness in the believer. It does point to the overcoming of sin. It speaks of putting to death the sinful deeds or practices by the Spirit. Because it is by the Spirit, this can be done as his control is accepted.

> Only it is never so final as these clear-cut antitheses suggest, for the Christian is continually tempted to live κατὰ σάρκα -- that is, to live towards God under the terms of the old covenant, severed from Christ, fallen from grace, and on the way to death once more (8:5-8, 12f.; cf. Gal. 3:3; 5:2-4, 16-18) --and all too often he succumbs to that temptation, with all the frustration and despair which it involves. He must discover the Spirit's liberating might ever anew in every new situation. He must learn not to live κατὰ σάρκα, but rather to put to death by the Spirit's strength the deeds of the body (v.13). That is to say, the Christian life from start to finish is a matter of daily dependence on the Spirit who alone brings life. (Emphasis supplied.)[2]

---

[1]Kevan, p. 62. [2]Dunn, p. 147.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT AND THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

> He therefore does not only liberate those who believe in Jesus Christ from the law of sin and death but he also . . . positively sets them free for a life in obedience (8:12-16).[1]

> The freedom to resist sin is not, of course, merely negative. It is--positively--freedom for obedience to God, freedom for God's law, as v. 4 makes clear.[2]

> . . . in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom 8:4).

As indicated in the previous chapter, when the Spirit delivers the believer from sin, this should not be considered as a merely negative process. The above statements speak of a positive side to this deliverance from sin. Rom 8:2 speaks of "the law of the Spirit of life." "In Christ Jesus," this "Spirit of life" includes a positive quality of life now. The general tenor of Rom 8:1-17 bears this out. Rom 8:4 seems an obvious starting point for relating the Spirit to righteous living. There are those, however, who are not so sure about this.

Some Differing Opinions

Calvin refers to Rom 8:4a and says it is quite wrong to say "that those who have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ fulfil the

---

[1]Barth, Shorter Commentary, p. 88.

[2]Cranfield, "Freedom of the Christian," p. 96.

law."[1] He says it means "forgiveness, for while the obedience of Christ is imparted to us, the law is satisfied, so that we are accounted just."[2] In this way he makes vs. 4 another statement of justification. He can do this only because he passes vs. 4b off as a reference to regeneration "lest Christ should be thought to be the minister of sin."[3] Rather, it is vs. 4b qualifying vs. 4a that provides the ethical emphasis. It speaks righteous living, not just righteous standing before God.

Käsemann speaks of "the new obedience" and of establishing "the righteousness of the divine will which had been originally manifested in the law." But he adds:

> God alone fulfills what he demands. He does it paradoxically on the cross with the sending of his Son as a sin-offering, and therefore apart from and even in opposition to our co-operation. . . . The reality of the new life is characterised by the fact that Christ takes possession of it in the power of the Spirit. . . .
>
> . . . . The Spirit points us back to the cross of Christ as the place of salvation. He thus continually actualises justification, sets us unceasingly in the sphere of the power of the Crucified, and is . . . the earthly presence of the exalted Lord.[3]

Much of what Käsemann says here is correct as it relates to the believer's standing before God. It is vital to understand that God has provided the righteousness he demands, in the cross of Christ. No idea that "the new obedience" by the Spirit is in order to merit salvation should be entertained. But the impression that he gives is that vs. 4 is speaking of justification. The Spirit's work is that of pointing mankind back to Christ, and thus maintaining a continuing justification. There is no question that there is much truth in this.

---

[1]Calvin, p. 160. [2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid. [4]Käsemann, pp. 218-19.

The question is only whether or not this is the point of vs. 4. The impression Paul gives is that God's work in Christ on the cross dealt with man's condemnation (vs. 3) and by implication provides his righteous standing. The effect of this, according to vs. 4, is seen in the life of the believer. Without question justification is very much involved, but Paul is talking about a life lived by the Spirit as a consequence of justification.

Best has similar ideas to Calvin and Käsemann.

> Paul does not say that because we have the spirit to help us 'we are now able to fulfil the actual commandments of the law'. He says that the commandment is fulfilled in us, i.e. its requirement has been met because sin has been condemned and 'because there is no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus' (Verse 1).[1]

Best's concern seems to lie in the fact that Paul says the requirement of the law is fulfilled "in us," and not "by us." In consideration of the work of the Spirit this can be seen as correct. Paul does not say here that Christ died in order to fulfil the law for man, as Best seems to be saying. He says Christ died that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in man.

Best's conclusions are wrong in that he wants to stay with the idea of justification. The phrase "in us" may be seen as having two applications. It could be said that the work of Christ provides for the law to be fulfilled in man, both by his righteousness and by his Spirit. If the terms justification and sanctification are used for these conditions, the former can be seen in Rom 8:1 with an emphasis on the latter in vs. 2. Paul then expands in vss. 3-4 so that justification is in view again in vs. 3 with its consequence,

---

[1]Best, p. 89.

sanctification, the point of vs. 4. It should be noted that the life lived by the believer is very much in Paul's thought here. Deliverance from sin by the Spirit (vs. 2) is connected in thought with walking by the Spirit (vs. 4). Both include the idea of Christian living, not just standing with God.

In vs. 4, therefore, "in us" cannot be limited to justification. In fact, Paul probably used it to indicate the effects in the believer's life. Kirk says it is "so phrased because the agent of this result is God's grace, not human effort."[1] The context of walking by the Spirit supports this conclusion.

A rather different view is put forward by Byrne. He agrees with the ideas already presented that this is God working, not Christians achieving. Then he says: "There is a fulfillment of the moral demand, a new righteousness created, and this righteousness is precisely that which holds away the katakrima mentioned in vs. 1 as non-applicable for those 'in Christ Jesus.'"[2] His idea is that, by the Spirit, God is creating a righteousness in the believer that "holds away" condemnation. Paul's idea is that the person "in Christ" is released from condemnation, and that a further consequence of being in Christ is the effect on the believer's life of the gift of the Spirit. There is no question that the prime mover is God, by the Spirit. He moves, however, not to make the believer righteous and therefore acceptable, but to accept the believer in Christ, and then through the Spirit to produce obedience to the will of God.

---

[1]K. E. Kirk, The Epistle to the Romans, The Clarendon Bible (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 210.

[2]Byrne, p. 569.

It is true, as Byrne says, that vs. 4 is talking about God working "in us through the Spirit as a consequence of the Christ-event" in vs. 3.[1] But Paul is describing the life of an accepted Christian rather than a righteousness created in the Christian so that he will be accepted.

A Broader Base

It has been noted that various commentators see Rom 8:4 as another expression of justification. Byrne, on the other hand, sees a righteousness in the believer that removes condemnation. While discounting these ideas as Paul's meaning, it should be noted that all these writers emphasize the truth that Paul is not just talking about the believer doing things. God is at work by his Spirit. It is important that this be emphasized lest it be concluded that Paul is simply talking about another way of keeping the rules. This may be included, but the life of which Paul speaks--life by the Spirit as a consequence of the cross in the life of the believer--is more than this.

Although some of Käsemann's conclusions may be suspect, it would be difficult to find a better summary statement of Paul's meaning than the following:

> Verses 2-4 characterise the new life of the Christian as grounded in the act of salvation and standing in the sphere of the Spirit, in which the will of God is actually fulfilled as it could not be under the rule of the law.[2]

It is fundamental to recognise that Paul is not saying that the Christian life is motivated by law, but by the Spirit; it is not ruled by law but by the Spirit. Better still, "its obedience is

---

[1]Ibid. [2]Käsemann, p. 215.

oriented in the last resort, not to the Torah, but solely to the Kyrios."[1] Or, as Barth puts it: "Our whole behaviour, the course of our existence, is lived after the Spirit and is defined by the knowledge of the Son of God."[2]

Käsemann and Barth would however have nothing more to do with the law. That this is not Paul's meaning is discussed below. The point being made here is that the fulfillment of the law's requirement is not only a consequence of the cross; it is also necessarily a consequence of the Spirit's enabling (vs. 4). The believer's motivation, the believer's actual living, is at a higher, deeper, and wider level than a set of "do's and don'ts." The believer is in a relationship with Christ by faith and through the Spirit which, by its very nature, sets a new direction to the life. The love and loyalty of the believer may be mentioned as a motive for discipleship. The Lordship of Christ may be mentioned as subjecting the believer to Christ's authority. As well, the gift of the Spirit breaks the power of sin and works contrary to the power of sin in the flesh. All of this provides new life, grounded in the work of God for the believer. What the law cannot do, God has done on the cross and in the believer (vss. 3-4).

> The law is . . . an inadequate basis for the moral righteousness of the believer. Thus he <u>never</u> says what popular Christianity has often taught: that <u>after</u> one experiences Christ, <u>then</u> he can fulfil the law. For Paul, the way of the law can <u>never</u> be the basis for Christian morality, because it always involves self-endeavour. Even Christian morality must derive from grace, from the Spirit of God.[3]

---

[1]Ibid., p. 216. [2]Barth, <u>Romans</u>, p. 282.

[3]J. B. Polhill, "New Life in Christ: Romans 6-8," <u>Review and Expositor</u> 73 (1976):431.

Although some of this may sound rather subjective, and this seems a danger in Käsemann's view, it is vital to see that the broad base of Christian living is the Spirit under Christ's leadership; and not the law--any law. There is in this some subjectivity--but within certain limits, as is noted below.

Acts or Attitudes

There is no way that the requirement of the law can be fulfilled by mere outward acts. When Paul says, "The law is spiritual" (Rom 7:14), he is not just referring to his own problems with the law. He is talking about the essential nature of the law which cannot be met by a mere adherence to the "written code." The essential difference is the enabling of the Spirit (Rom 7:6).[1] But even here the question could well be raised as to the result. Is it a matter primarily of acts or attitude? Leenhardt's comment seems appropriate:

> The result [of vs. 3] is that he who accepts the exposure of his sin and submits to the inner spiritual consequences of this acceptance, encounters the essential will of God; he accomplishes the law not by particular acts which are in conformity with the law, but above all by the fundamental attitude of his whole being; . . . . He can serve in the "new life of the Spirit" (7:6).[2]

Having said this, however, the requirement of the law is not fully met by an attitude. The requirement of the Christian life as evidenced everywhere in the NT is positively ethical, morally active. Where the Spirit is, there is life that will be lived. To suggest that the will of God will be performed by the Christian who lives

---

[1]"We serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (Rom 7:6b). Two different kinds of living are stated here. The Spirit makes the difference in inner attitudes.

[2]Leenhardt, pp. 204-5.

according to the Spirit is to say nothing other than what Paul is saying in Rom 8:4. "Through Christ the Spirit has come to the believer, and now the latter has a real basis for fulfilling the decrees of the law."[1]

Before exploring this point further it is important to stress a point made by Nygren in his commentary. He limits the meaning of vs. 4 to justification.[2] But it is imperative that his warning be heeded. Paul "has never considered it the mission of the gospel to make possible 'righteousness by the law.'"[3] Anything that is said about the keeping of the law, doing the will of God, is not talking about the ground of the believer's righteousness before God. "They who are 'in Christ' are by that very fact righteous, and not by a keeping of the law made possible by that fact."[4] Although Nygren may be excluding all keeping of the law, these points he makes are correct. This righteous living of which Paul speaks in vs. 4 is an expression of that righteousness that already belongs to the believer, in Christ. It is now being practised, by the Spirit.

The Spirit delivers the believer from the power of sin (vs. 2). So, on vs. 4, Cranfield comments: "This ἵνα - clause . . . clarifies the significance of the liberation spoken of in vs. 2. . . . This is what we have been set free for."[5] Numerous commentators follow

---

[1]Polhill, p. 433.

[2]Nygren, p. 319: "When we are 'in Christ,' the law's positive purpose, its δικαίωμα, is fulfilled in us, not by our keeping of the law, but through Christ, and by the fact that we 'are in Him.'" This is true, but it is not Paul's meaning in Rom 8:4.

[3]Ibid., p. 317.

[4]Ibid., p. 320. [5]Cranfield, Romans, 1:383.

this line that Cranfield presents. Paul is here presenting a positive and actual fulfillment or meeting of the requirement of God's law, God's will, in the life of the believer.[1]

Barth may be very vague about the law; in fact he replaces it with the Spirit. He can even define the Spirit as "nothing but the validity and power of the Law of grace."[2] He speaks of those "whose Law is the Spirit of God."[3] This should not be decried. Rather it should have added to it, that, because of the continuing weakness of sinful humanity, there is need of objective instruction, as in the law. And further, that the law of which Paul speaks in Rom 8:4 is not just another way of talking about the Spirit. The law in vs. 4a, though the phrase is "the just requirement of the Law", is hardly different to the law in vs. 3a.

The law of vs. 3 is the law that Paul has had clearly in focus throughout Rom 7. It is the law from which the Christian has been discharged (Rom 7:6). But at the same time it is the law which Paul says is not sin. It points out sin by reference to specific commandments (Rom 7:7-11). "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good" (Rom 7:12). It is spiritual (Rom 7:14). It is the law of God (Rom 7:22). Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that the law referred to by Paul is the previous

---

[1]"Since it is deliverance from the power of sin that is in the forefront . . . verse 4 will have to be regarded as the designed effect in us of the judgement executed upon the power of sin in the cross of Christ and of the inwardly operative power of the Holy Spirit." Murray, 1:282-83.

[2]Barth, Shorter Commentary, p. 91.

[3]Ibid., p. 93.

Old Testament revelation in its moral requirements.[1]

In Rom 8:3a the law in general, all of the law God gave, had no capacity to save (cf. Gal. 3:21). But in this context Paul has specific interest in sin and righteousness. In Rom 8:4a he is concerned with "the just requirement of the law." Therefore, there should probably be the qualification that his concern here is the moral aspects of this law. This would include the ten commandments without being limited to them, and be broader than the mere letter of the law. Rom 7:7 and 13:8-10 would support this contention. "The result, therefore, was to secure the fulfillment of the law's requirements (insofar as the command is holy, just and for our good) in our lives, as we live and move not by the flesh but by the Spirit."[2]

What is being said then is that Rom 8:4 does refer to a specific obedience, a righteous life in harmony with the will of God, enabled by the Spirit of God. In this way, by the Spirit, Christians are enabled to carry out the true intention of the law, which is that outward obedience should express the inner reality of heart and mind in relationship with God. Rom 8:4 is not talking about a mere outward compliance.[3]

Another way of looking at this is that Rom 8:4 is "the fulfillment of the promises of Jer 31:33 and Ezek 36:26f."[4] These

---

[1]Vincent Taylor, p. 50 and Robinson, p. 95, refer to the Mosaic Law being fulfilled in Rom 8:4.

[2]Dodd, p. 121. See also Black, p. 114: "What the Law could not do . . . the Holy Spirit enables us to accomplish; because with the help of the Spirit, we were empowered to fulfil the demands of the law."

[3]Harrisville, p. 124. [4]Cranfield, Romans, 1:384.

new covenant promises are often misunderstood to mean the abolition of the law. A careful reading of the passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel indicates that God's requirements for his people remain the same. He provides new attitudes and abilities in relation to himself and his will. A footnote by Cranfield is pertinent:

> Jer 31:31-34 is often understood as a promise of a new law to take the place of the old . . . or else as a promise of a religion without law at all. But the new thing promised in v. 33 is, . . . a sincere inward desire and determination on the part of God's people to obey the law already given to them ('my law').[1]

This is the same idea as Rom 8:3-4. Failure is seen in relation to God's requirements, God's law. He, himself, steps in to provide both righteousness and power to deal with the sins of the people. One of the results is that his people are given, by the Spirit, new abilities in relation to God's law. The fact of these new covenant promises having a Christian fulfillment is made clear in Heb 8:6-12. The point being made here is that the principles of the new covenant are the same principles as in Rom 8:3-4.

So, even if it must be said that some of the applications of the law have changed, its underlying principles remain. It can be said there is a continuity of the law. God's righteous requirements have not changed, but God's people relate to them in a different way, by the Spirit.

> The difference lay in the fact that a new inward power was now imparted, enabling the believer to fulfil what he could not fulfil before. The will of God had not changed; but whereas formerly it was recorded on tablets of stone it was now engraved on human hearts, and inward compulsion accomplished what external compulsion could not. . . . For the sum of the commandments was love, and this was something which became possible to him only when the divine love was poured into his

---

[1]Ibid.

> heart by the Spirit (Romans 5:5). The reference to the Spirit should remind us that Paul's teaching here points to the fulfillment not only of Jeremiah's "new covenant" oracle but also of the companion oracles in Ezekiel 11:19f. and 36:25-27, where God promises to implant within his people a new heart and a new spirit.[1]

Following on from Bruce's comment, it should be noted that Rom 8:4 shows that there is a difference between the religious man who tries by himself to keep the law, and the Christian who by the Spirit fulfils the requirement of the law. It is saying that the Spirit affects inner motives as well as outward acts. It is saying that there is actual obedience to the requirements of God in his law, by the Spirit.

> The purpose of it all is precisely that the dikaiōma of the law, what the law defines as 'righteous', may find fulfillment in us (verse 4), ...
>
> . . . . not only can this regimen be described in a real sense as a nomos, the true divine norm of life, but it actually fulfills rather than abolishes the Mosaic law. For, in the life and power of the Spirit, Christians can really live up to it.[2]

It is not being suggested that this obedience is perfect, but it is real. The previous chapter has already pointed out the continuing problem of the Christian with his sinful nature. The presence of flesh and Spirit in vs. 4b implies conflict and imperfection as in vs. 13. This also leaves him less than perfect in the matter of obedience, until "the redemption of our bodies." A child may give his father a picture he has drawn, grubby and un-artistic, but it is accepted because of the relationship and the motives. Even so, in those who walk according to the Spirit, a life of obedience is seen in acts of righteousness in harmony with God's revealed law.

---

[1]Bruce, Paul, pp. 199-200.

[2]Robinson, p. 95. He refers to Rom 13:8-10 as an example of Christians fulfilling the law.

These are soiled and spoiled because of the sinfulness of the believer. But this obedience is there and it is accepted because of the relationship and the motives.

An interesting theological and practical consequence of this is that it "finally disposes of the suggestion (Rom 6:15) that we may sin because we are not under law but under grace."[1] The believer is not set free from sin by the Spirit in order to sin, but to obey. He is constrained by the Spirit towards the requirements of the law of God.

Walking by the Spirit

Having concluded that Paul's main concern in Rom 8:4 is the practice of righteousness, living for God, it is now suggested that vs. 4b confirms this idea. The phrase "walk . . . according to the Spirit" leans heavily towards the idea that Paul's concern in vs. 4 is that of conduct governed by the Spirit. Olshausen says that vs. 4a is the consequence of partaking in Christ's work. "He [Paul] presupposes already the περιπατεῖν κατὰ πνεῦμα ."[2] Vincent Taylor comments: "The statement that the requirement 'might be fulfilled' is not strange in view of the words which follow, 'in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'."[3] To be walking according to the Spirit "is not the condition of justification (that is faith), but of the fulfillment of the law," says Meyer.[4] These further comments demonstrate the unity of thought in Rom 8:4 that has already been mentioned earlier in this chapter.

---

[1]Kirk, p. 210. [2]Olshausen, p. 269.

[3]Vincent Taylor, p. 50. [4]Heinrich Meyer, 2:49.

The point is that the phrase "walk . . . according to the Spirit" is referring to the conduct of the believer. It is a well-known fact that "'to walk' in Semitic thought is merely another way of saying 'to live, to behave, to act.'"[1] Arndt and Gingrich give as a meaning for περιπατέω, "fig. . . the walk of life . . . . conduct oneself."[2] The significance of this is brought out by Cranfield when he says this indicates "the manner of the fulfillment of the law's requirement. . . . Thus these words serve to clarify the meaning of πληρωθῇ."[3]

Following this line of reasoning, then, conduct governed by the Spirit is what "the just requirement of the law . . . fulfilled in us" is about.

It must be emphasized here again that it is κατὰ πνεῦμα. The life governed by the Spirit is the life described by Paul as fulfilling the requirement of the law. It is not just the busy activity of even "religious" flesh. It is the work of God in the person committed to Christ as Saviour. It is the work of the Spirit first before it is the work of the believer.

This practical understanding of Rom 8:4 is supported by vs. 5. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit." Paul's further statement leaves no doubt that the work of the Spirit makes a definite practical difference to the life of the person governed by the Spirit rather than the flesh. The issue is that of a life to be lived, and the

---

[1]Newman and Nida, p. 148. [2]Arndt and Gingrich, p. 649.

[3]Cranfield, Romans, 1:385.

living is done according to one of two quite different principles. The person lives either by the dictates of the flesh or of the Spirit.

From one point of view Rom 8:5 expresses the intention, the focus of the life. On the one hand, to be focussed on the flesh is to be absorbed in an existence apart from God. On the other hand, a concentration on the Spirit is to widen the horizon of life and allow God to be the dominating factor.[1]

From still another point of view, the issue is that of control: "a life that is controlled by one's own human nature" or "the life which is controlled by God's Spirit."[2] It should be noted that Rom 8:5 shows that this control is very much an internal matter. People "set their minds" on the things of the flesh or the Spirit. This shows the inward character of the individual is deeply affected by the control of the flesh or the Spirit. So the flesh, or the Spirit, determines the character of the life by directing the inner affections. These in turn are expressed in the actual practice of living. The life shows the controlling power. The Christian "is what he is because of his Lord and the power of his Lord, and he shows this in his acts."[3]

Paul himself defines the power of the flesh as hostile to God and unable to submit to God's law (Rom 8:7). This suggests that the control of the Spirit has the opposite effect. The Spirit "is a power operating in defiance of the power of sin and in place of the powerlessness of the law to produce liberation, life, and peace."[4] More to the point, it is not hard to see Rom 8:4-5 and 8:7 complementing each other. This complementation provides further insight into vs. 4.

---

[1]Barrett, p. 157. [2]Newman and Nida, p. 148.

[3]Käsemann, p. 219. [4]Paul Meyer, p. 8.

Where the flesh is hostile to God and unable to submit to God's law, it is not strange to think of the law fulfilled in those who are controlled by the Spirit. As the flesh is characterised by the attitude and act of rebellion and disobedience, so the control of the Spirit is seen in the attitude of willingness and the act of obedience.

While these principles are evident in the text, the situation is a little more subtle than has been stated. Moule puts it well:

> The outlook of the flesh, in Rom. 8:5ff., does not necessarily mean a gross or lustful sensuality. It could apply to the most 'respectable' and refined concerns, insofar as they are not referred to God. . . .
>
> In contrast 'according to the Spirit' stands for an attitude that takes God into account, puts God first, reckons with the way of the cross.[1]

This, of course, has its ultimate effect on life-style. The point is that whatever else Paul may be saying here, he is saying the controlling power of the Spirit results in the practice of righteousness. Black speaks of "divinely-aided obedience to the law of God, the divine agent in obedience being the Holy Spirit."[2] Again, as in the discussion on Rom 8:13, because the Spirit is the enabling power, reference to Gal 5:19-23 is appropriate. The works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit. When the believer walks or lives "according to the Spirit," the Spirit's presence reveals itself.

---

[1]C. F. D. Moule, The Holy Spirit (Oxford: A. R. Mowbray, 1978), p. 41.

[2]Black, p. 115.

The Indwelling of the Spirit

It should not be concluded from the above that only Rom 8:4-5 has bearing on righteous living enabled by the Spirit. Rom 8:14 also does, as was noticed in the previous chapter. Another passage of some significance is one that could easily be passed over, it is Rom 8:9 and its concept that "the Spirit of God . . . dwells in you."

"οἰκεῖν ἐν denotes a settled permanent penetrative influence." But it does not mean "Pantheistic absorpotion."[1] This classic definition from Sanday and Headlam deserves a good deal of thought. At the same time, Cranfield's cautionary statement should be noted: "Used of the Holy Spirit, it [οἰκεῖν ἐν] denotes the mystery of His presence."[2] Here, "mystery" is the word to be stressed. The points to be noticed from these comments seem to be that Paul's idea of an indwelling Spirit is difficult to define; it does not mean some supernatural substance infusing the believer, but it does mean there is a constant supernatural influence on the believer. Such an influence must have its effects.

As Calvin and Luther noted long ago, the primary effect of the presence of the Spirit is regeneration.[3] This is not simply the comment of a theologian. Jesus himself taught that regeneration is the work of the Spirit (John 3:5-8). Paul speaks of the same thing in Titus 3:5. This regeneration has definite effects on the life of the Christian (2 Cor 5:17). In Rom 8:9 the indwelling of the Spirit, by the nature of the language, goes beyond being born of the Spirit

---

[1]Sanday and Headlam, pp. 196-97. [2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:388.

[3]Calvin, p. 164; Martin Luther, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1954; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1976), p. 120.

(John 3:5) to the constancy and continuation of a life controlled by the Spirit. Kevan's comment, therefore, seems appropriate:

> There is no 'mystic' way of experiencing Christ which is something other than faith and obedience. . . . It is in all the Spirit-inspired activities of the born-again soul that the indwelling of Christ is known.[1]

Olshausen also brings the idea of indwelling out of the realms of the mystic: "The possession of this Spirit of Christ, however, is naturally not to be measured according to the mere feeling . . . but according to its real effects and fruits."[2]

The point of this is that it may be difficult to define the indwelling of the Spirit, but to define its significance may be easier and more important. For the present purpose, it should be noted that where the Spirit dwells in the believer, righteous living results from the Spirit's message.

The Spirit dwelling in the believer means that the believer is "in the Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι), says Paul (Rom 8:9). According to Loane this means that the believer is "enveloped in an atmosphere in which the one controlling influence was the Holy Spirit."[3] Leenhardt comes at it another way:

> Such phrases ["in the flesh" and "in the Spirit"] are strikingly vivid, but they resist a close analysis. . . . To be in the flesh means to live under the domination of what 7:5 calls the sinful passions. It is clear then that ἐν is instrumental and not locative; it indicates a way of life and not a place. The same applies to ἐν πνεύματι, in the Spirit.
> . . . the Spirit governs your existence.[4]

---

[1]Kevan, p. 52. Note that the interchange of Christ and the Spirit in Rom 8:9-10 is obvious in the text, and recognised by most commentators.

[2]Olshausen, p. 273. [3]Loane, p. 39.

[4]Leenhardt, pp. 206-7.

The important thing about these two points of view is that they both come to the same conclusion, i.e., the Spirit controls, or governs, the life of the believer. The tenor of Rom 8:1-17 supports Leenhardt's contention that ἐν is instrumental. The Spirit is portrayed as an active force rather than an atmosphere. This is seen in vs. 2 where he "sets free" those in Christ Jesus, and in vs. 14 where he leads. In vss. 4-5 the believer walks or lives by the Spirit, and in vs. 13 he puts to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. Hence Christians are those who are being directed, aided, enabled by "a source outside themselves."[1] At the same time, the language of being "in the Spirit" or being indwelt by the Spirit says that this outside source gets right to the heart of the Christian. He exercises an internal control.

> He who indwells and guides is the Master. In saying that the Spirit, or Christ, dwells "in you" Paul is suggesting this act of dominance in virtue of which God exercises his authority, by Christ or the Spirit, at the centre of the personality of the believer.[2]

Then, as Käsemann says: "One cannot belong to the Lord without manifesting his lordship with one's own existence."[3] The Spirit gives his fruit and his gifts. These become evident in the life and service of the believer. From this point of view Rom 8:9 is much more concrete (living the Christian life by the Spirit), than abstract and mystical (merely referring to an inner spiritual life). After all, if it is only a mystical matter, it might well be asked how the reality of the Spirit's indwelling can be tested. Dodd speaks of the assumption "that when a man came to Christ he received a

---

[1]Barrett, p. 158. [2]Leenhardt, p. 208.

[3]Käsemann, p. 224.

supernatural gift of divine power; and this assumption must have corresponded with general experience."[1] It must have been an observable general experience.

The next question has to do with the nature of this experience. It has been suggested here that it was a very pragmatic matter. If being indwelt by the Spirit is seen as an inner reality, then obedience is the outward effect that reveals the reality. Dunn says: "A man may have the Spirit indwelling him (i.e., be a Christian), and yet not be living κατὰ πνεῦμα."[2] This point has to be conceded in the light of Paul's ethical imperatives. He has to tell Christians to live as Christians,[3] even to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:16, 25). However, in view of Rom 8:4-5, 13-14, Dunn's point cannot be allowed as a constant or acceptable trend for Christian living.

It is preferable to look at this problem as Dodd puts it: "The effect of the gift [of the Spirit] might not go very far."[4] He cites the Corinthian converts as examples of this. "But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men in the flesh, as babes in Christ" (1 Cor 3:1). Again, it is necessary to note that the essential matter in the work of the Spirit is not to measure the degree of the effect, but that there is an effect as the result of his presence. It is not so much how far down the road the Christian is, but that he is on the road.

What then governs or tests the nature of this experience of

---

[1]Dodd, p. 123. [2]Dunn, p. 148.

[3]E.g., Rom 6:12-19; Rom 12-14; Eph 4-6; Col 3-4.

[4]Dodd, p. 123.

the indwelling Spirit? In this very context (Rom 8:9-10a) Paul has not left it to be a matter of subjective experience.

> His virtual identification of the experience of the Spirit with the experience of the indwelling Christ is of the utmost value. It saved Christian thought from falling into a non-moral, half-magical conception of the supernatural in human experience, and it brought all 'spiritual' experience to the test of the historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ.[1]

The Spirit then leads and controls in the way of the character and the teaching of Jesus Christ. In this it seems quite natural that the Spirit would use the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15-17). His work of leading the Christian in the way of Christ, while not limited to the written word, is in harmony with it. "The Spirit is present in his Word," and for this reason there can be some objective testing as to the reality of his presence in the believer's life.[2] The practice of righteousness by the Spirit is not every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.

The Spirit in the Community

So far this matter has been discussed as it relates to the individual believer, but there is a further question.

> Is the primary work of the Holy Spirit to initiate, sustain, renew, and shape the lives of individual believers, so that the bestowal of shared life on the community is a happy by-product? Or is the primary work of the Holy Spirit to initiate, sustain, renew and shape the shared life of the community so that the bestowal of life on individual believers is instrumental to that end?[3]

Winn believes it is the latter, but it may be that his question has

---

[1]Ibid., p. 124.

[2]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg, 1961), p. 510.

[3]Albert C. Winn, "Holy Spirit and the Christian Life," Interpretation 33 (1979):50.

raised another question. Is it a matter of primacy, or of remembering that the work of the Spirit embraces the community?

In 1 Cor, Paul makes clear that the indwelling of the Spirit belongs to both the individual (6:19) and the community of believers (3:16). He makes this latter even more meaningful in 1 Cor 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body . . . and all were made to drink of one Spirit." It was as individuals that their participation in the body had been initiated by receiving the Spirit. Then as members of the body they were receiving continuing life from him. The gifts of the Spirit, at least, were "for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). It was as individuals that they were being sustained by the Spirit, as well as being corporately built into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph 2:22). The point for the present purpose is that the individual, enabled by the Spirit to practise righteousness, did not practise it in isolation. He practised it in the community of believers, and in the community at large. And the Spirit in the church, in his fellow believers, encouraged him in this.

So the question then is not so much which is the most important, but to see that both contribute to each other. The Spirit in the individual contributes to the community, and the Spirit in the community encourages the individual. The end result is that both the individual Christian and the Christian community practise righteousness by the Spirit. It is not so much that "it was essentially a <u>social</u>, not an <u>individualistic</u>, phenomenon;"[1] but, that it was a social and never simply an individualistic phenomenon.

---

[1]Black, p. 117.

Abba! Father!

The practice of righteousness by the Spirit is also found in Rom 7:15-16. Commentators often raise questions about the individuality or communality of the Spirit and his activities. These questions need not be canvassed again just now. There are, however, some aspects of these verses that are quite significant, but rarely noted, as they relate to the matter of the believer's obedience, enabled by the Spirit of God.

"It is certainly reasonable and justified to regard at least 8:12-16 . . . as a description of the obedience which is characteristic of the life of those 'who are in Christ Jesus'."[1] In the previous chapter this has been indicated to be true of vss. 12-14. Looking at vs. 15, the first thing to be noted is that the sons of God, led by the Spirit of God, do not operate in an atmosphere of slavish fear.[2] The Spirit brings believers into a family spirit; the attitude of a son to a father is the relationship expressed. The Spirit leads the believer to look to God, to trust him as his heavenly Father. The cry "Abba! Father!" is elicited by the Spirit.

It is surprising that few commentators draw any direct ethical implications from this. Most limit it to an attitude of trust in God as heavenly Father; but the relationship involved in this cry, and the presence of the Spirit evidenced by this cry have definite bearings on the life of the believer. It is a poor son who disregards his father's will. A true son, influenced by the spirit of his father, gives definite heed to the practice of his father's

---

[1]Barth, Shorter Commentary, p. 193. [2]Ibid., p. 94.

will. "It cannot fail to happen that we may and must enter into the good work of obedience which consists in our crying out 'Abba! Father!'"[1]

Barth not only sees the cry as an act of obedience, he states the further principle which is implicit in this cry and sees this defined presumably in Rom 12 and the following chapters.

> All acts of obedience ought obviously to be included in it. They ought to arise from it and in all circumstances they ought to have their root and archetype, their first and their last condition in it. . . . Both that which is prohibited and that which is commanded can and does include many things--the last chapters of the Epistle can give us some impression of that.[2]

The point surely is that the presence of the Spirit means definite effects in the life of the believer. If the Spirit leads him to acknowledge God as Father, he will also lead him in a life to please the Father.

Another connection that seems appropriate is to consider the cry "Abba! Father!" in the experience of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. There, this phrase introduced Jesus' "prayer of submission to the will of God."[3] It is reasonable to assume this same principle in the life of the believer signified by the same cry. This is especially so when the cry is recognised as an evidence of the presence of Christ, by the Spirit, in the believer (cf. Rom 8:9, 10b).

> In Galatians and Romans it is the coming of the Spirit of Christ at Baptism, to dwell in the believer, which enables him to say as Christ does in Gethsemane, ἀλλ' οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω, ἀλλὰ τί σύ. This marks the believer's submission to God's will.[4]

While there is no evidence in vs. 15 to tie or limit this

---

[1]Ibid., p. 95. [2]Ibid., p. 96.

[3]T. M. Taylor, p. 67. [4]Ibid.

experience specifically to baptism, it is certainly of the Spirit. Taylor has presented this in support of his point: "It is my growing conviction that the unqualified faith-obedience which baptism is meant to initiate in the life of the believer may very well be indicated by the enigmatic expression, ἀββά, ὁ πατήρ ."[1] To call God "Father," then, means more than trusting him to provide for the believer. It also means that the believer is expressing his loyalty and devotion. These things cannot but be expressed in seeking to do the Father's will.

> This then is what it means to live after the Spirit, to mortify by the Spirit the deeds of the body, and to be led by the Spirit of God--simply to be enabled by that same Spirit to cry, "Abba, Father". . . . All that must be said about the Christian's obedience has been already said in principle when this has been said.[2]

Conclusion

These various statements in Rom 8:1-17 show that the person in Christ Jesus is set free from sin by the Spirit in order to live for God by the Spirit. This is not some vague kind of pleasant existence. It is a positive striving towards righteousness in practice as defined by the will of God. One of the results of being in Christ is that "the just requirement of the law" is in fact fulfilled in the life practice of the believer who lives "according to the Spirit." This life lived by the Spirit is as a son devoted to his father. He thus is guided by the law of God as exemplified in the life and teachings of his Lord Jesus Christ. However, rather than being merely religious strivings, true Christian obedience is an enabling

---

[1]Ibid., p. 63. [2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:401.

by the Spirit of God to live in harmony with the will of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT AND THE ASSURANCE OF LIFE

The Spirit of God is "the Spirit of life" for the person "in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2). When the person in Christ is set free from sin by the Spirit, the life of the Spirit is seen in the life that is lived by the believer. This life lived is an expression of life granted.

Rom 6:23 states that "the wages of sin is death." Rom 7:10, 24 further indicate that the power of sin binds a person in the chains of death. When the believer is set free from sin by the Spirit it follows that he is released from this dominion of death. Thus not only is there no condemnation for the man in Christ Jesus, but there follows the practical effect, by the power of the Spirit of God, of the beginnings of deliverance from sin and death (8:2). The Christian then is in a state of "life." He is aware of this because of faith in Christ and the indwelling Spirit of God. This latter is an important aspect of Christian living because by the Spirit the believer is assured that he has passed from death to life. There is current evidence that the believer is a child of God, that he is not hoping in vain for a future life, for that future life is already present in the indwelling of the Spirit of life.

If the Spirit of God Dwells in You

In Rom 8:4-7 the two ways of living, "flesh" and "Spirit", are presented side by side. The alternative effects presented in vs. 6 are "death" and "life." This supports the idea above, drawn from vs. 2, that the Spirit makes the practical difference between death and life for the believer. It also means that the declarations in vss. 8 and 9 are hardly surprising. "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you."

An initial reading might understand vs. 9a as a warning for Christians to be sure that they are in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Most commentators, however, see Rom 8:9a as a statement of assurance with vs. 9b issuing the warning.

Murray presents a conservative approach to the idea of assurance by stating:

> The apostle is careful to impart to believers the assurance and consolation which belong to them as those who are "in the Spirit". . . . Nevertheless he is likewise careful to lay down the condition upon which this assurance may be entertained --"if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you".[1]

In a footnote, he explains that "εἴπερ could be interpreted in the sense of 'since' or 'seeing that'. . . . But it is more usual for εἴπερ to specify a condition."[2]

Käsemann, however, sees no conditions. "εἴπερ does not have a conditional . . . and limiting sense but an affirmative sense."[3] Cranfield, speaking of this assurance of the Spirit's presence in vs. 9a, says:

---

[1]Murray, 1:287-88. [2]Ibid., 1:288.

[3]Käsemann, p. 233.

> This is not called in question by the following clause; for εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν is not to be understood as making the assertion of the main clause conditional, as a discreet warning of the possibility that some of them may not be indwelt by the Spirit after all, but as an appeal to a fact acknowledged by them in confirmation of that assertion. It indicates a fulfilled condition.[1]

Dodd translates εἴπερ as "since."[2] And Taylor says it would be more accurately translated "'if, as is the case.'" He adds, "No doubt is expressed."[3]

In consideration of these comments and the thrust of Paul's argument it seems best to conclude that Rom 8:9a is a statement of assurance, with εἴπερ "meant to suggest only that element of misgiving which would result in true self-examination."[4] It must be remembered that Paul is not here merely making an assertion about the indwelling Spirit. He is appealing "to an experienced reality."[5] It is precisely because the presence of the Spirit is a reality to the individual and the church that there is ground for assurance of belonging to Christ.

Rom 8:9, whatever else it says, indicates that all Christians, not just some special ones, have the Spirit dwelling in them.[6] "So far as Paul is concerned, Rom 8:9 rules out the possibility both of a non-Christian possessing the Spirit and of a Christian not possessing

---

[1]Cranfield, Romans, 1:388. [2]Dodd, p. 122.

[3]Vincent Taylor, p. 51.

[4]Loane, p. 39. Cf. Heinrich Meyer, 2:53: εἴπερ "conveys an indirect incitement to self-examination."

[5]Brunner, p. 70. [6]Whiteley, p. 125.

the Spirit."[1] From Paul's language here, this is something that the believer can know.

In chap. 5 the effects of the indwelling Spirit have been discussed.[2] It was pointed out there that the presence of the Spirit, far from being just a subjective matter, was highly objective. The Spirit effects regeneration and leads the life in the way of the will of God as seen in the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's implied self-examination here in Rom 8:9 must look at both the heart and the life. Is there a Spirit-led relationship with the Saviour? Is there a life that moves appropriately in harmony with that relationship? He must remember that he in himself has nothing of which to boast. He is not looking for what he has done, but what God has done for him in bringing him into a relationship with Christ, by the Spirit. These are evidences, however slight, of the life of the Spirit. These observable evidences of the Spirit's presence are one way of giving assurance to the believer.

The previous chapter also looked at the question of whether the indwelling of the Spirit referred to the individual or the community.[3] It was there concluded that it can refer to both. It should be pointed out here, however, that in Rom 8:9, while Paul is addressing the church, he is not just referring to them collectively. "If any one" (εἴ τις) is singular and speaks to the individuals in the congregation. Therefore, the assurance that the Spirit gives to the believer is something that is ultimately the believer's own.

---

[1]Dunn, p. 93. [2]See pp. 65-69.

[3]See pp. 69-70.

Assurance in Sonship

Another way of expressing the indwelling and the assurance of the Spirit is the statement of Rom 8:14. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." God is here seen to mark out his children by the activity of the Spirit in their lives. It follows from this that not all men are children of God in this special sense. "Only some men--namely, those who are guided by the Spirit of God--can rightly be called children of God."[1] The presence of the Spirit of God thus identifies the sons of God by his activity and becomes a reason for the believer's assurance that he is a son of God.

This has real bearing on the life of a believer because sonship is "a relationship which guarantees future salvation."[2] The activity of the Spirit establishes this relationship with God, and his activity "anticipates the future," the final adoption, the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23).[3] Thus, because of the Spirit's present activity, the believer lives with a present assurance that his hope of eternal life will be realised.

The assurance that the believer has by faith in Jesus Christ is not being questioned here. Rather, the work of the Spirit is a further assurance of the believer's status as a child of God. Or, the result of, or witness to, the fact that he is a child of God. Again, the warning must be given that it is not some degree of sanctification, some attainment in holiness that Paul is presenting. He speaks of the fact of the Spirit's activity in the life of the

---

[1]Dodd, p. 130. [2]Barrett, p. 163.

[3]Ibid.

individual. "Their sonship depends not on the issue of the fight but on the presence of the Spirit, and is therefore a consequence of their justification."[1]

While the believer's assurance rests in his Saviour by faith, it is the activity of the Spirit that brings a perceptible reality to that assurance. The believer's ultimate trust for salvation is in what God has done in the sacrifice of Christ. At the same time, God's resultant work in the believer by the Spirit, although mysterious, is tangible. This knowledge is an aid to, even a part of, the assurance that the believer is a child of God. As Käsemann says, "Verses 15-16 are not . . . a parenthesis addressed to doubters . . . but a proof of v. 14."[2] The Spirit's activity is perceptible to the believer and is of great encouragement to him as he lives his life waiting for that final adoption (Rom 8:23).

The Spirit of Adoption

"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship" (Rom 8:15). The RSV translation here does not take πνεῦμα as a reference to the Spirit, but rather sees two dispositions, "the spirit of slavery" and "the spirit of sonship." When the context (vss. 14-16, at least) is considered this seems strange. "The Spirit of sonship" is quite a natural phrase to follow on from vs. 14, where those "led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."[3]

---

[1]Best, p. 94. [2]Käsemann, p. 227.

[3]"The Spirit of adoption is so called because it is those who are led by the Spirit of God that are sons of God (verse 14)." Bruce, Romans, p. 165.

There is also the matter of Gal 4:5-6. Although the proposition is phrased differently, perhaps even approached differently, there is sufficient similarity of thought to see it as parallel. If this is the case, it is another argument for "Spirit" rather than "spirit" in Rom 8:15. Referring to Gal 4:6, Murray says: "The parallelism of the thought constrains the conclusion that in Rom. 8:15 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father' is the Holy Spirit."[1]

One of the reasons that Spirit is here seen by some as a disposition of sonship is to account for the spirit or disposition of slavery. Barrett, however, suggests that "Paul does not mean that there exists such a 'spirit of bondage'; the phrase is a rhetorical formation based upon 'Spirit of adoption'."[2] While this is possible, the best explanation seems to be that "the Holy Spirit whom they have received is not a spirit of bondage but the Spirit of adoption."[3] This is grammatically possible as the following explanation demonstrates:

> The phrase "spirit of slavery" is taken to mean "a spirit which brings about slavery." In this context "spirit" is taken as a specific reference to God's Spirit, <u>for the Spirit that God has given you does not make you a slave</u>. . . .
>
> . . . The phrase "spirit of adoption" is again a reference to the Holy Spirit, while the genitive relation means that <u>the Spirit</u> (of God) <u>makes you God's sons</u>.[4]

If this is the case, Paul is saying that the Spirit of God does not lead believers in the way of fear and anxiety, but into the assurance that they are indeed the children of God.

---

[1]Murray, 1:296. [2]Barrett, p. 163.

[3]Cranfield, <u>Romans</u>, 1:396. See also Murray, 1:297.

[4]Newman and Nida, p. 154.

In what way then is the Spirit "the Spirit of sonship"? Is it because the Spirit makes the believer aware that he is the son of God, or that the Spirit makes the believer a son of God? There are those who limit the Spirit's activity to the first of these options. "He is called 'the Spirit of adoption', not because he is the agent of adoption but because it is he who creates in the children of God the filial love and confidence by which they are able to cry 'Abba, Father'."[1]

It seems that Paul is saying more than this. His use of υἱοθεσία would be better seen as "adoption" rather than "sonship." This is the meaning of the word; it refers to the making of sons and the resultant state, rather than just the status of sonship. This active meaning is clear in Paul's other four uses of the term.[2]

The Holy Spirit then is involved in making sons of God, as well as assuring believers that they are God's children. This can be explained from two points of view. First, believers are made children of God legally and actually by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:26). The Spirit then makes their status in Christ effective in their lives. A second way of explaining the Spirit's role in bringing about adoption is that he unites men with Christ and they thus become sharers in his sonship.[3] Both of these statements indicate that Paul is well able to say that the Spirit is the agent of adoption.

---

[1]Murray, 1:296. See also Barrett, p. 163; Bruce, Paul, p. 208.

[2]Eph 1:5; Gal 4:5; Rom 8:23, 9:4. See Arndt and Gingrich, p. 833.

[3]Cranfield, Romans, 1:397. Cf. C. F. D. Moule, p. 29: "The Spirit . . . reproduces in Christians the relation of Christ to God as son to Father."

> It is evident from vv. 14-17 that it is the Spirit who effects sonship, not merely strengthens the consciousness of sonship. NEB quite properly translates πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας as 'a Spirit that makes us sons' . . . .
>
> . . . his coming at conversion makes us sons (8:15).[1]

Cranfield does point out in a footnote, however, that in Gal 4:6 "it seems to be implied that adoption precedes the gift of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit is a kind of seal confirming the adoption."[2] His point is pertinent, in that Gal 4 may only be referring to the Spirit marking those who are God's children. However, this is only a part of what Paul is saying in the fuller discussion of the Spirit's work in Rom 8:14-16. There the activity of the Spirit of God both makes and marks the sons of God.

The benefit of the Spirit's activity to the believer is viewed from two sides. Firstly, there is freedom from slavery and fear.[3] Secondly, the Spirit's activity brings assurance of sonship.[4] Calvin provides an interesting comparison by referring to Mount Sinai with its attendant terrors and Mount Zion with all its assurances in Heb 12:18-24.[5] A similar illustration can also be seen in Gal 4:22-26. Paul's comparison there of slave and free is made relevant for Rom 8:15 by his earlier question, "Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" (Gal 3:3). When a believer is

---

[1]Dunn, pp. 149-50. [2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:397.

[3]"They are thus set free by the Spirit from slavery either to sin (6:15-19), or to the law (6:14) which they cannot obey (7:7-25), and which therefore brings fear because of their failure to please God." Best, p. 94.

[4]"Whoever is under the guidance of the Spirit is a son and is ruled by love and trust in the Father who acknowledges him as his son." Brunner, p. 72.

[5]Calvin, p. 168.

being led by the Spirit he can have the assurance and enjoy the benefits of being a child of God. This is not to deny assurance in the work of Christ as Saviour. The work of the Spirit is an integral part of Christ's work. In fact, the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9).

Another important benefit to the believer from the Spirit's activity is that his present assurance of sonship brings hope for a future life. This is discussed in the next chapter, but it also arises out of the idea of sonship, or adoption, here. Barrett takes the position that "v. 23 makes quite clear that our adoption . . . lies in the future."[1] The work of the Spirit "brings forward into the present what is properly an eschatological event."[2] It seems better, however, to see a present real adoption that anticipates a further, real eschatological adoption. Vs. 14 speaks of the present standing of the believer as a son of God. The assurance in vs. 16 is "that we are children of God" now. The statement of vs. 15 likewise refers to the believer's present experience.

This does have future consequences, of course. John wrote the same thing. "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). So, in Rom 8:23 those who now have the Spirit as in vss. 14-16 are those who are waiting for their future adoption, that is "the redemption of their bodies." Paul's use of adoption indicates a present and future adoption, both part of the one work of redemption. The real point, however one looks at it, is that this Spirit-led sonship marks the contrast "between those who

---

[1]Barrett, p. 163. [2]Ibid.

have no hope for the future, and those who can confidently look forward to life and glory."[1]

The Witness of the Spirit

The witness of the Spirit to the believer's sonship as presented by Paul in Rom 8:15b-16 provides such fruitful grounds for difference of opinion that it is not envisaged that it can be finally sorted out here. The point seems to be that, as the Spirit is involved in enabling the believer to be a child of God, he is also involved in assuring the believer of his status.

The RSV translation, or interpretation, of 8:15a leads to its translation of vss. 15b-16, "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God." When the Spirit of God is seen as the subject of vs. 15a it is natural to translate "by whom we cry" as most translators do.[2] It should be noted, however, that both translations see the Spirit as the cause of the cry "Abba! Father!" This is Paul's idea; and "for Paul, this cry in the Spirit is proof that the Christians are truly children of God."[3] Just as "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3), so no one can truly call God "Father" except by the indwelling Spirit. This marks Christians as God's children.

Vs. 16 conveys the import of vs. 15b. Not all agree with this, but if this is not the case vs. 16 is somewhat isolated. It is probably better to see in vs. 16 a statement that brings home the

---

[1]Ibid. [2]Newman and Nida, pp. 154-55.

[3]Gunkel, p. 79, n.9.

significance of the Spirit-inspired cry, "Abba! Father!" "In our opinion," says Gunkel, "v. 16 interprets the preceding ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν· Ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ."[1]

> The truth is surely rather that v. 16 is intended to confirm and clarify the υἱοθεσίας and the ἐν ᾧ of v. 15 by indicating that our crying 'Abba, Father' rests upon something prior to it and independent of it, namely the fact that no less an authority than God Himself in His Spirit has assured us--and continues to assure us--that we are His children.[2]

Both Gunkel and Cranfield agree that vs. 16 relates to vs. 15 and is not just another and isolated statement of the Spirit's work. However, they do not agree as to the nature of the Spirit's witness here.

Gunkel contains the Spirit's witness specifically within the cry "Abba! Father!" He speaks of prayers in the worship setting with obvious "suprahuman" signs. "What must be involved here is glossolalia or something similar," he says, referring to Rom 8:26 in support of this idea.[3] The majority of commentators today see something like this. The cry "Abba! Father!" the witness of the Spirit, is not a private matter.[4] It is "the prayers of the Church,"[5] "the situation of worship."[6]

On the other hand, Cranfield represents those who see this as a private and personal matter in the experience of the believer. The Spirit does lead the believer in "an urgent and sincere crying to God,"[7] but the witness of the Spirit is not limited only to "His

---

[1]Gunkel, p. 79, n. 9. [2]Cranfield, Romans, 1:402.

[3]Gunkel, pp. 79-80. [4]Paul Meyer, p. 10.

[5]Barrett, p. 164. [6]Käsemann, p. 228.

[7]Cranfield, Romans, 1:399.

immediate inspiration of the prayer 'Abba, Father.'" It involves "His whole work of enabling us to believe in Jesus Christ, through whom alone we may rightly call God 'Father'."[1] In this way, the individual, conscious of the leading of the Spirit in his life, has the assurance that he is a child of God.

This witness of the Spirit should not be seen as a purely mystical thing. It is "[not] a direct propositional revelation to the effect, 'Thou art a child of God'."[2] Neither is the subject of this statement simply the fruits of the Spirit. Paul says in another place that the Spirit does enlighten men regarding the things of God (1 Cor 2:9-13). The Spirit, then, can help believers to understand that they are children of God.

The witness of the Spirit probably should not be limited to either a public or a private experience. "The wind blows where it wills" (John 3:8). The activity of the Spirit in public worship can be as much a confirmation of the believer's standing as his own private prayer. The Spirit should be active in both areas for this purpose.

However, the thrust of these verses (vss. 14-16) seems to have a very personal emphasis, as the relationship of a son to the Father. The assurance that the Spirit gives is ultimately only of value as it is given to each individual believer. As Käsemann says, referring to "ecstatics" in the congregation, "the Spirit ruling in the congregation manifests objectively to the individual Christian what the Spirit says as given to him personally."[3] Even the public

---

[1]Ibid., 1:402-3. [2]Murray, 1:297.

[3]Käsemann, p. 228.

witness is for the benefit of the individual.

Along with this personal individual emphasis it should also be noted that Paul is presenting the work of the Spirit. For this reason those who see "two witnesses, according to the OT injunction,"[1] are probably seeing more than they should see. It is a rather common interpretation that the Spirit along with the believer's spirit bears witness to the believer's status. There is no way that the Spirit of God and the spirit of man can be given equal ranking in this matter. Whatever the believer does is invoked by the Spirit so there is really no joint witness, in the true sense. Thus, some prefer to translate, "the Spirit of God testifies to our spirit."[2] "It seems better here to follow the example of the Vulgate and take συμμαρτυρεῖν with the dative in its other (well-established) sense of 'testify to', 'assure'."[3]

The way in which the spirit of the believer can go along with the Spirit is as Leenhardt presents it.

> We could not know this [that we are God's children] by looking towards ourselves, what we are and what we do; but the divine Spirit testifies this for us, and our spirit, yielding to the authority of that witness, gains a conviction transcending all reason.[4]

The witness is the witness of the Spirit.

Leenhardt's statement seems to be supported by Paul himself in Gal 4:6. Assuming that Paul had similar concerns as in Romans, here are those who are God's children through faith in Christ. God

---

[1]Black, p. 119. [2]Best, p. 95.

[3]Cranfield, Romans, 1:403. See also Leenhardt, p. 215, n.

[4]Leenhardt, p. 215. See also Olshausen, p. 279: "The one that properly gives witness . . . is the divine Spirit; the human spirit is more the receiver of the witness from Him."

has sent the Spirit into their hearts. So they cry out "Abba! Father!" It should be noted that in whatever way the Spirit gives the witness, it is for the individual believer's personal assurance. The language of Paul, both in Gal 4 and Rom 8, leans very heavily to an inner activity of the Spirit that gives the believer personal assurance that he is a child of God.

Dodd makes the important point that "Paul does not base his faith on what is called 'religious experience' of an emotional and non-rational kind, but he is prepared to appeal to such experience as corroborative evidence for the individual who has it."[1] It should be noted, however, that the witness of the Spirit is not purely emotional and non-rational. It is always in harmony with God's word and has outward effects in the life to support its reality.[2] In addition, it is not limited to some Christians. It is the privilege of all Christians to know the witness of the Spirit because he dwells in all who are truly Christians (Rom 8:9).

One final point about this assurance of the Spirit should be noted, and it may be the most important. The Spirit of life is present to testify to believers of their life in Christ Jesus. The assurance the believer can have is not just because of the Spirit's presence as such. It is not at all totally what the Spirit does for and in the believer. As has been previously noted, while the work of

---

[1]Dodd, p. 130.

[2]"It was observed before (at ver. 9) that this witness of the Spirit is not to be placed merely in the feeling (1 Jn iii.19), but His whole inward and outward efficacy must be taken together; for instance, His comfort, His incitement to prayer, His censure of sin, His impulse to works of love, to witness before the world, and such like more." Olshausen, pp. 279-80.

God is perfect the receptor is less than perfect.[1] Any witness that depends on subjectivity alone leaves much to be desired. In the final analysis, then, the witness of the Spirit is not to his own presence. It is to remind and assure the believer that Jesus Christ is his Saviour; that in him the believer has life.

---

[1]See p. 48.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRIT AND ETERNAL LIFE

The Spirit not only gives assurance of life in Christ Jesus, he also gives life. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

The Spirit is Life

There is a large number of translators and commentators who see in Rom 8:10 a reference to the human spirit. Sanday and Headlam see "the human πνεῦμα which has the properties of life infused into it by the presence of the Divine πνεῦμα."[1] Nygren goes along with the RSV translation, "the spirit is alive because of righteousness."[2] Harrisville, with others, takes the body here to refer to "the old man in 6:6." The contrast he then sees is that spirit here is "what Paul elsewhere calls the 'new creation'."[3] This is probably the same idea that is held by Sanday and Headlam.

One of the main reasons for this interpretation seems to be the supposed necessity of contrasting the human body and human spirit

---

[1]Sanday and Headlam, p. 198. [2]Nygren, p. 322.

[3]Harrisville, p. 125.

in this statement.[1] This view does not adequately consider the immediate context. In fact, it totally departs from it.[2]

The immediate context presents the believer "in the Spirit" (vs. 9), the Spirit dwelling in the believer (vss. 9, 11a, and 11b), and the believer having the Spirit of Christ (vs. 9). It also seems reasonable to understand the "Christ in you" of vs. 10 as the indwelling Spirit. Where in all this discussion of the Spirit of God is the justification for the introduction of the human spirit? The RSV further misleads the reader by translating τὸ πνεῦμα as "your spirits" (vs. 10). Paul Meyer, however, aptly comments that "when the shift is made [to the human spirit] in verse 16, it is clearly marked by the possessive 'our.'"[3] There is nothing of this in Rom 8:10, "it is rather a question of the Spirit of God, as in the whole context."[4]

> It would seem strange, though not altogether implausible, that between two such explicit references to the Spirit of God and its work [Rom 8:9 and 11] Paul should shift his attention to anthropology and do so in terms of a body - spirit dualism

---

[1]See Nygren, p. 322; Dodd, p. 125; Heinrich Meyer, 2:57; Sanday and Headlam, pp. 197-98, for example.

[2]"The apparent parallelism to the anthropological term 'body' is not sufficient ground for interpreting pneuma here as also anthropological rather than as God's Spirit, in violation of the train of thought." Paul Meyer, p. 8.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Leenhardt, p. 209. As most modern translations do not accept the Spirit of God here, it may be of value to notice some other commentators who do: Murray, 1:289-90; Käsemann, p. 224; Robinson, p. 99; Newman and Nida, p. 151; Barrett, p. 159; Bruce, Romans, p. 164; and Cranfield, Romans, 1:390.

long unused, if indeed Paul ever used it at all. . . .
So then the verse in question should be translated as in the KJV.[1]

If πνεῦμα can be translated as the Spirit of God it becomes highly probable that "the Spirit is life" is the correct translation as against "the spirit is alive." This accords with the overall thrust of Rom 8:1-17. Everything the believer has comes by his relationship with Christ Jesus and by the ministry of the Spirit. It is possible that Paul is saying here what he has said before; that the Spirit is "the Spirit of life" for the person in Christ (Rom 8:2).

What, then, is meant by "life"? The understanding of this is tied up with the phrase, "because of righteousness" (διὰ δικαιοσύνην). If righteousness here is the practice of righteousness, life would refer more to the life that is lived. If righteousness refers to justification, life is more a quality or status of life that the Spirit gives.

Calvin sees sanctification here, almost it seems, developing to the point of perfectionism. He speaks of a process that goes on "until He destroys our mortal flesh and at last renews us perfectly."[2] The end-result is eternal life. Byrne seeks to take a similar line with a definite sanctification-salvation theme. He translates, "the Spirit means life because of righteousness."[3] His idea seems to be that this Spirit-produced righteousness "really contributes to their gaining full salvation."[4] However, the question must be

---

[1]R. T. Fortna, "Romans 8:10 and Paul's Doctrine of the Spirit," Anglican Theological Review 41 (1959):82-83.

[2]Calvin, p. 165. [3]Byrne, p. 579.

[4]Ibid.

asked: Is the Spirit given in order to impart righteousness so that the Christian will be saved eventually? Or does the Spirit's presence signify an already present saving relationship? The first part of Rom 8:10 gives the answer. "If Christ is in you . . . the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Emphasis supplied.)

It must be also noted that Käsemann[1] and Paul Meyer[2] both see the practice of righteousness to be the concern of this statement, but in a more acceptable way than above. The Spirit "produces life . . . for the sake of producing righteousness (telic dia with the accusative, as in 1 Cor 11:9), which is the fulfillment of the 'just requirement' mentioned in verse 4."[3] While this is theologically acceptable, the question remains as to whether it is what Paul means here.

It is rather doubtful if Meyer would apply his grammatical analysis to the previous phrase in Rom 8:10. Is the body dead for the sake of producing sin? It is more consistent to see sin as the reason the body is dead,[4] and righteousness as the reason the Spirit is life for the Christian. This is the simple basic meaning of διά with the accusative. It is followed by most commentators, and "because of righteousness" is to be interpreted as a reference to justification.

This means that Paul is speaking here about quality or status of life. The Christian, in Christ, is justified and is consequently

---

[1]Käsemann, p. 224. [2]Paul Meyer, p. 8.

[3]Ibid.

[4]This is true whether death means "subject to death" (as Bruce, Romans, p. 164 and Cranfield, Romans, 1:389) or "dead with Christ" (as Barrett, p. 159). In the context, the former is probably correct.

indwelt by the Spirit. The very presence of the Spirit is life. Brunner talks of "a real participation in his life, in the glory of his resurrection" now.[1] Fortna says, "We have our resurrection life now in the Spirit."[2]

Barrett brings the reality of this life out into the light of day when he says, "All the graces of the Christian life are the consequences of, and depend upon, justification."[3] His comment is a necessary reminder that no life exists without expressing itself. Still, the main thrust of Paul's thought here is "the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23). The Spirit brings this to the believer now.

> The Spirit of the Christians is life already in the present, and there can be no more talk of its ζωοποίησις . "Thus our verse directly states the important thought that the ζωὴ αἰώνιος is already present in the Christian experience here and now, and above all as a still inward possession of the Spirit.[4]

So then, because of his relationship with Christ and the gift of the Spirit, the believer is in a condition of life. It could well be that the best statement is the first--"the Spirit is life because of righteousness"--because he is justified in Christ.

The Spirit and the Resurrection

"There is no need to ask what is present and what still to come. We both are raised and will be raised."[5]

There was a time when this writer believed that Rom 8:11 was speaking of the sanctifying work of the Spirit. He now finds that

---

[1]Brunner, p. 70. [2]Fortna, p. 83.

[3]Barrett, p. 159. [4]Gunkel, p. 109.

[5]Fortna, p. 83.

ANDALE LIBRARY COLLEGE

thought quite unbelievable. It seems that the real clue to this statement is the resurrection of Christ. In seeking the proper meaning of vs. 11, there is a connection that cannot be overlooked between Christ's resurrection and the believer being given life.[1] This is so, even though the focus of the statement is on the Spirit. Again, Paul makes a statement in Rom 8:23 that is not unrelated. Those who have the first-fruits of the Spirit are waiting for the redemption of their bodies.[2]

It is strange that men such as Calvin and Leenhardt have overlooked these connections. Calvin states that Paul "is not speaking of the last resurrection." He sees "the continual operation of the Spirit, by which He gradually mortifies the remains of the flesh and renews in us the heavenly life."[3] Leenhardt, acknowledging that most commentators see here the resurrection of believers, nevertheless speaks of "the vivifying energy of the Spirit, who liberates from the tyranny of sin" now.[4]

Cranfield points out that discussion of mortifying the flesh "seems to be introduced in v. 12."[5] It is best kept for there; and the future giving of life in vs. 11, in the context of Christ's

---

[1]Notice 1 Cor 6:14, 15:20, 23; 2 Cor 4:14; and 1 Thess 4:14 for connections of Christ's resurrection with that of believers' resurrection.

[2]Eph 1:13b-14 shows this connection between the indwelling Spirit and the future inheritance.

[3]Calvin, p. 166.

[4]Leenhardt, p. 210. Philippi, 1:406, goes to the extent of talking about "the gradual absorption of ἁμαρτία into δικαιοσύνη . . . or of the σῶμα into the πνεῦμα."

[5]Cranfield, Romans, 1:391.

resurrection and the presence of the Spirit in the believer, is best seen as the resurrection of believers. The Spirit is life, "and the vista of life in the Spirit extends as far as the general resurrection."[1]

Brunner sees the presence of the Spirit in the believer as "the connecting link between the present and the future existence, . . . the 'pledge' of eternal glory."[2] There is no question that this idea is involved in Rom 8:11, but there is probably much more.

The major point of discussion in vs. 11b is whether the correct text is διά plus the genitive (resurrection by the agency of the Spirit) or διά plus the accusative (resurrection because of the presence of the Spirit). Both these readings have strong and early textual witnesses, with slightly more weight to support the genitive reading.[3] Most commentators and versions take this active meaning where the Spirit is the agency. This seems to harmonise with the positive, active thrust in vs. 10, "the Spirit is life."

It is interesting to notice that Karl Barth in his major commentary in 1933 adopts the reading "because of his Spirit."[4] In his later Shorter Commentary, he has changed his view. "There is the promise that by the same Spirit we ourselves, our bodies, shall

---

[1]Barrett, p. 159. See also Newman and Nida, p. 151: "It seems best to take this verse as an eschatological reference; that is, God's Spirit, which is presently living in the believers, will be the means by which God will give life to their mortal bodies at the end of time."

[2]Brunner, p. 71.

[3]See Sanday and Headlam, pp. 198-99; Murray, 1:292, n. 14; Cranfield, Romans, 1:391-92.

[4]Barth, Commentary, p. 287.

live forever."[1] (Emphasis supplied.) As far as the end result is concerned, either view presents the fact that the indwelling Spirit leads to the believer's resurrection.

Paul's point in vs. 11, however, is that "the Spirit is obviously regarded as the true resurrecting force."[2]

> Here then is Paul's doctrine of 'immortality.' Of a natural 'immortality of the soul,' in the sense which our thought has inherited from Plato, he knows nothing. The race of Adam is doomed to death; life must be the gift of God; and life God gives, by giving His Spirit to those who are in Christ.

---

[1]Idem, Shorter Commentary, p. 193.

[2]Käsemann, p. 225.

[3]Dodd, p. 126.

AVONDALE COLLEGE LIBRARY

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPIRIT AND JESUS

One of the gravest mistakes in any discussion of the Spirit is to consider that his work is something that is independent of, or in addition to, the saving work of Christ. It has been hinted here and there throughout this thesis that the work of the Spirit is an integral part of the salvation provided in Christ Jesus. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine this idea as it is revealed in Rom 8:1-17.

Firstly, it should be remembered that Rom 8 is not an isolated statement. Neither is it the beginning of Paul's discussion of what it means to be a Christian. Earlier in Romans Paul has shown that it is in a faith-relationship with Jesus Christ that a person is a Christian. He has discussed certain elements of living the Christian life, and now he further develops his ideas. In Rom 8:1-17 he is talking about the man who is "in Christ Jesus" (vs. 1). The life that is characterised by the indwelling of the Spirit of God is that of the individual who has a faith-relationship with Christ.

The position that has been taken here regarding Rom 8:2 is that "in Christ Jesus" refers to that faith-relationship of the believer with Christ. On the basis of that relationship "the law of the Spirit of life . . . has set me free from the law of sin and death" (vs. 2). If this is so, it can be seen that the work of the

Spirit is not separate from the work of Christ. It is consequent upon the work of Christ and the believer's union with Christ. A person is only ever "in the Spirit" (vs. 9) when he is in Christ Jesus. It is only in Christ that he receives and benefits from the work of the Spirit for Christian living. Outside of a faith-relationship with Christ there is no indwelling Spirit. This work of the Spirit as presented in Rom 8:1-17 does not take place outside of Christ.

This Christ-centred basis of the Spirit's activity in enabling the Christian life is seen in vss. 3-4, where the redemptive sacrifice of Christ has, as a consequence, the fulfillment of the just requirement of the law "in us, who walk . . . according to the Spirit." It is not too much to say that the experience of walking according to the Spirit presupposes experiencing the reality of vs. 3. This means that not only has Christ been given as Saviour by God, but also that he has been accepted as Saviour by the believer.

The statement of Rom 8:3-4 may be seen as a further definition of Rom 6:1-4. There, the expected result of the faith-baptismal union with Christ is that the believer will "walk in newness of life" (vs. 4b). It points to the results of belonging to Christ. In Rom 8:4 this same result is defined as a Spirit-led life.

What is being said then is not so much that there is a life oriented to the Spirit, but a life oriented to Christ in which the Spirit is at work.

The intimacy between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit is highlighted in vss. 9-10. The subtle shift from "Spirit of God" to the "Spirit of Christ" and then to "Christ in you" shows

that the person who has the Spirit is in Christ. There is no separation between Christ and the Spirit; one is not present without the other.

These statements also mean that Christ dwells in believers by his Spirit. This again asserts the primacy of Christ as Saviour. The Spirit is the means by which Christ is experienced, by which Christ's lordship is asserted or exercised in the believer. The pre-condition of the Spirit as life in vs. 10 is "if Christ is in you." In practice this means that any so-called experience of the Spirit can be judged objectively by how it relates to Christ. Does salvation reside in relationship with Christ as Saviour, or in the "experience" of the Spirit? Is life in the Spirit related to the life of Christ as to its principles?

The primary focus of vs. 11 is the presence and power of the indwelling Spirit of God. However, it is significant that Paul refers to the resurrection of Christ in connection with a future resurrection for those indwelt by the Spirit. This is surely a reminder that death has been suffered and conquered by Christ, to whom those indwelt by the Spirit belong (vs. 9b). Hence, vs. 11 is a reminder of what the believer has in Christ, and that it is and will be mediated by the work of the Spirit of God. It is not just that the Spirit is life, but that he is life to those in Christ Jesus.

Christ is not mentioned in Rom 8:12-16, but this does not signify that the Spirit is now working alone any more than in the earlier verses of this passage. These verses cannot be considered in isolation from the earlier statements, and Paul has elsewhere laid down a firm Christological basis for what he says here.

It may be that Paul, commentators to the contrary, deliberately omitted saying, "We are debtors to the Spirit to live according to the Spirit," to finish vs. 12. He knew that believers are debtors to Jesus Christ in whom they have the Spirit. The Spirit does not function for believers in his own right according to Rom 8:1-11, but on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the believer's relationship with him.

The on-going conflict with sin in the life of the believer, which is enabled by the Spirit (vs. 13), is not something done apart from Christ. It is a consequence of justification. This finds support in Paul's earlier statement in Rom 6:11-12. "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." This is what is required of the Christian. Rom 8:12-14 is how it is achieved. The significant point from Rom 6 is that this situation is to pertain for those "in Christ Jesus" (vs. 11b).

The concept of being children of God does not belong only in the realm of the Spirit's activity. Paul's ideas of adoption, of being children of God, are a way of expressing the relationship with God that comes about in justification and reconciliation as a result of faith in Christ Jesus. (See Rom 5:1-11, for example.)

In Rom 8, being led by the Spirit as a child of God (vs. 14) is hardly different from walking according to the Spirit (vs. 4). The former, with the latter, can thus be seen as a consequence of salvation in Christ (vs. 3).

While the main thrust of Rom 8:14-16 is to describe certain activities of the Spirit as characteristic of the child of God, vs. 15

probably includes the idea of the Spirit's involvement in believers becoming children of God. This cannot, however, override the unequivocal statement of Paul in Gal 3:26. There, relationship with Christ is the determinative factor in being a child of God. The presence of the Spirit is assurance of this (Gal 4:6, Rom 8:16).

Is it too much to say that a good part of this assurance is the work of the Spirit in reminding believers that Christ is their Saviour? Even in the process of inciting the cry "Abba! Father!" the Spirit is not simply bringing to the notice of believers something they have in themselves. He is reminding them of their solidarity with him who cried "Abba! Father!" for them.

There is, then, no "gospel of the Spirit" separate from the gospel of Christ. Believers do not come to know the work of the Spirit apart from knowing Christ. They do not advance from knowing Christ to some "higher" experience of the Spirit. At the same time, it is true that there is no gospel, no Christianity, without the Spirit. "A religious way of life which is without the experience of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart is unreal. It is not Christian, nor is it the experience of salvation."[1]

---

[1]Kevan, p. 7.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The work of the Spirit of God is better experienced than explained. Nevertheless, where Scripture has stated certain matters, it is well that some effort be made to understand them.

In this attempt to understand Paul's teaching about the Spirit and the Christian life in Rom 8:1-17, vs. 2 has been seen as the basic statement. There Paul says that the person in Christ Jesus has been delivered from the power of sin and death by the power of the Spirit. This liberation is not instantaneous, entire sanctification. It is an initial liberation in which the slavery, the dominating power of sin is broken. Thus the believer is free to choose and to move in God's way by the Spirit.

This freedom from sin's dominion is something that must be maintained. It can be maintained "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body" (Rom 8:13). This involves conflict with sin, overcoming the practice of sin, repentance for sin, and living a righteous life. All of this is by the Spirit and is a constant process in the Christian life. The believer only deals with sin by the Spirit, not by his own inherent powers. Therefore, he needs to be enabled by the Spirit to deal with the problem of sin until the redemption of his body at Christ's return (Rom 8:23).

The positive side of actual Christian living by the Spirit

is high-lighted in Rom 8:4. The just requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit. It was noted that this is an attitude towards God before it is an act of obedience. This was noted especially in connection with the cry "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15). Where the Spirit prompts this cry, indicating a genuine Father-son relationship with God, filial devotion is revealed by obedience to the Father's will. Again, the very presence of the Spirit (Rom 8:9) is revealed by his influence on the life of the believer. The Spirit of Christ cannot but move the believer in harmony with the life and the teachings of Christ.

The end-result of sin is death. Hence, to be delivered from sin by the Spirit involves deliverance from death. The Spirit of life gives to the believer the assurance that he is indeed a child of God (Rom 8:14-15). The indwelling of the Spirit is revealed by an inward witness of assurance (Rom 8:16), the actual effects on the life (Rom 8:9, 14-15), and by his witness that Christ is indeed Saviour. These guarantees of sonship bring present assurance of the future eternal life that God has for his children.

The Spirit of life, however, gives more than the assurance of life. He is life (Rom 8:10), so that by the indwelling Spirit believers have life eternal now. While this life is revealed in the believer's life now, the end will be eternal life (Rom 8:11). By the same indwelling Spirit, God will give life eternal on the day of the resurrection.

It has been pointed out that this work of the Spirit is not something separate from or an addition to the saving work of Christ. It is a part of what the believer has in Christ--a direct consequence

of his relationship with the Saviour. There is no such thing as a person in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ who is without the work of the Spirit.

The theme of Rom 8:2, then, has been shown to be elaborated by Paul in vss. 3-17. As well the vital role of the Spirit in Christian living has been demonstrated.

This thesis has not attempted to develop something new but to draw attention to an often neglected area of Christian truth. It is anticipated that the reader has found some clarification of these important matters. It would be most gratifying, however, if he should seek more and more of the reality that the Spirit of God has set him free in Christ Jesus from the power of sin and death.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Barclay, William. The Letter to the Romans. The Daily Study Bible. 2d ed. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1957.

_____. The Mind of St. Paul. London: Collins, 1958.

Barrett, C. K. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957.

Barth, Karl. A Shorter Commentary on Romans. London: SCM Press, 1959.

_____. The Epistle to the Romans. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Beet, Joseph Agar. A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. 5th ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885.

Best, E. The Letter of Paul to the Romans. Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: University Press, 1967.

Black, Matthew. Romans. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants, 1973.

Bruce, F. F. Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977.

_____. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. London: Tyndale Press, 1963.

Bruner, Frederick Dale. A Theology of the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1970.

Brunner, Emil. The Letter to the Romans: A Commentary. London: Lutterworth Press, 1959.

Buchanan, James. The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit. N.p.: n.p., 1843; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966.

Buttrick, George Arthur, ed. The Interpreter's Bible. 12 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1954.

Calvin, John. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians. Edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Ross Mackenzie. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961.

Cranfield, C. E. B. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. International Critical Commentary. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975.

_____. "The Freedom of the Christian According to Romans 8:2." In New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World: Essays in Honour of Harry Sawyer, pp. 91-98. Edited by Mark E. Glasswell and Edward W. Fasholé-Luke. London: SPCK, 1974.

Davis, Thomas A. Romans for the Everyday Man. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971.

Denney, James. "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans." The Expositor's Greek Testament. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900. 2:585-725.

Dodd, C. H. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932.

Dunn, James D. G. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. London: SCM Press, 1970.

Godet, F. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. N.p.: Funk & Wagnall, 1883; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1956.

Gore, Charles. St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: A Practical Exposition. 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1907.

Griffith, Gwilym O. St. Paul's Gospel to the Romans. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949.

Gunkel, Hermann. The Influence of the Holy Spirit. Translated by Roy A. Harrisville and Philip A. Quanbeck II. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Gutbrod, W. "νόμος." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967. 4:1022-85.

Haldane, Robert. The Epistle to the Romans. N.p.: n.p., n.d.; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958.

Halverson, Richard C. The Gospel for the Whole of Life. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1964.

Harrisville, Roy A. Romans. Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980.

Hodge, Charles. A Commentary on Romans. N.p.: n.p., 1864; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972.

Hunter, A. M. The Epistle to the Romans. Torch Bible Commentaries. London: SCM Press, 1955.

Käsemann, Ernst. Commentary on Romans. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1980.

Kevan, E. F. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit. London: Pickering & Inglis, 1953.

Kirk, K. E. The Epistle to the Romans. The Clarendon Bible. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. 10 vols. Edited and translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964-76.

Leenhardt, Franz J. The Epistle to the Romans. London: Lutterworth Press, 1961.

Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg, 1961.

Loane, Marcus L. The Hope of Glory: An Exposition of the Eighth Chapter in the Epistle to the Romans. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968.

Luther, Martin. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1954; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1976.

Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm. Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879.

Moule, C. F. D. The Holy Spirit. Oxford: A. R. Mowbray, 1978.

Moule, H. C. G. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.

Murray, John. The Epistle to the Romans. New International Commentary on the New Testament. 2 vols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960.

Newell, William R. Romans: Verse by Verse. Chicago: Moody Press, 1947.

Newman, Barclay M., and Nida, Eugene A. A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans. Help for Translators, vol. 14. London: United Bible Societies, 1973.

Nygren, Anders. Commentary on Romans. London: SCM Press, 1952.

Olshausen, Hermann. Biblical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans. Clark's Foreign Theological Library, vol. 13. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864.

Philippi, Friedrich Adolph. Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Clark's Foreign Theological Library. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878-79.

Robinson, J. A. T. Wrestling with Romans. London: SCM Press, 1979.

Sanday, William, and Headlam, Arthur C. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895.

Simpson, A. B. The Holy Spirit or Power from on High. 2 vols. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Christian Publications, 1896.

Stott, John R. W. Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8. London: Intervarsity Fellowship, 1966.

Swete, H. B. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1964.

Taylor, Vincent. The Epistle to the Romans. Epworth Preacher's Commentaries. London: Epworth Press, 1955.

Thomas, W. H. Griffith. St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: A Devotional Commentary. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1947.

Whiteley, D. E. H. The Theology of St. Paul. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964.

Wood, A. Skevington. Life by the Spirit. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.

Wuest, Kenneth S. Romans in the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956.

Articles

Byrne, Brendan. "Living out the Righteousness of God: The Contribution of Rom 6:1-8:13 to an Understanding of Paul's Ethical Presuppositions." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 43 (1981): 557-81.

Du Plessis, P. J. "The Concept of Pneuma in the Theology of Paul." Neotestamentica 3 (1969):9-19.

Fortna, R. T. "Romans 8:10 and Paul's Doctrine of the Spirit." Anglican Theological Review 41 (1959):77-84.

McCant, Jerry. "A Wesleyan Interpretation of Romans 5-8." Wesleyan Theological Journal 16 (1981):68-84.

Meyer, Paul W. "Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters: A Contextual Exploration." Interpretation 33 (1979):3-18.

Polhill, J. B. "New Life in Christ: Romans 6-8." Review and Expositor 73 (1976):425-36.

Taylor, T. M. "'Abba, Father' and Baptism." Scottish Journal of Theology 11 (1958):62-71.

Winn, Albert C. "Holy Spirit and the Christian Life." Interpretation 33 (1979):47-57.

LIBRARY