

From the Book "**The Power of the Spirit**" by **William Law**

(Published in 1761, then by **Andrew Murray** in 1896 and CLC in 1967)

Rom 8:6 **Now the mind of the flesh, which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit, is death...But the mind of the Holy Spirit is life and peace.** AMP

Eph 4:17 **...You should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind,** (governed entirely by the intellect).

Phil 2:5 (Instead) **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus** (what mind is this since its not referring to Christ's brain?)

1 Cor 2:11 **...No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**

2 Tim 1:7 **God has not given us a spirit of fear but** (His Holy Spirit) **of...a sound mind.** (our choice: Our brain or the Creator of the brain)

Chapter Nine:

Natural Reason Opposes the Spirit

Some have complained that my writings oppose the use of natural reason. If so, then the same complaint must be made against our Lord for saying, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself take up the cross, and follow me" (Matt, 16:24). For how can a man deny himself without denying his reason, unless reason be no part of him? How great is the folly proposed by those who allow the denying of self to be good doctrine, but boggle and cry out at the denying of reason as quite bad. For how can a man deny himself except by denying that which is the life and spirit and power of self? And what else could this be, if not man's reason? For if man were not a rational creature, he could not be called upon to deny himself. What makes a man a sinner? Nothing but the power and working of his own will in independence from God. And what does his will follow in determining its choice, if not his own natural reason? Did not Satan appeal to Eve's reason, in enticing her to eat of the forbidden fruit? And therefore, if our natural reason is not to be denied, we must keep up and follow that which works all sin in us. For no man could be responsible or judged of God any more than the beasts, except that his carnality has all its evil from his intelligent nature, reason being the life and power of it. "For the carnal mind is at enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7), And what is the carnal mind, if it is not our natural reason? Our blessed Lord said, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). And had not this been the form of His whole life, He could not have lived without sin. To deny our own will thus that God's will may be done in us is the height of our calling; and as far as we are kept by the Spirit of God from our own will, so far we are kept from sin. But who can separate his own will from his natural reason? For it is reason that gives self-direction and power to man's will. And without the corruption of natural reason enticing it, man's will would have no reason to do ought but yield to the will of God. For it is our reason which justifies self in its independent disobedience; and it is this above all which must be denied for man to be a servant of God. Without this full denial of natural reason, there can be no true faith, for the man who believes only that which his reason can establish has

no more faith than he who believes only that which any of his five senses can verify. Nor could we ever experience and know the realities of God's eternal kingdom, except by denying our reason; for those things are by their very nature infinite, but our own reasoning powers are limited. Hard as this may seem to unregenerate nature, yet it is truth firmly established in Scripture, that this full denial of our own natural will, including our own natural reason, is the only possible way for divine knowledge, divine light, and divine goodness to have any place or power of birth in us. All religious knowledge that comes to us through the gateway of our own natural reason, great as men may consider it, is only great in vanity, emptiness, and self-deceiving folly. For all the evil and corruption of our fallen nature consists in this; it is an awakened life of our own will, under the power of natural reason, plotting and justifying its rebellion against the will of God. Especially do the workings of this carnal mind, or natural reason, which is the same thing, oppose within us this call of Christ, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 18:3).

Whether this self broken off from God reasons and contends in favor of or against various Scripture words and doctrines, the same evil state of fallen nature, the same death and separation from God, the same corrupt desires of flesh and blood will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other. The astute reasoner on doctrinal matters, who is mending church opinions here and fixing heresies there, forgets all the while that a carnal self and natural reason have the doing of all that is done by this learned zeal, and are as busy and active in him as in the reasoning agnostic or scheming worldling. Bad logic in defense of transubstantiation, or better reasonings against it, signify no more toward the casting of Satan out of our souls than a bad or better taste for art. Hence it is that papists and Protestants, for the sake of their different excellent opinions, zealously hate, fight, and kill one another as enemies; while at the same time, as to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they are in the highest union and communion with one another. Hence also it is that Christendom, full of the nicest, most carefully reasoned decisions about faith, grace, works, heresies, and excommunications, is yet full of all those evil dispositions which prevailed in the heathen world when none of these religious opinions were yet known .

All that I have here said is neither more nor less than Paul meant when he declared, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them (1 Cor, 2:14) . . . , but as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom, 8:14). What higher proof, then, can a man give that he is that very natural man cut off from God, living to self, than to deny the necessity of abandoning self with its natural reason to the lordship of Christ and the fullness of His Spirit! For where self or the natural man is become great in religious learning, the more firmly will he be fixed in the religion of proving himself to be right, rather than in surrendering to the will of God. But where self is wholly denied to take up the cross in following Christ, there nothing can be called heresy, schism, or wickedness, but the lack of loving God with one's whole heart, and one's neighbor as oneself . Nor can anything be called truth, life, or salvation but the Spirit and power of Christ living and manifesting Himself in mortal flesh.

Does not God call men to use their natural reason when He says, "Come now and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1 : 18) ? Indeed He does call men to a proper use of their reason, but not to an improper one. We have no spiritual need except for a restoration of the divine nature in us. And if this

be true, then nothing can be our salvation except that which brings us into a right relationship with God, making us partakers of the divine nature in such a manner and degree as we need. But to reason about life cannot communicate it to the soul, nor can a religion of rational notions and opinions logically deduced from Scripture words bring the reality of the gospel into our lives. Do we not see sinners of all sorts, and men under the power of every corrupt passion, equally zealous for such a religion? How is it then that Christian leaders spend so much time reasoning about Scripture doctrines, and yet remain so blind to the obvious fact that filling the head with right notions of Christ can never give to the heart the reality of His Spirit and life? For logical reasoning about Scripture words and doctrines will do no more to remove pride, hypocrisy, envy, or malice from the soul of man, than logical reasoning about geometry. The one leaves man as empty of the life of God in Christ as the other.

Yet the church is filled with professing Christians whose faith has never gone beyond a conviction that the words of scripture are true. They believe in the Christ of the Bible, but do not know Him personally, The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is sound doctrine to their minds, but their lives are empty of His manifest power either to overcome the power of sin within, or to convert others to Christ. Though many are zealous to preach the gospel, yet instead of bringing men to Christ, they seek to reason them into a trust in their own learned opinions about Scripture doctrines. In contrast to Paul, their gospel is in word only, without the demonstration and power of the Spirit. Nor can they see their need of the Holy Spirit to fill them with Christ, and then to overflow through them in rivers of living water to others, because reason tells them that they are sound in the letter of doctrine.

Is it not true that God must be all in all, that in Him we live and move and have our being, and that He can give us no salvation from our fallen nature but in such degree as He communicates Himself to us? Then it is known with the utmost certainty that to put a religious trust in our own reasonings about doctrines and Scripture words and our ability thus to persuade others, has a more foolish nature than the same idolatry that puts a religious trust in the sun, a departed saint, or a graven image, But the truth of the whole matter lies here: as the Word manifested in the flesh is the one mediator or restorer of union between God and man, so to seeing eyes it must be evident that nothing but this one mediatorial nature of Christ, essentially brought to life in our souls, can be our salvation. For that which made the man Christ Jesus the delight of His Father can alone be our deliverance from self and natural reason. If a wrong use of natural reason prevents the professing Christian from experiencing the reality of the gospel, much more does the skeptic's use of reason perpetuate in himself that dreadful death to God and the kingdom of heaven which entered into the race at Adam's fall. And nothing but a faith that is willing to go beyond the limits of human reasoning can give any fallen man power to become again a son of God. For to live by faith is to live in the kingdom of God; while to believe only that which reason can verify is to live as a heathen under the power of the kingdom of darkness. Proud men may imagine that their superior reasoning abilities prevent them from being so naive as to share that simple faith of fishermen disciples, Scripture, however, declares that their "minds are darkened through the ignorance that is in them, being separated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), "for Satan has blinded the minds of those who believe not" (2 Cor.4:4).

To the end of the world, this will be the unalterable difference between faith in God and reasoning about the things of God; they can never change their place. That which they were and did to the first

man, that they will be and do to the last. Failure to discern the difference between a rational understanding of truth and the faith which appropriates it has brought the darkness and death of the world into the church to this day. It matters not how much the revelations and precepts of God are increased since the first simple command given to Adam, for no more is offered our reasoning faculty by the whole Bible than by that single precept. And the benefit of all Scripture is lost to us as soon as we make human reason the measure of the validity and necessity of its commands, just as the benefit of that first precept was lost in the same way. Yet an equal poverty of soul must eternally torment that man who is satisfied merely to reason about eternal life, while remaining without the real possession and power of the indwelling Son of God manifest in his daily experience.

"Hath God indeed said ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" (Gen. 3:1). This was the beginning of reasoning about the things of God. What it was and did then it will always be and do. Its nature and fruits will never be better nor any other to the end of the world, And though in these last ages man's natural reason has passed through all schools of quibbling and has arrived at its utmost height of art, subtlety and precision of arguments; yet as to divine matters it stands just where it stood when it first learned that specious logic from the serpent which improved the understanding of Eve at the cost of cutting her off from her Creator. And at this day it can see no deeper into the things of God, can be no wiser, give no better judgment about them, than the conclusion which it first made; namely, that death could not be in a tree which was "so good for food, so pleasant to behold, and so much to be desired for knowledge"(Gen. 3:6).

God does not demand a faith that is unreasonable-but He does demand a faith that goes beyond the limits of human reason. And thus there is a point where faith and reason divide the human race into two kinds of men fully distinct from each other. The faithful through every age are the children of God, and sure heirs of His redemption through Jesus Christ. Those who trust in reason alone are of the seed of the serpent, and real heirs of that confusion which happened to the first builders of the tower of Babel. To live by faith is to be truly and fully in covenant with God; to reject that which reason cannot verify is to be merely and solely in compact with ourselves, with our own vanity and blindness, and with Satan who first led the race into this sad state. To live by faith is to live in humility, in patience, longsuffering, obedience, resignation, absolute trust and dependence upon God, with all that is temporal and earthly under our feet, To oppose the gospel by reasoning is to be a prey of the old serpent, eating dust with him, groveling in the mire of earthly passions, devoured with pride, embittered with envy and regrets, tools and dupes of our carnal self, tossed up with false hopes, cast down with vain fears, slaves to all the good and evil things of this world. So likewise does that man resist the Spirit who reasons in favor of the gospel and thinks thereby to gain eternal life.