

Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus

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I shall now proceed to speak a word regarding the power of this Covenant of Grace, this Law in the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; for as it is a Law of light, liberty, righteousness and true holiness, it creates a new man within, in righteousness and true holiness; so it is a principle of power and much glory. "We preach Christ," saith the Apostle, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." This is that word which is mighty in operation, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, it enters into the dividing of the joints and the marrow; it is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The power of this Law of Christ is a convincing power, for it overpowers the spirits of men, it convinces men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; it convinces them of sin, making them truly and deeply sensible of it. Of righteousness, making souls sensible of the unrighteousness of all their best righteousness; {and if there be any true righteousness, it will only be found in Christ alone.} Of judgment, that all those things delighted in formally must be judged, must receive the sentence of death from Jesus Christ, sitting as a refiner and purifier in them, &c. This Law of Christ in the hands of the Spirit converts as well as convinces, it changes and renews the mind, unshackles the mind from sin; it changes the mind, and the conversation, making a clear separation between the flesh and spirit, as it separates between a man, and his beloved lusts; as it converts a soul from the love of sin, and converts it likewise from the practice of sin, and effectually works a real change within, which produces a change without. This is that power which overcomes the flesh, the world and the devil;

and that is the reason why many a poor soul would many times gladly be rid of sin, but they lack a power, not being sensible where their actual power lieth; but perhaps oppose flesh in the strength of the flesh, when its proper only to the Spirit to destroy the workings of flesh. Therefore let saints be informed where their actual power lieth, after they may wait upon God; {in earnest prayer and supplications to be fortified by the Spirit in Christ, and thereby enabled to subdue the flesh; as they "through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body," and live unto God;} whose work it is to subdue all things in them, and all things without them that are contrary to Him, in his time. This Law of the Spirit convinces and converts, so it makes those in whom it effectually worketh a free and a willing people. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." {Ps.110:3} Willing to have sin sacrificed, lust and corruption subdued; willing in the beauty of holiness to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God in Christ Jesus; it is this powerful Spirit which works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" for nothing in the world is able to over-power the will, and liberate the affections, but this {reign of Grace in Christ} spirit of power, for it is this Spirit which makes souls willing to yield up themselves to the Scepter of the Almighty, which makes souls free and willing subjects to the King of Kings, that fills them with joy at the beholding of his presence, of his power, in faith triumphing and rejoicing because the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, keeping under all other laws and powers beside itself. Thus the Lord reigns, and the saints rejoice; the Lord reigns, and the world trembles! The power of this invincible Law of Christ will appear in the destruction of Antichrist, that man of sin, that son of perdition; this the Lord himself will effect by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. The coming of Christ in the Spirit, which is the glorious manifestation of this Holy Law, is that power that does and must destroy Antichrist. By Antichrist, that man of sin, we understand anything within us, or without us, whether it appear in wisdom or power, if it be of the flesh, though its pretenses be ever so fair and glorious, yet it is but an antichrist, a man of sin, a son of perdition; so whilst it is true that all the workings of the flesh are against Christ, but these are workings in a more higher and

sophisticated way, and then it is more deceitful, and the more dangerous; as it consists principally in wisdom and power, whether within us or without us; that is, that wisdom and power of the flesh in the things of God, which occasions much pride and fleshly exaltation, above all that is called God or that is worshiped. This is that deceivable spirit of antichrist, that "deceivableness of unrighteousness" in the perishing, that mystery of unrighteousness, which the Lord will destroy by the Spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. Therefore let all the wisdom, pride, and power of the flesh, veil itself to this excellent glory; for certainly it is that which must be accomplished. "For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." {Is.2:12} Every proud thing within the saints, every high & lofty thought that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, {II Cor.10:5,} and every proud and lifted up person among them; "upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall; and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures; and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." {Is.2:13-17} The day of the Lord's power will be upon all the wisdom, pride, power, confidence, comfort and beauty of the flesh, and then the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day; and this is the day of the Lord's power, in which his saints do rejoice and are glad therein, for this will minister true occasions of joyfulness to those that belong to him, when they can say and sing this song, "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And thus this powerful Law in the Spirit will appear in the subjecting of these powers below, or contrary to it, unto itself, when all created powers whatsoever below this omnipotency shall be made to acknowledge, "that thou Lord God Almighty are worthy to receive glory, and honor, and majesty, for thou only art worthy." Then shall this power cause all other powers to bend the knee unto it, to submit and fall down before it. Learn therefore to wait upon this prevailing and

powerful Law of the Spirit of Christ to accomplish all your works for you, both within you and without you, to bring down all your fleshly enemies, and then in conclusion shall you be enabled to see and say, that through the help of God you have gone through an host, by the help of God you have leaped over the wall. "For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. For thou wilt light my candle; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall." {Ps.18:27-29} The power of this Covenant and Law in the Spirit appears, in that it upholds those in whom it is effectually operative from falling; it engenders the soul to Christ; for the power of standing or falling is not left to the believer, {weak in himself,} but the power of God is that very power put forth to uphold him in Christ; therefore "we preach Christ - the power of God, and the wisdom of God." {I Cor.1:23,24} Not only wisdom and power to convert, but to uphold and keep up the soul in a way of grace; hence this Covenant is called an Everlasting Covenant. And saith the Lord, "I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;" {Jer.32:40;} for this is the power of this spiritual Law, it keeps souls perpetually with itself, so that as the Father's love is an everlasting love, so he makes with his people an everlasting Covenant in Christ, and so their souls might live everlastingly in his everlasting love. In a word, it is a Law of Power which hath undertaken the effecting of all the saints work both within them and for them, to carry them through temptations, and trials, and all oppositions both within and without, until they come to be completed in that Heavenly Kingdom. "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." {Is.41:8-10} A blessed word being spoken to the hearts of God's elect; how will this raise souls above themselves; and work them to a

dependency upon Him who is higher than themselves. When the Lord speaks this word with power, "Fear not, I am thy God, I will uphold thee, I will help thee, &c.," what need such a soul fear temptations, trials and enemies? This is that rock upon which Christ builds his Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is a word of comfort for the weak saints, for they are not left to themselves to stand or fall in their own power, but they are carried along in the everlasting arms of the Almighty. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." {Is.40:11} The Lord will not lose one of his little ones, but will raise them up at that last day. "Now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." {Is.43:1-3} This is made good in the spiritual Israel of God, for he undertakes for them, and his power and strength is to become theirs, for he will deliver them and uphold them, and carry them through fiery temptations and trials, through floods of afflictions and tribulations; and thus through many a fiery trial will he carry them to the Kingdom. Oh therefore look to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith; look to him who is your Eternal Surety, your Covenant Representative, and works all for you, and all in you; it is his word to you, and likewise in you. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." {Is.45:22} There is no power below or besides God able to save you, able to uphold and keep you, but he alone is able to keep that which is committed unto him until that day; and his power is made especially known in our weakness; and thus revealed, as declared and experienced in our hearts. "Nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." {II Tim.1:12} The power of this Covenant, this Law in the Spirit enables to do what

it commands; for it is not only a law of light, enlightening the mind, giving understanding to the simple, but it carries on the soul in acting suitable to the light communicated; hence it is that the Apostle could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" {Phil.4:13;} and Christ says, "without me ye can do nothing." {Jn.15:5} "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." {Phil.2:13} I work, saith the Apostle, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." {I Cor.15:10} "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." {Gal.2:20} "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." {I Thes.2:13} It is Christ's power in the believer that is effectually destroying those inward corruptions of the flesh; it is Christ who is in you that works you up to a suitable acting and walking with himself. I, saith the Apostle, "am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." {Gal.2:19} Through the power of this Law in the Spirit am I dead to the Law in the flesh, that so in the same power I might live unto God. Thus the saints live in the power of this Law, act to God in the light and power of God; an excellent thing to be known of saints, where their power, the life of their lives lieth. "Because I live, ye shall live also." {Jn.14:19} Thus is Christ, who is the Covenant, become not only the wisdom of God, but the power of God in everyone that believes. Thus this Law in the Spirit transcends all other laws besides itself; for the Law and Covenant of Moses commanded, but gave no power unto obedience; hence it is the Lord who says, that they had broken the Covenant, though he was a Husband unto them; but this is a Law, a Covenant not to be broken, because it effects what it commands. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD." {Jer.31:32} "Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." {II Sam.23:5} "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh &c." {Rom.8:3} This Law of the Spirit of

life in Christ Jesus is a Law of spiritual power, for it doth that which the Covenant in the letter could not; that was a Covenant that could not give life, this is a Law of life, a Law of power in the spirits of believers. As this Law, this Covenant in the Spirit is a Law of power, so there is a powerful law in the flesh likewise, though this Law in the Spirit overpowers it, and subjects it to itself, where it is manifest in power. This law or principal of power in the flesh may be considered, either as it is more gross, or more refined. As it is more gross, powerfully working the minds and actions of natural men into a conformity unto itself; it carries on the natural man to act all manner of unrighteousness, and that with greediness; inasmuch that they think strange of those who run not with them to the same excess of riot; and thus it operates in natural men. This law of the flesh works with much power many times even in the hearts of believers; for this law of the flesh rebels against the law of the spiritual mind, and leads captive to the law of sin in the members. How do saints painfully experience this truth? Many times though the inner man be upright, {as considered in Christ,} and as he is born of God, they sin not; yet what temptations, what workings of flesh appears within them; which occasions blackness and darkness many times, the appearance of flesh in a way of power, which seems to stop the current of the souls present communion, and leaves it under a waiting condition for deliverance. Question: Is this law in the flesh too strong and powerful for that in the Spirit, when it seems thus to prevail in its rebelling against that Holy Law of Christ? Answer: It is not too strong for it, but wisdom gives way to this rebelling law, that it may act its part, that so the soul may feel itself what it is by nature, and so the more prize grace, and the more earnestly wait for a deliverance; {through Him who tells them to "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," Jn.16:33, and thus they overcome the world in Him;} and likewise for the keeping of the soul in an humble, waiting dependency upon this Almighty Power; therefore he sends a prick in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet, lest there should be an exaltation above measure, as experience teacheth us, that flesh is ready to take advantage, and that from spiritual discoveries. This Law in the flesh worketh in a more refined and

pure manner, though in a more deceivable way; not only in working souls with violence and greediness in a way of sin, but likewise works souls, when they come to see their sin, {or become blinded to their sin,} into a fleshly righteousness; so that the soul being ignorant of the righteousness of God, it goes about to establish its own righteousness. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." {Rom.10:3} And so it works the soul into a fleshly boasting, and a fleshly glorying in an external, or even internal self-righteousness, and that with as much violence as into a way of sin and profaneness, unless the power of the Spiritual Law prevent; then it's true, that the soul is content with joy to suffer the loss of all, and to account all things but dung and dross that it may win Christ, and be found exclusively in Him; then it is content not only to suffer the loss of this law in the flesh in its grosser considerations, but even in its most refined considerations; for then it can truly say, "but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." {Phil.3:7-9} This Covenant in the Spirit is a glorious Covenant, when Christ comes, he comes with power and much glory; and this Law rules in that Kingdom, where there is power and much glory. The glory of this Covenant appears not only in all those fore-mentioned particulars, as it is a law of light, liberty, righteousness, holiness, and power, &c., which must needs produce much glory where all these heavenly infusions are met together in one soul; as it is sensibly made a partaker of Christ; of the light, liberty, righteousness, holiness, power and glory of the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ. Besides this, for illustrating of this glorious Law, I mind how it interests the soul, in whom it is, into a near relation to the Father, not only of son, and of heir, but likewise the relation of a wife or spouse, and so is married to the

Lord eternally; and this is a name better than that of sons and daughters. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." {Jer.3:14} "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." {Is.54:5} "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the LORD." {Hos.2:19.20} This glorious Law makes forth many glorious discoveries and revelations in the hearts of believers, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." {I Cor.2:9,10} O, those sweet discoveries that God oft makes in the hearts of his saints, that they may say sweetly to their souls after a black and dark day, "return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee." {Ps.116:7} "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy Free Spirit." {Ps.51:12} Thus are they let see into that glorious mystery of love which passeth all knowledge. This Law of the Spirit works a glorious mind, a desire in the mind to be completed in this glory; not out of self-love, {as most do desire heaven that they might avoid hell,} but for the excellency and glory of Christ himself, it beholding the beauty, the sweetness, the purity, the perfection of Christ, and so the soul is overcome, nothing in the world is to be compared to it; and hence it is that saints have such a noble heroic spirit, looking above, fighting all things below as nothing, all riches, creature excellencies and glories are as grass and dross unto it; for this is the nature of this glorious Law as it fills the soul with so much glory where it is, that the desire is overcome with it, because it far out-glories all other glories in the world besides; and as it is an out-glorifying glory, and so draws the desire of the mind unto it; so it is likewise a transforming, changing glory, for it never leaves the soul in whom it is effectually operative, until it completes them in all the glory set before them, working up souls more and more to

itself, until it hath perfected them in the glory of the Father. "Well done, good and faithful servant - enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." {Phil.1:6} "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." {Heb.13:20,21} "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." {Rom.8:30} Hence it was Paul being possessed with this truth, expecting this completion in glory, pressing unto the mark of the prize of Christ set before him, who was enabled to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." {II Tim.4:7,8} O, therefore my dear brethren, in the unity of the spirit, look and wait for this day of God, the glorious appearing of the Great God, because when he shall appear, you shall appear with him in glory, and you will never enjoy the end of your faith, until you come into the perfection of this glorious salvation in Christ. Thomas Collier {Second Epistle to all Saints, 1651}