

NOTE B. - CHAP. IV

THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART

THE thought of the law written in the heart sometimes causes difficulty and discouragement, because believers do not see or feel in themselves anything corresponding to it. An illustration may help to remove the difficulty. There are fluids by which you can write so that nothing is visible, either at once or later, unless the writing be exposed to the sun or the action of some chemical. The writing is there, but one who is ignorant of the process cannot think it is there, and knows not how to make it readable. The faith of a man who is in the secret believes in it though he see it not.

It is even thus with the new heart. God has put His law into it. “Blessed are the people in whose heart is God’s law.” But it is there invisibly. He that takes God’s promise in faith, knows that it is in his own heart. As long as there is not clear faith on this point, all attempts to find it, or to fulfil that law, will be vain. But when by a simple faith the promise is held fast, the first step is taken to realise it. The soul is then prepared to receive instruction as to what the writing of the law in the heart means. It means, first, that God has implanted in the new heart a love of God’s law, and a readiness to do all His will. You may not feel this disposition there, but it is there. God has put it there. Believe this, and be assured that there is in you a Divine nature that says—and you therefore do not hesitate to say it – “I delight to do Thy will, O God!” In the name of God, and in faith, say it.

This writing of the law means, further, that in planting this principle in you, God has taken all that you know of God's will already, and inspired that new heart with the readiness to obey it. It may as yet be written there with invisible writing, and you are not conscious of it. That does not matter. You have here to deal with a Divine and hidden work of the Holy Spirit. Be not afraid to say: Oh, how love I Thy law! God has put the love of it into your heart, the new heart. He has taken away the stony heart; it is by the new heart you have to live.

The next thing implied in this writing of the law, is that you have accepted all God's will, even what you do not yet know, as the delight of your heart. In giving yourself up to God, you gave yourself wholly to His will. That was the one condition of your entering the Covenant; Covenant grace will now provide for teaching you to know, and strengthening you to do, all your Father would have you do.

The whole life in the New Covenant is a life of faith. Faith accepts every promise of the Covenant, is certain that it is being fulfilled, looks confidently to the God of the Covenant to do His work. Faith believes implicitly in the new heart, with the law written in it, because it believes in the promise, and in the God who gave and fulfils the promise.

It may be well to add here that the same truth holds good of all the promises concerning the new heart—they must be accepted and acted on by faith. When we read of “the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit,” of “Christ dwelling in the heart,” of “a clean heart,” of “loving each other with a clean heart fervently,” of “God establishing our heart unblamable in holiness,” we must; with the eye of faith, regard these spiritual realities as

actually and in very deed existing within us. In His hidden unseen way God is working them there. Not by sight or feeling, but by faith in the Living God and His Word, we know they are as the power for the dispositions and inclinations of the new heart. In this faith we are to act, knowing that we have the power to love, to obey, to be holy. The New Covenant gives us a God who works all in us; faith in Him gives us the assurance, above and beyond all feeling, that this God is doing His blessed work.

And if the question be asked what we are to think of all there is within us that contradicts this faith, let us remember what Scripture teaches us of it. We sometimes speak of an old and a new heart. Scripture does not do so. It speaks of the old, the stony, heart, being taken away—the heart, with its will, disposition, affections, being made new with a Divine newness. This new heart is placed in the midst of what Scripture calls the flesh, in which there dwelleth no good thing. We shall find it a great advantage to adhere as closely as possible to Scripture language. It will greatly help our faith even to use the very words God by His Holy Spirit has used to teach us. And it will greatly clear our view for knowing what to think of the sin that remains in us if we think of it and deal with it in the light of God's truth. Every evil desire and affection comes from the flesh, man's sinful natural life. It owes its power greatly to our ignorance of its nature, and our trusting to its help and strength to cast out its evil. I have already pointed out how sinful flesh and religious flesh is one, and how all failure in religion is owing to a secret trust in ourselves. As we accept and make use of what God says of the flesh, we shall see in it the source of all evil in us; we shall say of its temptations: "It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me"; we shall maintain our integrity as we maintain a good conscience that condemns us for nothing knowingly done against God's will; and we shall be strong in the faith of the Holy

Spirit, who dwells in the new heart, so to strengthen that we need not and “shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

I conclude with an extract of an address by Rev. F. Webster, at Keswick last year, in confirmation of what I have just said: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Make no provision for the flesh. The flesh is there, you know. To deny or ignore the existence of an enemy is to give him a great chance against you; and the flesh is in the believer to the very end, a force of evil to be reckoned with continually, an evil force inside a man, and yet, thank God, a force which can be so dealt with by the power of God, that it shall have no power to defile the heart or deflect the will. The flesh is in you, but your heart may be kept clean moment by moment in spite of the existence of evil in your fallen nature. Every avenue, every opening that leads into the heart, every thought and desire and purpose and imagination of your being, may be closed against the flesh, so that there, shall be no opening to come in and defile the heart or deflect the will from the will of God.

“You say that is a very high standard. But it is the Word of God. There is to be no secret sympathy with sin. Although the flesh is there, you are to make it no excuse for sins. You are not to say, I am naturally irritable, anxious, jealous, and I cannot help letting these things crop up; they come from within. Yes, they come from within, but then there need be no provision, no opening in your heart for these things to enter. Your heart can be barricaded with an impassable barrier against these things. ‘No provision for the flesh.’ Not merely the front door barred and bolted so that you do not invite them to come in, but the side and back door closed too. You may be so Christ-possessed and Christ-enclosed that you shall positively hate everything that is of the flesh.

“Make no provision for the flesh.” The only way to do so is to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’. I spoke of the heart being so barricaded that there should be no entrance to it, that the flesh should never be able to defile it or deflect the will from the will of God. How can that be done? By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been such a blessing to me just to learn that one secret, just to learn the positive side of deliverance-putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.”