

## **THE LIFE I NOW LIVE**

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

1. **John 5:39-40** You search the Scriptures, but in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
2. **John 5:24** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.
3. **Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.
4. **Galatians 3:13-14** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
5. **2 Corinthians 3:6** . . . who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
6. **Romans 7:21, 23** I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. But I see (v. 23) another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
7. **Romans 8:10** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.
8. **Romans 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.
9. **Romans 5:10** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

## **The Leading of the Spirit**

‘As many as are led by the *Spirit of God*, these are sons of God.’ – Romans 8:14

By very many Christians the leading of the Spirit is chiefly thought of as a suggestion of thoughts for our guidance. In the decision of doubtful questions of opinion or of duty, in the choice of words from Scripture to use, or the distinct direction to the performance of some Christian work, they would be so glad of some intimation from the Spirit of what the right thing is. They long and ask for it in vain. When at times they think they have it, it does not bring the assurance, or the comfort, or the success, which they think ought to be the seal of what is really from the Spirit. And so the precious truth of the Spirit's leading, instead of being an end of all controversy, and the solution of all difficulty, a source of comfort and of strength, itself becomes a cause of perplexity, and the greatest difficulty of all.

The error comes from not accepting the truth we have had to insist upon more than once, that the teaching and the leading of the Spirit is first given in the Life, not in the Mind. The Life is stirred and strengthened; the Life becomes the Light. As the conformity to this world and its spirit is crucified and dies, as we deliberately deny and keep down the life of nature and the will of the flesh, we *are renewed in the spirit* of our mind, and so the mind becomes able to *prove and know* the good and perfect and acceptable will of God (Romans 12:2).

This connection between the practical sanctifying work of the Spirit in our inner life, and His leading, comes out very clearly in our context. 'If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live,' we read in Romans 8:13. Then follows immediately, '*For* as many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.' That is, as many as allow themselves to be led by Him in this mortifying of the deeds of the body, these are the sons of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the holy life which there was and is in Christ Jesus, and which works in us as a Divine life-power. He is the Spirit of Holiness, and only as such will He lead. Through Him God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure; through Him God makes us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. To be led of the Spirit implies in the first place the surrender to His work as He convicts of sin, and cleanses soul and body for His temple. It is as the Indwelling Spirit, filling, sanctifying, and ruling the heart and life, that He enlightens and leads.

In the study of what the leading of the Spirit means, it is of the first importance to grasp this thought in all its bearings. It is only the spiritual mind can discern spiritual things, can receive the leadings of the Spirit. The mind must grow spiritual to become capable of spiritual guidance. Paul said to the Corinthians, that because, though born again, they were still carnal, as babes in Christ, he had not been able to teach them spiritual truth. If this holds of the teaching that comes through man, how much more of that direct teaching of the Spirit, by which He leads into all truth! The deepest mysteries of Scripture, as far as they are apprehended by human thought, can be studied and accepted and even taught by the unsanctified mind. But the leading of the Spirit, we cannot repeat it too often, does not begin in the region of thought or feeling. Deeper down, in the life itself, in the hidden laboratory of the inner life, whence issues the power that moulds the will and fashions the character in our spirits, there the Holy Spirit takes up His abode, there He breathes and moves and impels. He leads by inspiring us with a life and disposition out of which right purposes and decisions come forth. 'That ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding': that prayer teaches us that it is only to a spiritual understanding that the knowledge of God's will can be given. And the spiritual understanding only comes with the growth of the spiritual man, and the faithfulness to the spiritual life. He that would

have the leading of the Spirit must yield himself to have his life wholly possessed and filled of the Spirit. It was when Christ had been baptized with the Spirit that, 'being full of the Spirit, He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness' (Luke 4:1), 'that He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee' (Luke 4:14), and began His ministry in Nazareth with the words, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.'

All leading claims following. It is easily understood that to enjoy the leading of the Spirit demands a very teachable, follow-some mind. The Spirit is not only hindered by the flesh as the power that commits sin, but still more by the flesh as the power that seeks to serve God. To be able to discern the Spirit's teaching, Scripture tells us that the ear must be circumcised, in a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ. The will and wisdom of the flesh must be feared, and crucified, and denied. The ear must be closed to all that the flesh and its wisdom, whether in self or in men around us, has to say. In all our thoughts of God or our study of His Word, in all our drawings nigh to worship, and all our goings out to work for Him, there must be a continued distrust and abnegation of self, and a very definite waiting on God by the Holy Spirit to teach and lead us. A soul that thus daily and hourly waits for a Divine leading, for the light of knowledge and of duty, will assuredly receive it. Would you be led of the Spirit, give up, day by day, not only your will and wisdom, but your whole life and being? The Fire will descend and consume the sacrifice.

The leading of the Spirit must very specially be a thing of faith, and that in two senses. The beginning of the leading will come when we learn in holy fear to cultivate and act upon the confidence: The Holy Spirit is in me, and is doing His work. The Spirit's indwelling is the crowning piece of God's redemption-work: the most spiritual and mysterious part of the mystery of godliness. Here, if anywhere, faith is needed. Faith is the faculty of the soul which recognizes the Unseen, the Divine; which receives the impression of the Divine Presence when God draws near; which in its measure accepts of what the Divine Being brings and gives to us. In the Holy Spirit is the most intimate communication of the Divine Life; here faith may not judge by what it feels or understands, but simply submits to God to let Him do what He has said. It meditates and worships, it prays and trusts ever afresh, it yields the whole soul in adoring acceptance and thanksgiving to the Saviour's word, 'He shall be in you.' It rejoices in the assurance: the Holy Spirit, the Mighty Power of God, dwells within; in His own way, I may depend upon it, He will lead me.

And then, with this more general faith of the indwelling of the Spirit, faith has also to be exercised in regard to each part of the leading. When there is a question I have laid before the Lord, and my soul has in simplicity and emptiness waited for His exposition and application of what in Word or Providence has met me, I must in faith trust my God that His guidance is not withheld. As we have said before, not in sudden impulses or strong impressions, not in heavenly voices or in remarkable interpositions, must we expect the ordinary leading of the Spirit. There are souls to whom such leading undoubtedly is given; the time may come, as our nature becomes more spiritual and lives more in direct contact with the Invisible, that our very thoughts and feelings may become the conscious vehicles of His blessed voice. But this we must leave to Him, and the growth of our spiritual capacity. The lower steps of the ladder are let down low enough for the weakest to reach; God means every child of His to be led by the Spirit every day. Begin the path of following the Spirit's leading by believing, not only that the Spirit is within you, but that He, if hitherto you have little sought or enjoyed the wondrous blessing, does now at once undertake the

work for which you ask and trust Him. Yield yourself to God in undivided surrender: believe with implicit confidence that God's acceptance of the surrender means that you are given in charge of the Spirit. Through Him Jesus guides and rules and saves you.

The Spirit of Christ by Andrew Murray