

FUNCTIONS OF THE REGENERATED SPIRIT

(Manuscript)

Outline of *The Spiritual Man – Volume II* by Watchman Nee

compiled by

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BIB482

Syllabus

This course is designed by Dr. Kenneth Meadors and is based on the writings of:

- 1) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man—Vols. I & II*. The reading materials of Watchman Nee for the course may be found by going to:
www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm , then follow the instructions for each Lesson.
- 2) Jessie Penn Lewis, *Soul and Spirit*. The reading materials of Jessie Penn Lewis for Lessons 2 and 3 may be found by going to:
www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm. Click on the appropriate link as indicated in Lessons 2 and 3.

LESSONS

- 1) Spirit, Soul, and Body
 - a) Watchman Nee
 - i) *The Spiritual Man*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 1.
 - ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume I
 - (2) Click on “1 Spirit, Soul and Body.” (Under Part 1 INTRODUCTION ON SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY.
 - 2) Spirit and Soul
 - a) Watchman Nee
 - i) *The Spiritual Man*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 2.
 - ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume I
 - (2) Click on “2 Spirit and Soul” (Under Part 1 INTRODUCTION ON SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY.
 - b) Jessie Penn Lewis (Chapter 1, Soul and Spirit).
 - i) *Soul and Spirit* by Jessie Penn Lewis.
 - ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “Soul and Spirit” by Jessie Penn Lewis.
 - (2) Click on “1 Soul and Spirit.”
 - 3) The Dividing of Spirit and Soul
 - a) Watchman Nee
 - i) *The Spiritual Man*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 14.

- ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume I
 - (2) Click on “14 Spirit and Soul” (Under Part 3: SPIRITUAL BELIEVERS AND THE SOUL)
 - b) Jessie Penn Lewis (Chapter 4, “How ‘Soul’ and ‘Spirit’ Are Divided).
 - i) *Soul and Spirit* by Jessie Penn Lewis.
 - ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “Soul and Spirit” by Jessie Penn Lewis.
 - (2) Click on “4 How ‘Soul’ and ‘Spirit’ Are Divided.”
- 4) The Holy Spirit and the Believer’s Spirit
- a) Watchman Nee
 - i) *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part IV, Chapter 1.
 - ii) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - (1) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume I
 - (2) Click on “1 The Holy Spirit and the Believer’s Spirit” (Under Part 4: THE SPIRIT).
- 5) A Spiritual Man (Part 4: The Spirit; Chapter 2)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part IV, Chapter 2.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “2 A Spiritual Man” (Under Part 4: THE SPIRIT).
- 6) Spiritual Work (Part 4: The Spirit; Chapter 3)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part IV, Chapter 2.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “3 Spiritual Work” (Under Part 4: THE SPIRIT).
- 7) Function of the Spirit: Intuition (Part 5: An Analysis of the Spirit; Chapter 1)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part V, Chapter 1.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “1 Intuition” (Under Part 5: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPIRIT).
- 8) Function of the Spirit: Communion (Part 5: An Analysis of the Spirit; Chapter 2)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part V, Chapter 2.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “2 Communion” (Under Part 5: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPIRIT).
- 9) Function of the Spirit: Conscience (Part 5: An Analysis of the Spirit; Chapter 3)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part V, Chapter 3.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.

- i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “3 Conscience” (Under Part 5: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPIRIT).
- 10) The Laws of the Spirit (Part 6: Walking After the Spirit; Chapter 2)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part VI, Chapter 2.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “2 The Laws of the Spirit” (Under Part 6: WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT).
- 11) The Normalcy of the Spirit (Part 6: Walking After the Spirit; Chapter 4)
- a) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, Part VI, Chapter 4.
 - b) Go to: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/bookcat.htm>.
 - i) Click on “The Spiritual Man Volume II
 - ii) Click on “4 The Normalcy of the Spirit” (Under Part 6: WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT).
- 12) Review

Your grade will be based on the following:

- 1) Class attendance (or view each video class).
- 2) Reading the required materials.
- 3) Any written assignments.
- 4) Final Exam.

LESSON ONE

Spirit, Soul, and Body

(From Volume 1: Chapter 1; Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*)

SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

The ordinary concept of the constitution of human beings is dualistic-soul and body. According to this concept soul is the invisible inner spiritual part, while body is the visible outer corporal part. Though there is some truth to this, it is nevertheless inaccurate. Such an opinion comes from fallen man, not from God; apart from God's revelation, no concept is dependable. That the body is man's outward sheath is undoubtedly correct, but the Bible never confuses spirit and soul as though they are the same. Not only are they different in terms; their very natures differ from each other. The Word of God does not divide man into the two parts of soul and body. It treats man, rather, as tripartite-spirit, soul and body. I Thessalonians 5.23 reads: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This verse precisely shows that the whole man is divided into three parts. The Apostle Paul refers here to the complete sanctification of believers, "sanctify you wholly." According to the Apostle, how is a person wholly sanctified? By his spirit and soul and body being kept. From this we can easily understand that the whole person comprises these three parts. This verse also makes a distinction between spirit and soul; otherwise, Paul would have said simply "your soul." Since God has distinguished the human spirit from the human soul, we conclude that man is composed of not two, but three, parts; spirit, soul and body.

Is it a matter of any consequence to divide spirit and soul? It is an issue of supreme importance for it affects tremendously the spiritual life of a believer. How can a believer understand spiritual life if he does not know what is the extent of the realm of the spirit? Without such understanding how can he grow spiritually? To fail to distinguish between spirit and soul is fatal to spiritual maturity. Christians often account what is soulical. as spiritual, and thus they remain in a soulish state and seek not what is really spiritual. How can we escape loss if we confuse what God has divided?

Spiritual knowledge is very important to spiritual life. Let us add, however, that it is equally as, if not more, important for a believer to be humble and willing to accept the teaching of the Holy Spirit. If so, the Holy Spirit will grant him the experience of the dividing of spirit and soul, although he may not have too much knowledge concerning this truth. On the one hand, the most ignorant believer, without the slightest idea of the division of spirit and soul, may yet experience such a dividing in real life. On the other hand, the most informed believer, completely conversant with the truth concerning spirit and soul, may nonetheless have no experience of it. Far better is that person who may have both the knowledge and the experience. The majority, however, lack

such experience. Consequently, it is well initially to lead these to know the different functions of spirit and soul and then to encourage them to seek what is spiritual.

Other portions of the Scriptures make this same differentiation between spirit and soul. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4.12). The writer in this verse divides man's non-corporal elements into two parts, 11 soul and spirit. The corporal part is mentioned here as including the joints and marrow organs of motion and sensation. When the priest uses the sword to cut and completely dissect the sacrifice, nothing inside can be hidden. Even joint and marrow are separated. In like manner the Lord Jesus uses the Word of God on His people to separate thoroughly, to pierce even to the division of the spiritual, the soulical, and the physical. And from this it follows that since soul and spirit can be divided, they must be different in nature. It is thus evident here that man is a composite of three parts.

THE CREATION OF MAN

And Jehovah God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2.7 ASV). When God first created man He formed him of dust from the ground, and then breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. As soon as the breath of life, which became man's spirit, came into contact with man's body, the soul was produced. Hence the soul is the combination of man's body and spirit. The Scriptures therefore call man a living soul. The breath of life became man's spirit; that is, the principle of life within him. The Lord Jesus tells us it is the spirit that gives life (John 6.63). This breath of life comes from the Lord of Creation. However, we must not confuse man's spirit with God's Holy Spirit. The latter differs from our human spirit. Romans 8.16 demonstrates their difference by declaring that it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The original of the word life in breath of life is chay and is in the plural. This may refer to the fact that the in-breathing of God produced a twofold life, soulical and spiritual. When the in-breathing of God entered man's body it became the spirit of man; but when the spirit reacted with the body the soul was produced. This explains the source of our spiritual and soulical lives. We must recognize, though, that this spirit is not God's Own life, for the breath of the Almighty gives me life (job 33.4). It is not the entrance of the uncreated life of God into man, neither is it that life of God, which we receive at regeneration. What we receive at new birth is God's Own life as typified by the tree of life. But our human spirit, though permanently existing, is void of eternal life.

"Formed man of dust from the ground" refers to man's body; "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" refers to man's spirit as it came from God; and "man became a living soul" refers to man's soul when the body was quickened by the spirit and brought into being a living and self-conscious man. A complete man is a trinity the composite of spirit, soul and body. According to Genesis 2.7, man was made up of only two independent elements, the corporeal and the spiritual; but when God placed the spirit within the casing of the earth, the soul was produced. The spirit of man touching the dead body produced the soul. The body apart from the spirit was dead, but with the spirit man was made alive. The organ thus animated was called the soul.

Man became a living soul expresses not merely the fact that the combination of spirit and body produced the soul; it also suggests that spirit and body were completely merged in this soul. In other words, soul and body were combined with the spirit, and spirit and body were merged in the soul. Adam in his unfallen state knew nothing of these ceaseless strivings of spirit and flesh which are matters of daily experience to us. There was a perfect blending of his three natures into one and the soul as the uniting medium became the cause of his individuality, of his existence as a distinct being. (Pember's Earth's Earliest Age) Man was designated a living soul, for it was there that the spirit and body met and through which his individuality was known. Perhaps we may use an imperfect illustration: drop some dye into a cup of water. The dye and water will blend into a third substance called ink. In like manner the two independent elements of spirit and body combine to become living soul. (The analogy fails in that the soul produced by the combining of spirit and body becomes an independent, indissoluble element as much as the spirit and body.)

God treated man's soul as something unique. As the angels were created as spirits, so man was created predominantly as a living soul. Man not only had a body, a body with the breath of life; he became a living soul as well. Thus we find later in the Scriptures that God often referred to men as souls. Why? Because what the man is depends on how his soul is. His soul represents him and expresses his individuality. It is the organ of man's free will, the organ in which spirit and body are completely merged. If man's soul wills to obey God, it will allow the spirit to rule over the man as ordered by God. The soul, if it chooses, also can suppress the spirit and take some other delight as lord of the man. This trinity of spirit, soul and body may be partially illustrated by a light bulb. Within the bulb, which can represent the total man, there are electricity, light and wire. The spirit is like the electricity, the soul the light, and body the wire. Electricity is the cause of the light while light is the effect of electricity. Wire is the material substance for carrying the electricity as well as for manifesting the light. The combination of spirit and body produces soul, that which is unique to man. As electricity, carried by the wire, is expressed in light, so spirit acts upon the soul and the soul, in turn, expresses itself through the body.

However, we must remember well that whereas the soul is the meeting-point of the elements of our being in this present life, the spirit will be the ruling power in our resurrection state. For the Bible tells us that it is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body (I Cor. 15.44). Yet here

is a vital point: we who have been joined to the resurrected Lord can even now have our spirit rule over the whole being. We are not united to the first Adam who was made a living soul but to the last Adam who is a life-giving spirit (v.45).

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

It is through the corporal body that man comes into contact with the material world. Hence we may label the body as that part which gives us world-consciousness. The soul comprises the intellect, which aids us in the present state of existence, and the emotions, which proceed from the senses. Since the soul belongs to man's own self and reveals his personality, it is termed the part of self-consciousness. The spirit is that part by which we commune with God and by which alone we are able to apprehend and worship Him. Because it tells us of our relationship with

God, the spirit is called the element of God-consciousness. God dwells in the spirit, self dwells in the soul, while senses dwell in the body.

As we have mentioned already, the soul is the meeting point of spirit and body, for there they are merged. By his spirit man holds intercourse with the spiritual world and with the Spirit of God, both receiving and expressing the power and life of the spiritual realm. Through his body man is in contact with the outside sensuous world, affecting it and being affected by it. The soul stands between these two worlds, yet belongs to both. It is linked with the spiritual world through the spirit and with the material world through the body. It also possesses the power of free will, hence is able to choose from among its environments. The spirit cannot act directly upon the body. It needs a medium, and that medium is the soul produced by the touching of the spirit with the body. The soul therefore stands between the spirit and the body, binding these two together. The spirit can subdue the body through the medium of the soul, so that it will obey God; likewise the body through the soul can draw the spirit into loving the world.

Of these three elements the spirit is the noblest for it joins with God.

The body is the lowest for it contacts with matter. The soul lying between them joins the two together and also takes their character to be its own.

The soul makes it possible for the spirit and the body to communicate and

to cooperate. The work of the soul is to keep these two in their proper order so that they may not lose their right relationship ---namely, that the lowest, the body, may be subjected to the spirit, and that the highest, the spirit, may govern the body through the soul. Man's prime factor is definitely the soul. It looks to the spirit to give what the latter has received from the Holy Spirit in order that the soul, after it has been perfected, may transmit what it has obtained to the body; then the body too may share in the perfection of the Holy Spirit and so become a spiritual body.

The spirit is the noblest part of man and occupies the innermost area of his being. The body is the lowest and takes the outermost place. Between these two dwells the soul, serving as their medium. The body is the outer shelter of the soul, while the soul is the outer sheath of the spirit. The spirit transmits its thought to the soul and the soul exercises the body to obey the spirit's order. This is the meaning of the soul as the medium. Before the fall of man the spirit controlled the whole being through the soul.

The power of the soul is most substantial, since the spirit and the body are merged there and make it the site of man's personality and influence. Before man committed sin the power of the soul was completely under the dominion of the spirit. Its strength was therefore the spirit's strength. The spirit cannot itself act upon the body; it can only do so through the medium of the soul. This we can see in Luke 1.46-47: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Darby). Here the change in tense shows that the spirit first conceived joy in God, and then, communicating with the soul, caused it to give expression to the feeling by means of the bodily organ. (Pember's Earth's Earliest Age)

To repeat, the soul is the site of personality. The will, intellect and emotions of man are there. As the spirit is used to communicate with the spiritual world and the body with the natural world, so the soul stands between and exercises its power to discern and decide whether the spiritual or the natural world should reign. Sometimes too the soul itself takes control over man through its intellect, thus creating an ideational world which reigns. In order for the spirit to govern, the soul must give its consent; otherwise the spirit is helpless to regulate the soul and the body. But this decision is up to the soul, for therein resides the personality of the man.

Actually the soul is the pivot of the entire being, because man's volition belongs to it. It is only when the soul is willing to assume a humble position that the spirit can ever manage the whole man. If the soul rebels against taking such a position the spirit will be powerless to rule. This explains the meaning of the free will of man. Man is not an automaton that turns according to God's will. Rather, man has full sovereign power to decide for himself. He possesses the organ of his own volition and can choose either to follow God's will or to resist Him and follow Satan's will instead. God desires that the spirit, being the noblest part of man, should control the whole being. Yet, the will---the crucial part of individuality---belongs to the soul. It is the will, which determines whether the spirit, the body, or even itself is to rule. In view of the fact that the soul possesses such power and is the organ of man's individuality, the Bible calls man's a living soul.

THE HOLY TEMPLE AND MAN

Do you not know, writes the Apostle Paul, that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Cor. 3.16) He has received revelation in likening man to the temple. As God formerly dwelt in the temple, so the Holy Spirit indwells man today. By comparing him to the temple we can see how the tripartite elements of man are distinctly manifested.

We know the temple is divided into three parts. The first is the outer court, which is seen by all and visited by all. All external worship is offered here. Going further in is the Holy Place, into which only the priests can enter and where they present oil, incense and bread to God. They are quite near to God---yet not the nearest, for they are still outside the veil and therefore unable to stand before His very presence. God dwells deepest within, in the Holy of Holies, where darkness is overshadowed by brilliant light and into which no man can enter. Though the high priest does enter in once annually, it nonetheless indicates that before the veil is rent there can be no man in the Holy of Holies.

Man is God's temple also, and he too has three parts. The body is like the outer court, occupying an external position with its life visible to all. Here man ought to obey every commandment of God. Here God's Son serves as a substitute and dies for mankind. Inside is man's soul which constitutes the inner life of man and which embraces man's emotion, volition and mind. Such is the Holy Place of a regenerated person, for his love, will and thought are fully enlightened that he may serve God even as the priest of old did. Innermost, behind the veil, lies the Holy of Holies into which no human light has ever penetrated and no naked eye has ever pierced. It is the secret place of the Most High, the dwelling place of God. It cannot be reached by man unless God is willing to rend the veil. It is man's spirit. This spirit lies beyond man's self-consciousness and above his sensibility. Here man unites and communes with God.

No light is provided for the Holy of Holies because God dwells, there. There is light in the Holy Place supplied by the lampstand of seven branches. The outer court stands under the broad daylight. All these serve as images and shadows to a regenerated person. His spirit is like the Holy of Holies indwelt by God, where everything is carried on by faith, beyond the sight, sense or understanding of the believing one. The soul resembles the Holy Place for it is amply enlightened with many rational thoughts and precepts, much knowledge and understanding concerning the things in the ideational and material world. The body is comparable to the outer court, clearly visible to all. The body's actions may be seen by everyone.

The order, which God presents to us, is unmistakable: your spirit and soul and body (I Thess. 5.23). It is not soul and spirit and body, nor is it body and soul and spirit. The spirit is the pre-eminent part, hence it is mentioned first; the body is the lowest and therefore is last mentioned; the soul stands between, so is mentioned between. Having now seen God's order, we can appreciate the wisdom of the Bible in likening man to a temple. We can recognize the perfect harmony, which exists between the temple and man in respect to both order and value.

Temple service moves according to the revelation in the Holy of Holies. All activities in the Holy Place and in the outer court are regulated by the presence of God in the Holiest Place. This is the most sacred spot, the place upon which the four corners of the temple converge and rest. It may seem to us that nothing is done in the Holiest because it is pitch dark. All activities are in the Holy Place; even those activities of the outer court are controlled by the priests of the Holy Place. Yet all the activities of the Holy Place actually are directed by the revelation in the utter quietness and peace of the Holy of Holies.

It is not difficult to perceive the spiritual application. The soul, the organ of our personality, is composed of mind, volition and emotion. It appears as though the soul is master of all actions, for the body follows its direction. Before the fall of man, however, the soul, in spite of its many activities, was governed by the spirit. And this is the order God still wants: first the spirit, then the soul, and lastly the body.

LESSON TWO

Spirit and Soul

SPIRIT AND SOUL

It is imperative that a believer knows he has a spirit, since, as we shall soon learn, every communication of God with man occurs there. If the believer does not discern his own spirit he invariably is ignorant of how to commune with God in the spirit. He easily substitutes the thoughts or emotions of the soul for the works of the spirit. Thus he confines himself to the outer realm, unable ever to reach the spiritual realm.

1 Corinthians 2. 11 speaks of "the spirit of the man which is in him."

1 Corinthians 5.4 mentions "my spirit." Romans 8.16 says "our spirit."

1 Corinthians 14.14 uses "my spirit."

1 Corinthians 14.32 tells of the "spirits of prophets."

Proverbs 25.28 refers to "his own spirit." Darby

Hebrews 12.23 record "the spirits of just men."

Zechariah 12.1 states that "the Lord ... formed the spirit of man within him."

The above Scripture verses sufficiently prove that we human beings do possess a human spirit. This spirit is not synonymous with our soul nor is it the same as the Holy Spirit. We worship God in this spirit.

According to the teaching of the Bible and the experience of believers, the human spirit can be said to comprise three parts; or, to put it another way, one can say it has three main functions. These are conscience, intuition and communion.

The conscience is the discerning organ, which distinguishes, right and wrong; not, however, through the influence of knowledge stored in the mind but rather by a spontaneous direct judgment. Often reasoning will justify things, which our conscience judges. The work of the conscience is independent and direct; it does not bend to outside opinions. If man should do wrong it will raise its voice of accusation. Intuition is the sensing organ of the human spirit. It is so diametrically different from physical sense and soulical sense that it is called intuition. Intuition involves a direct sensing independent of any outside influence. That knowledge which comes to us without any help from the mind, emotion or volition comes intuitively. We really "know" through our intuition; our mind merely helps us to "Understand." The revelations of God

and all the movements of the Holy Spirit are known to the believer through his intuition. A believer must therefore heed these two elements: the voice of conscience and the teaching of intuition. Communion is worshipping God. The organs of the soul are incompetent to worship God. God is not apprehended by our thoughts, feelings or intentions, for He can only be known directly in our spirits. Our worship of God and God's communications with us are directly in the spirit. They take place in "the inner man," not in the soul or outward man.

We can conclude then that these three elements of conscience, intuition and communion are deeply interrelated and function coordinately. The relationship between conscience and intuition is that conscience judges according to intuition; it condemns all conduct which does not follow the directions given by intuition. Intuition is related to communion or worship in that God is known by man intuitively and reveals His will to man in the intuition. No measure of expectation or deduction gives us the knowledge of God.

From the following three groups of Scripture verses it can readily be observed that our spirits possess the function of conscience (we do not say that the spirit is conscience), the function of intuition (or spiritual sense), and the function of, communion (or worship).

A) The Function of Conscience in Man's Spirit

"The Lord your God hardened his spirit" Deut. 2.30

"Saves the crushed in spirit" Ps. 34.18

"Put a new and right spirit within me" Ps. 51.10

"When Jesus had thus spoken, he was troubled in spirit" John 13.21

"His spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols" Acts 17.16

"It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" Rom.8.16

"I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment" 1 Cor. 5.3

"I had no rest in my spirit" 2 Cor. 2.13 AV

"For God did not give us the spirit of timidity" 2 Tim. 1.7

B The Function of Intuition in Man's Spirit

"The spirit indeed is willing" Matt. 26.41

"Jesus perceiving in his spirit" Mark 2.8

"He sighed deeply in his spirit" Mark 8.12

"He was deeply moved in spirit" John 11.33

"Paul was pressed in the spirit" Acts 18.5 AV

"Being fervent in spirit" Acts 18.25

"I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the spirit" Acts 20.22

"What person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him" 1 Cor. 2.11

"They refreshed my spirit as well as yours" I Cor. 16.18

"His spirit was refreshed by you all" 2 Cor. 7.13 AV

C The Function of Communion in Man's Spirit

"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior" Luke 1.47

"The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" John 4.23

Whom I serve with my spirit" Rom. 1.9

"We serve ... in the new life of the spirit" Rom. 7.6

"You have received the spirit of sonship when we cry Abba Father" Rom.8.15

"The Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit" Rom. 8.16

"He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" I Cor. 6.17

"I will sing with the spirit" 1 Cor. 14.15

"If you bless with the spirit" I Cor. 14.16

"In the spirit he carried me away" Rev. 21.10

We can know by these Scriptures that our spirit possesses at least these three functions. Although unregenerate men do not yet have life, they nevertheless possess these functions (but their

worship is of evil spirits) - Some people manifest more of these functions while others less. This does not however imply that they are not dead in sins and transgressions. The New Testament does not consider those with a sensitive conscience, keen intuition or a spiritual tendency and interest to be saved individuals. Such people only prove to us that aside from the mind, emotion and will of our soul, we also have a spirit. Prior to regeneration the spirit is separated from God's life; only afterwards does the life of God and of the Holy Spirit dwell in our spirits. They then have been quickened to be instruments of the Holy Spirit.

Our aim in studying the significance of the spirit is to enable us to realize that we as human beings possess an independent spirit. This spirit is not man's mind, his will or his emotion; on the contrary, it includes the functions of conscience, intuition and communion. It is here in the spirit that God regenerates us, teaches us, and leads us into His rest. But sad to say, due to long years of bondage to the soul many Christians know very little of their spirit. We ought to tremble before God, asking Him to teach us through experience what is spiritual and what is soulish.

Before the believer is born again his spirit becomes so sunken and surrounded by his soul that it is impossible for him to distinguish whether something is emanating from the soul or from the spirit. The functions of the latter have become mixed up with those of the former. Furthermore, the spirit has lost its primary function-towards God; for it is dead to God. It thus would appear that it has become an accessory to the soul. And as the mind, emotion and volition grow stronger, the functions of the spirit become so eclipsed as to render them almost unknown. That is why there must be the work of dividing between soul and spirit after a believer is regenerated.

In searching the Scriptures it does seem that an unregenerated spirit functions no differently from the way the soul does. The following verses illustrate this.

"His spirit was troubled" Gen. 41.8

"Then their spirit was appeased toward him" Judges 8.3 (Darby)

"He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" Prov. 14.29 (Darby)

"A downcast spirit dries up the bones" Prov. 17.22

"Those who err in spirit" Is. 29.24

"And shall wail for anguish of spirit" Is. 65.14

"His spirit was hardened" Dan. 5.20

These show us the works of the unregenerated spirit and indicate how similar are its works to those of the soul. The reason for not mentioning soul but spirit is to reveal what has occurred in the very depth of man. It discloses how man's spirit has become controlled and influenced completely by his soul with the result that it manifests the works of the soul. The spirit nonetheless still exists because these works come from the spirit. Though ruled by the soul the spirit does not cease to be an organ.

SOUL

Aside from having a spirit, which enables him to commune with God, man also possesses a soul, his self-consciousness. He is made conscious of his existence by the work of his soul. It is the seat of our personality. The elements, which make us human, belong to the soul. Intellect, thought, ideals, love, emotion, discernment, choice, decision, etc. are but various experiences of the soul.

It has been explained already that the spirit and the body are emerged in the soul, which, in turn, forms the organ of our personality. That is why the Bible sometimes calls man "souls," as though man has only this element. For example, Genesis 12.5 refers to people as "souls" (ASV). Again, when Jacob brought his entire family down to Egypt, it is recorded, that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten" (Gen. 46.27 ASV). Numerous instances occur in the original language of the Bible where "soul" is used instead of "Man." For the seat and essence of the personality is the soul. To comprehend a man's personality is to comprehend his person. Man's existence, characteristics and life are all in the soul. The Bible consequently calls man "a soul."

That which constitutes man's personality are the three main faculties of volition, mind and emotion. Volition is the instrument for our decisions, revealing our power to choose. It expresses our willingness or unwillingness: "we will" or "we won't." Without it, man is reduced to an automaton. Mind, the instrument for our thoughts, manifests our intellectual power. Out of this arise wisdom, knowledge and reasoning. Lack of it makes a man foolish and dull. The instrument for our likes and dislikes is the faculty of emotion. Through it we are able to express love or hate and to feel joyful, angry, sad or happy. Any shortage of it will render man as insensitive as wood or stone.

A careful study of the Bible will yield the conclusion that these three primary faculties of personality belong to the soul. Too many Scripture passages exist to quote them all. Hence only a few selections can be enumerated here.

A) The Souls Faculty of Volition

"Give me not up to the will (original, "soul") of my adversaries" Ps.27.12

"Thou dost not give him up to the will (original, ,soul,) of his enemies" Ps. 41.2

"Delivered you to the greed (original,"soul") of your enemies" Ezek.16.27

"You shall let her go where she will (original, "soul")" Deut. 21.14

"Aha, we have our heart's desire (original "soul")" Ps. 35.25

"Or swear an oath to bind himself (original,"soul") by a pledge" Num.30.2

"Now set your mind and heart (original, "soul") to seek the Lord your God" I Chron. 22.19

"They desire and lift up their soul to return to dwell there" Jer. 44.14 Amplified

"These afflictions my soul refuses to touch" Job 6.7 Amplified

"My soul chooseth strangling, death, rather than my bones" Job 7.15 Darby

The "will or "heart" here points to the human will. "Set the heart," "lift up their soul," "refuse" and "choose" are all exercises of the will, having their springs in the soul.

B) The Souls Faculty of Intellect or Mind

"Whereunto they lift up their soul, their sons and their daughters" Ezek. 24.25 Darby

"That a soul be without knowledge is not good' Prove 19.2 Darby

"How long must I bear pain (Syriac:Hebrew: hold counsels) in my soul?" Ps. 13.2

"Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well"Ps. 139.14 Darby

"My soul continually thinks of it" Lam. 3.20

"Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul Prov. 2. 10

"Keep sound wisdom and discretion . . . and they will be life for your soul" Prov. 3.21,22

"Know that wisdom is such to your soul Prov. 24.14

Here "knowledge," "counsel," "lift up," "think," etc., exist as the activities of man's intellect or mind, which the Bible indicates as emanating from the soul.

C) The Souls Faculty of Emotion

1) EMOTIONS OF AFFECTION

"The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul 1 Sam. 18.1

"You whom my soul loves" Song 1.7

"My soul magnifies the Lord" Luke 1.46

"His life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty food" Job 33.20 Darby

"Who are hated by David's soul 2 Sam. 5.8

"My soul was vexed with them" Zech. 11.8 Darby

"You shall love the Lord your God . . . with all your soul Deut. 6.5

"My soul is weary of my life" job 10: 1 Darby

"Their soul abhorreth all manner of food" Ps. 107:18 Darby

2) EMOTIONS OF DESIRE

"For whatever thy soul desireth ... or for whatever thy soul asketh of thee" Deut. 14.26 Darby

"What thy soul may say" 1 Sam. 20.4 Darby

"My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord" Ps. 84.2

"Your soul's longing" Ezek. 24-21 Darby

"So longs my soul for thee, O God" Ps. 42.1

"My soul yearns for thee in the night" Is. 26.9

"My soul is well pleased" Matt. 12. IS

3) EMOTIONS OF FEELING AND SENSING

"A sword will pierce through your own soul also" Luke 2.35

"All the people were bitter in soul" I Sam. 30.6

"Her soul is bitter and vexed within her" 2 Kings 4.27 Amplified

"His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" Judges 10. 16 Darby

"How long will ye vex my soul" Job 19.2 Darby

"My soul shall exult in my God" Is. 61.10

"Gladden the soul of thy servant" Ps. 86.4

"Their soul fainted within them" Ps. 107.5

"Why are you cast down, O my soul. 42.5

"Return, O my soul, to your rest" Ps. 116.7

"My soul is consumed with longing" Ps. 119.20

"Sweetness to the sour' Prov. 16.24

"Let your soul delight itself in fatness" Is. 55.2 Amplified

"My soul fainted within me" Jonah 2.7

"My soul is very sorrowful" Matt, 26.38

"Now is my soul troubled" John 12.27

"He was vexed in his righteous soul day after day" 2 Peter 2.8

We can discover in the above observations touching upon man's various emotions that our soul is capable of loving and hating, desiring and aspiring, feeling and sensing.

From this brief Biblical study it becomes quite obvious that the soul of man contains in it that part known as will, that part known as mind or intellect, and that part known as emotion.

THE SOUL LIFE

Some Bible scholars point out to us that three different words are employed in the Greek to designate "life": (1) bios (2) psuche (3) zoe. They all describe life but convey very different meanings. Bio has reference to the means of life or living. Our Lord Jesus used this word when He commended the woman who cast into the temple treasury her whole living. Zoe is the highest life, the life of the spirit. Whenever the Bible speaks of eternal life it uses this word. Psuche refers to the animated life of man, his natural life or the life of the soul. The Bible employs this term when it describes the human life.

Let us note here that the words "soul" and "soul life" in the Bible are one and the same in the original. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for "soul"-nephesh-is used equally for "soul life." The New Testament consequently employs the Greek word psuche for both "soul" and "soul life." Hence we know "soul" not only is one of the three elements of man but also is man's life, his natural life. In many places in the Bible, "soul" is translated as "life."

"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood " Gen. 9.4,5

"The life of the flesh is in the blood" Lev. 17.11

"Those who sought the child's life are dead" Matt. 2.20

"Is it lawful on the sabbath-to save life or to destroy it?" Luke 6.9

"Who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ" Acts 15.26

"I do not account my life of any value" Acts 20.24

"To give his life as a ransom for many" Matt. 20.28

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" John 10.11, 15,17

The word "life" in these verses is "soul" in the original. It is so translated because it would be difficult to understand otherwise. The soul actually is the very life of man.

As we have mentioned, "soul" is one of the three elements of man. "Soul life" is man's natural life that which makes him exist and animates him. It is the life whereby man today lives; it is the power whereby man becomes what he is. Since the Bible applies *nephesh* and *psuche* both to soul and to man's life, it is evident to us that these two, though distinguishable, are not separable. They are distinguishable inasmuch as in certain places *psuche* (for example) must be translated either as "soul" or as "life." The translations cannot be interchanged. For instance, "soul" and "life" in Luke 12.19-23 and Mark 3.4 are actually the same word in the original, yet to translate them, with the same word in English would be meaningless. They are inseparable, however, because these two are completely united in man. A man without a soul does not live. The Bible never tells us that a natural man possesses a life other than the soul. The life of man is but the soul permeating the body. As the soul is joined to the body it becomes the life of man. Life is the phenomenon of the soul. The Bible considers man's present body a "soulical body" (I Cor. 15.44 original), for the life of our present body is that of the soul. Man's life is therefore simply an expression of the composite of his mental, emotional and volitional energies. "Personality" in the natural realm embraces these different parts of the soul but only that much- Soul life is man's natural life.

That the soul is man's life is a most important fact to recognize for it bears greatly upon the kind of Christian we become, whether spiritual or soulish. This we shall explain further on.

SOUL AND MAN'S SELF

Inasmuch as we have seen how soul is the site of our personality, the organ of volition and the natural life, we can easily conclude that this soul is also the "real I"--I myself. Our self is the soul. This too can be demonstrated by the Bible. In Numbers 30, the phrase "bind himself" occurs ten times. In the original it is "bind his soul." From this we are led to understand that the soul is our own self. In many other passages of the Bible we find the word "soul" is translated as "self." For instance:

"You shall not defile yourselves with them" Lev. 11.43

"You shall not defile yourselves" Lev. 11.44

"For themselves and for their descendants" Esther 9.31

"You who tear yourself in your anger" Job 18.4

"He justified himself" Job 32.2

"But themselves go into captivity, Is. 46.2

"What every one (original, "every soul") must eat, that only may be prepared by you" Ex. 12.16

"Who kills any person (original, "kill any soul") without intent" Num.35.11,15

"Let me (original, "let my soul,) die the death of the righteous" Num.23.10

"When any one (original, "any soul') brings a cereal offering" Lev. 2.1

"I have ... quieted myself" Ps. 131.2 AV

"Think not that in the king's palace you (original, "soul')will escape" Esther 4.13

"The Lord God has sworn by himself original, "sworn by his soul")" Amos 6.8

These Scriptures from the Old Testament inform us in various ways how the soul is man's own self.

The New Testament conveys the same impression. "Souls" is the original rendering for "eight persons" in I Peter 3.20 and for "two hundred and seventy-six persons" in Acts 27.37. The phrase in Romans 2.9 translated today as "every human being who does evil" is given in the original as "every soul of man that works evil." Hence, to warn the soul of a man who works evil is to warn the evil man. In James 5.20, saving a soul is considered to be saving a sinner. And Luke 12-19 treats the rich fool's speaking words of comfort to his soul as speaking to himself. It is therefore clear that the Bible as a whole views man's soul or soul life as the man himself. A confirmation of this can be found in the words of our Lord Jesus, given in two different Gospels. Matthew 16.26 reads- "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life (psuche)? Or what shall a man give in return for his life (psuche)?" Whereas Luke 9.25 renders it: "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself (eautov)?" Both Gospel writers record the same thing; yet one uses "life" (or "soul") while the other uses "himself." This signifies that the Holy Spirit is using Matthew to explain the meaning of "himself" in Luke and Luke the meaning of "life" in Matthew. Man's soul or life is the man himself, and vice versa.

Such a study enables us to conclude that, to be a man, we must share what is included in man's soul. Every natural man possesses this element and whatever it includes, for the soul is the common life shared by all natural men. Before regeneration whatever is included in life-be it self, life, strength, power, choice, thought, opinion, love, feeling-pertains to the soul. In other words, soul life is the life a man inherits at birth. All that this life possesses and all that it may become are in the realm of the soul. If we distinctly recognize what is soulical it will then be

easier for us later on to recognize what is spiritual. It will be possible to divide the spiritual from the soulish.

CHAPTER I

SOUL AND SPIRIT

(Hebrews 4: 12)

THE ignorance of Christians concerning the distinction between " soul " and " spirit " is very general, and is a primary cause of the lack of full growth in the spiritual life in many devoted and earnest believers. G. H. Pember points out as the cause of this ignorance the popular phraseology of " soul and body ", which has caused a deficiency in the English language. He says that although we have the nouns " spirit and soul " which are too often treated as synonyms—we have no adjective from the latter, with the consequence that the omission of such an adjective has almost concealed man's tripartite nature in the versions of the English Bible, where the " Greek word which signifies ` pertaining to the soul ' " is sometimes rendered " natural " and sometimes " sensual " (see I Corinthians 2:14, James 3:15, Jude 19).

Of course Greek scholars know well the different words in the original which stand for spirit *pneuma*; soul-*psuche*; flesh-*sarx*; but to the generality of Christians these distinctions are veiled, with the result that they are unable to discriminate in experience between things that differ, and yet which vitally belong to their peace. The need of knowledge is becoming of more than academic importance, for the fallen Archangel, with his superhuman wisdom, knows the make-up of human beings, and is now, as an angel of light, bringing to bear all the power of the knowledge which he possesses, upon counterfeiting the working of the Holy Spirit, and CREATING IN THE REALM OF THE SOUL such perfect imitations of the pure life of the Spirit of God indwelling the man's spirit, that the most earnest Christians are liable to be deceived. It is therefore necessary that the teaching of the Scripture upon the distinction between soul and spirit, should be brought within the range of the apprehension of the youngest believer, and made as clear as possible from the Word of God.

The writer is not attempting to meet the need of those who are able to go direct to the Greek Testament, and read for themselves, but to assist those who must have other help, as they earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit of God to enable them to grasp the truth, and receive spiritual understanding of spiritual facts set forth in the Scripture as necessary for their growth in life and godliness. Let the reader, then, pause at this point, and in an act of faith take the promise of John 14: 26—" The Holy Spirit ... shall teach you all things . . . " and John 16:13, "He will guide you into all truth " with confidence that the Spirit of God will fulfil His office to the teachable child of God. The Holy Spirit is able to teach the believer in experience the distinction between " soul and spirit ", without his ever knowing the truth intellectually; and vice versa, the scholar may see clearly the difference as expressed in the Greek without knowing all that the words mean experimentally—i.e., he may hold the truth in mental instead of spiritual power, and then it is but

the letter of the Word without the spirit. Moreover, the believer who has been taught experimentally by the Holy Spirit the dividing of " soul and spirit " before apprehending the distinction with his intelligence, is better able to understand, and " rightly divide the word of truth ", than the reader of the Greek who is untaught of God, for back of the words in the Scriptures there are spiritual verities which cannot be understood by the natural man-i.e., the " pertaining to the soul " man (lit. I Cor.2: 14)-and can only be known by revelation.(See I Cor.2:10-12)

But first as to the missing adjective ! G. H. Pember says that an attempt is being made to use the Greek word " psychic " for expressing in English the adjective for soul. The word is, however, too " Greek ", so to speak, to commend itself for general use. In connection with ames iii. 15, Pember uses the word "soulish ", and this seems more nearly to express what is needed. Stockmayer also uses this same word-" soul-ish "-to signify that which " pertains to the soul ", for he says in reference to i Corinthians ii. 14, " the Greek text has it, the `soulman ', or `soulish-man '. As spiritual is the adjective of spirit, so is soulish the adjective of soul ". The word " soulish " therefore might well be generally accepted by English readers as the missing adjective, which will enable us to speak of the " soulish " as well as the " spiritual "(ICor. 3:1) or " carnal " (fleshy), Christian, and the meaning be understood. For this purpose it will so be used in the present treatise.

As to the distinction between soul and spirit, Gall points out that not only in the English language is the distinction made, but in every classic language from Hebrew downward. In the English New Testament two passages only bring out the distinction clearly, viz., Hebrews iv. 12Dividing soul and spirit "-and I Thessalonians 5:23Sanctify you, spirit, soul and body ". These two, however, are sufficient, for the English reader, to see that man is tripartite, and not only " soul " and " body ".

The " soul " (psuche) and its functions

The next point for consideration is the question, What is the `soul' in distinction from the spirit, and what are its functions ? " Here some quotations from other writers will help us before we turn to the Scriptures, to discover what the Apostle means by the " dividing of soul and spirit ", and thus more clearly understand howspirit, soul and body " can be sanctified, and preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord.

Tertullian, one of the Fathers who wrote in the early centuries of the Christian era, calls the " flesh "-or physical being-the " body of the soul ", and the soul thevessel of the spirit ". The soul stands between thespirit and the body, for " direct communication between spirit and flesh is impossible; their intercourse can be carried on only by means of a medium " *-the " soul " being that medium.

The " soul was the meeting place, the point of union between body and spirit ", also writes Dr. Andrew Murray. " Through the body, man-the living soul (Gen.2:7)-stood related to the external world of sense "; through the " spirit he stood related to thespiritual world ".

Pember explains the function of each very clearly when he says, " The body we may term the sense-consciousness; the soul the self-consciousness; and the spirit the God-consciousness ". Again he says, the body " gives us the use of the five senses "; and the soul, the " intellect which aids us in the present state of existence, and the emotions which proceed from the senses ", whilst the spirit is the highest part which " came directly from God, and by which alone we apprehend and worship Him ".

Dr. Andrew Murray accords with this, when he writes that the gifts with which the soul was endowed when man became a " living soul ", were those of " consciousness, self-determination, or mind and will "; and these were to be but the " mould or vessel " into which the life of the spirit was to be received. Dr. Murray also says " The spirit is the seat of our God-consciousness; the soul of our self-consciousness; the body of our world-consciousness. In the spirit, God dwells; in the soul, self; in the body, sense ".f

Again, Pember writes concerning the creation of man, and how the tripartite being was formed-" God first moulded the senseless frame, and then breathed into itthe ' breath of lives ' (Genesis 2:7. The original is in the plural)," and this " may refer to the fact that the inbreathing of God produced a two-fold life-sensual (in the meaning of pertaining to the senses) and spiritual..." He adds, in a footnote, that possibly the meaning of the use of the plural in the " breath of lives ", is that " the inbreathing of God became the spirit, and at the same time by its action upon the body, produced the soul ".

Briefly, we see that all these writers practically define the " soul " as the seat of the personality, consisting of the will and the intellect or mind; a personal entity standing between the " spirit " with its openness to the spiritual world, and the " body "-open to the outer world of nature and sense-having the power of choice as to which world shall dominate or control the entire man.of For instance, when Adam walked in the garden of Eden, the spirit breathed into him by God dominated his " soul "-i.e., intellect, mind, will-and through the vessel the " soul " shone out in, and through, the earthly tabernacle of clay-the body-making it luminous with light, impervious to cold and heat, and able perfectly to fulfil the object of its creation.

The Fall of Man

But-alas, that a " but " has to be written-man fell, and after a time the result was seen as described by the Lord Himself in His words, " Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually " (Genesis 6:5, R.V.). The " Fall " apparently began in the intellectual department of the soul, for it is said that Eve saw that " The tree was to be desired to make one wise " (Genesis 3:6 R.V.). The appeal of the serpent was not made to the vessel of clay, or the outer man, for the body was then perfectly dominated by the Spirit; but it was directed to the intellect and understanding of man, and based on a lawful desire to advance in knowledge and power in the unseen realm of another world. " Ye shall be as God," said the serpent, not " ye shall be as the beasts ", created by God ! The temptation was KNOWLEDGE, and the very knowledge which probably God meant to give in due season, but grasped before its time,and out of God's will.

The words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 1: 19, are therefore very significant in connection with this aspect of the Fall, for the " word of the Cross ", is said by the Apostle to be the power of God to " destroy the wisdom of the wise ". Since sin entered through the avenue of the intellect, salvation comes by a Cross which destroys the fallen " wisdom " by the very acceptance of its message, for the preaching of " Christ crucified " is to the wisdom of men " foolishness " (I Cor. 1:18-25) Thus God, in His wisdom, provides salvation in a way which deals with the cause by which the Fall came about ! Therefore Paul writes, " If any man thinketh that he is WISE among you ... let him become a fool, that he may become wise, for the WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD " (I Cor. 3: 18,19 R.V.)

Eve, moreover, fell through yielding to the very temptation which had caused the fall of Satan himself, for she had said " I will be like the Most High . . . " (Isa. 14:13,14) The tempter knew how to attract Eve, by suggesting to her something higher than she possessed, for she was limited by a body made of dust, but had a soul capable of appreciating knowledge and growth, through the higher part of the tripartite being.

The full effect of the downfall we do not see until years afterward, when the record of the condition of the race shows that the road down was rapid, for the " wisdom " which gave knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden reached its ultimate in due course, in a complete sinking into " flesh ", so that the part of man's tripartite nature which he had in common with the animal creation, obtained the upper hand. Then it was that God looked down upon the fallen race, and said, " My Spirit shall not abide in man ... for in their going astray they are flesh " (Gen. 6:3) And so it is, that not only has " death reigned " over the fallen race of Adam, but every human being born in the likeness of the first Adam is of the " earth, earthy ", and is dominated by the flesh instead of the spirit; the soul, which is the personality of " himself " (see Luke 9: 23) a slave of the flesh and the earthly life, instead of being a handmaid of the spirit.

Thus the condition of the unregenerate man is now (1) his human spirit severed from God, fallen and alienated from His life (Ephesians 4: 18) " without God ", separate from Christ (Ephesians 2: 12), and incapable of fellowship with Him; (2) the soul-intellect, mind, will, self-consciousness may rule over the body, or (3) the body in its desires and appetites may be enslaving and dominating the soul. But while the human spirit is thus " dead " to God, and in darkness, it remains as full of activity as mind or body. In some instances the spirit part of the unregenerate man may be so large in its capacity that even in its dark condition, it dominates the soul and body. Then the man may be said to be " spiritual ", in the sense of possessing more " spirit " than others, who are mainly soulish or fleshly. These are the ones who seek intercourse with the spirit-world apart from the Holy Spirit of God, and become " mediums ", capable of exercising " occult powers ", such as clairvoyance, etc., bestowed upon them by satanic means, for unless the human spirit of a man is regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, it is in accord with the fallen spirits of Satan, and governed by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2: 2, 3).

We see, therefore, that the fallen spirit of man-bereft of God at the Fall-sank down, so to speak, into the vessel of the " soul "; and the " soul " again sank down into the fleshly body, under, what Paul the Apostle calls, " the power of the flesh ", so that in the unconverted " the soul, manifested

sometimes in intellectuality, some times in sensuality, often in both, reigns over them with undisputed sway. This is what Jude wishes to set forth in his 19th verse, which should be rendered, ' These be they who separate, men governed by soul, not having spirit. .

Fausset very clearly brings out this in his commentary on this passage, for he writes, " In the three-fold division of man's being ... the due state in God's design is that ` the spirit' . . . should be first, and should rule the soul, which stands intermediate between body and spirit, but in the ... natural man, the spirit is sunk into subserviency to the animal-soul, which is earthly in its motives and aims. The ' carnal' sink somewhat lower, for in these the flesh, the lowest element ... reigns paramount ".

In regeneration it is the darkened and fallen " spirit of man, which is quickened again and renewed ".t This is the meaning of the Lord's words to the " Master in Israel ", to whom He said, in spite of all that he knew in intellectual religious knowledge, " Ye must be born FROM ABOVE " (John 3:3, also margin 5:7), and later on to His disciples, " It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing " (John 6:63).

The way that the new life from above reaches the fallen spirit of man is shown in the Lord's words. " The Spirit breatheth where [He] listeth ... so is every one that is born of the Spirit " (John 3:8 R. V. m.); and the cause of the Spirit of God quickening the spirit into new life, is given in John 3:14 as the death of the God-Man upon the Cross in the place of the sinner, that "whosoever believeth into (lit. Greek) Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The Cross and the Fall exactly and perfectly correspond -the one as the remedy for the other. First by the death, of the Saviour on the Cross, the sin had to be put away, and the way made possible for the Holy God to pardon the sinner, and secondly the sinner must be given a way of escape from the bondage of soul and body into which he had fallen. The tripartite nature of man could then be again adjusted, with the spirit once more in domination, and the body acting merely as the outward and material vessel-the instrument of the spirit through the soul.

This way of escape is made clear in many parts of Scripture where we are shown the death of the sinner with the Saviour. Its mode of application for deliverance we shall see later on, as we consider the full meaning of the Cross.

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LESSON THREE

The Dividing of Spirit and Soul

HOW "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT" ARE DIVIDED

" The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart ... "(Hebrews 4:12, R.V.).

This remarkable passage in Hebrews 4:12 clearly sets forth the distinction between soul and spirit, the need of the "dividing " of one from the other and the means whereby this is done, so that the believer may become a truly " spiritual " man, living "according to 'God in the spirit" (I Peter 4:6). Pember points out, in regard to this passage, that here the Apostle "claims for The Word of God, the power of separating and, as it were, taking to pieces, the whole being of man, spiritual, psychic, soulish and corporeal even as the priest flayed and divided limb from limb the animal for the burnt offering...."

Fausset writes, "the Word of God is 'living' and powerful 'energetically efficacious (Greek)' reaching through even to the separation of the animal-soul from the spirit, the higher part of man "; "piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow . . . distinguishing what is spiritual from what is carnal and animal in him; the spirit from the soul ". " The Word of God divides the closely joined parts of man's immaterial being, soul and spirit...." An image taken from the "literal dividing of joints and penetrating to so as to open out) the marrow by the priest's knife."

These words show how suggestive and full of teaching, the whole passage to the believer whose eyes are opened to the danger of the soul-life dominating him, instead of the Spirit of God acting freely from the shrine of his spirit.

The question at once arises in a believer who desires to be a spiritual man-" What am I to do? How can I discern what is soulish in my walk and service? " The text we are considering shows that we are to yield ourselves to our High Priest Who has "passed into the heavens" and He, before Whom "all things are naked and laid open" (Hebrews 4:13), will exercise His office of Priest and wield the sharp two-edged knife of His Word, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit within us, discerning even the "thoughts and intents of the heart". The "Greek for ` thoughts ' refers to the mind and feelings, and the word ` intents ', or rather ` mental conception ', refers to the intellect ", again writes Fausset in his commentary.

The High Priest, Who Himself became Man, that He might be a "merciful and faithful High Priest" (Hebrews 2:17, R.V.) able to sympathise and touched with the very feeling of our physical and moral weakness (Hebrews 4:15, Greek), is the only One Who can take the sacrificial knife and patiently "divide" the soulish life from its penetration into thoughts and

feelings, the intellect and even mental conceptions. What a work to be done! How can the animal-soul-life, penetrating the very " joints and marrow" be tracked and dislodged so that the spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit may dominate and every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Our High Priest will not fail nor be discouraged in bringing forth victory out of judgment in all those who commit themselves to His hands and trust Him to wield the knife of His living Word by the Spirit of God.

But what are the steps? What is man's part? How is the believer to co-operate with the High Priest in this great and delicate work?

(1) By definite surrender of the whole man as a burnt sacrifice laid upon the altar of the Cross, with the entire consent of the will irrevocably given that the High Priest, Christ Jesus, should by His Spirit bring the entire being into conformity to His death (Philippians 3:10) i.e., that He should never stay His hand until the animal-soulish life is " divided" from the "spirit", so that the man may become a vessel into which and through which the inflow and outflow of the Spirit of God may flow freely from the shrine of the spirit.

(2) By continual, persistent, watchful prayer and searching the Scriptures, praying that the keen edge of the Word of God may be applied to all that is of the soulish life; the believer implicitly obeying the Word right up to the light given, according to I Peter 1: 22, R.V., "Ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth".

(3) By the daily taking of the Cross in the circumstances of life so that the believer has the entire victory over sin and the "works of the flesh", whilst the Spirit of God is doing the more minute work of separating the spirit from the soul and teaching the believer how to walk after the spirit.

How the separation between soul and spirit is carried out in those who thus lay themselves upon the altar (the Cross) and trust the Heavenly High Priest to use the sword of His Word as a knife to do the work in them we see in the calls to the Cross given by the Lord Jesus to His disciples when He walked the earth as man.

I. The Cross and the soul affections "He that doth not take his Cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life (psuche, soul-life) shall lose it: and he that loseth his life (psuche, soul-life) for My sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:38,39, R.V. and margin).

This passage occurs in the charge given to the twelve when the Lord sent them forth in His Name. He warns them that a

"man's foes shall be those of his own household" and shows that their first following Him in the path of the Cross will mean a "sword" in their family life, when the claims of Christ and the family are not in accord. The " sword " to divide the soulish and the spiritual in the affections generally comes in a clash between the known will of God and the will of the loved ones, which compels the believer to " take his cross ", i.e., " go forth even to crucifixion "* and follow the Lord, even though it causes " variance " with father or mother or the " own household ".

It was so with Christ Himself. He Who had said, " Honour your father and your mother," had to say, " Who is My mother and My brethren? " when they judged Him to be " beside Himself ", as He was occupied with His Father's business. The taking of the Cross in this way and the choosing to be obedient to Christ before family claims, means to the natural affections such suffering that it is as a sword piercing the soul, so that in very truth the soul-life in the affections is " lost " and the purified vessel of the " soul " in the aspect of its affections becomes open to the inflow of the love of God by the Spirit, whereby the believer loves the loved ones no longer for himself but for God and in and through God.

The lower life is exchanged for the higher, i.e., the " soul " in its personality and vessel-capacity remaining the same

" soul ", but now dominated from the spirit by the Spirit of Christ-the Last Adam-and not by the fleshly soul-life of the First Adam (see I Corinthians 15:45-48).

In Luke's Gospel the sword-effect of the Cross in connection with the soul's affections is more plainly defined for the Lord uses the word " hate " and says, " if any man cometh unto Me and HATETH not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple " (Luke 14: 26). Here again the word " life " is "psuche "-i.e., the animal or soul-life. Matthew gives the test for the will in its choice of God or the loved ones first, in the words " loveth more than Me "; but Luke records the language used by the Lord which describes the ATTITUDE of the wholly devoted follower of Christ to the soul-life in its permeating of the affections-an attitude which is necessary for their purification. Such a believer must " hate " his " own life (psuche) " in its penetration to family relationships, so that he may have " soul " divided from " spirit " in this sphere, and, in the " hating " and " losing " of his soul-life, find the higher and purer love life of Christ permeate the close family ties, ordained and honoured by God Himself through His Son in human form.

2. The Cross and soulish self-interest "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself . . . For whosoever would save his life (R.V. m. soul) shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life (soul) for My sake shall find it " (Matthew 16: 24-26). Later on Matthew again records a similar statement by the Lord, but this time drawn forth by Peter's words to Him in regard to His own Cross. Peter had said, " Pity Thyself," but the Lord replies that the path of following Him meant " DENY HIMSELF ". Here is the soul-life summed up in the word "himself ", when shown in self-centeredness in any form, i.e., self-pity, self interest, self-shrinking from suffering, in short, all that would make a man " save his life ", rather than go forward in Divine strength to pour out his " soul " unto death for others.

The choosing of the path of the Cross for Christ's sake means the " losing " of the fleshly soul-life, to have the pure Divine life of Christ in its capacity for sacrifice " found " and poured out through the soul-vessel for the blessing of the world.

The Evangelist Mark repeats again the words as given in Matthew's Gospel (Mark 8:34-36), and Luke does the same with the addition of the word " daily ", showing that the Cross in connection with the out-pouring and sacrifice of the soul-life needs to be of daily choice and efficacy and is a distinctly different aspect of the Cross to that given in Romans 6, and the other Epistles, where

the death of the old creation is to be apprehended as a COMPLETED FACT, made true as the believer " reckons " himself " dead indeed unto sin " and " alive unto God in Christ Jesus ".

3. The Cross and soulish grasping of earthly things "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to gain his life (soul) shall lose it but whosoever shall lose his life (soul) shall save it alive" (Luke 17:32,33, R.V. m.).

Here we find again the same emphatic words repeated by the Lord in connection with self-interest and the natural instinct of self-preservation and self-grasping of earthly possessions. " Remember Lot's wife," says the Lord Jesus, as He points out the natural tendency of the soul-life to turn back in the hour of danger to save the " goods ", and not to let them go.

The law of gaining the higher spirit-life is to " lose " so as to " gain ". The soulish-life seeks earthly treasures, but these must be renounced and the " dividing of soul and spirit " in this connection will come about again by the attitude of the believer when in the vicissitudes of life the test comes. " They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," is written of some in days of trial (Hebrews 10: 34) This attitude to " possessions " is sometimes a greater manifestation of Divine grace than the sacrifice of life.

The renouncing of the soul-life in its innate clinging to the things of earth is a necessity for the " gaining " of the Spirit-life of Christ, which, pouring into the vessel of the soul from the spirit, as the seat of the God-consciousness, brings with it such an assurance of abundance in God that earth's treasures are held lightly and are easily forsaken in the times of testing which come to all men.

The undue absorption of the children of God in " house " and " goods " to the neglect of the Kingdom of God, is manifestly an aspect of the " soul " and not the spirit-life and this clinging, or over-occupation with the necessary affairs of earth, needs the knife-work of the Great High Priest in the " dividing of soul and spirit ", so that the affections of His blood-bought ones may be set on things above, in fulfilment of the word : "for ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3: 1-4.).

4. The Cross and soulish self-love "He that loveth his life (soul) loseth it: and he that hateth his life (psuche-soul-life) in this world shall keep it unto life (zoe-the higher life) eternal " (John 12:25, R.V.).

Here we have the contrast between the soul-life and the higher life of the spirit manifested in and through the soul-personality, very clearly defined. The soul-life is now shown as summed up in SELF-LOVE-he that "loveth his soul "-which simply means himself. We have seen the soul-life penetrating family affections and manifested in self-pity, self-protection, self grasping of the goods of earth-in brief, summed up in " My family; Myself; My goods "-with self-love in and through all.

All this, the Master says, means loss-eternal loss-for it all comes from the life derived from the First Adam, manifested through the personality of the soul, and prevents that " soul " being

dominated by the spirit and giving expression to the pure Divine life of the Last Adam -the Lord from heaven.

Is it " sin " to keep it? Yes, WHEN THE LIGHT COMES, AND WE SEE THE TRUTH. In a deeper sense also it is sin although unknown sin-for all the life of the First Adam -i.e., the " natural man "-has been poisoned by sin and even in those who apprehend " death to sin " as set forth in Romans 6 and in consequence cease to " walk after the flesh " in manifestation of the " works of the flesh ", it penetrates into the realm of the affections and shows itself in self-love, self-pity, self-grasping and other phases of self-centredness. This must be called SIN, although in less discernible form, working through intellect, emotions and affections.

The Pathway of Freedom

" The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge that One died for all, therefore all died and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him ... " (2 Corinthians 5:14,15 R.V.).

The work of dividing soul and spirit is done by the Lord Himself, through His Spirit wielding the Word of God, as a living, active " sword ", which penetrates to the inmost recesses of the immaterial being of man.

But the MAN HIMSELF HAS HIS PART TO DO. The Spirit of God cannot carry out His work without the believer's consent and co-working. Briefly summarised, the conditions of co-operation on the man's side are as follows:

(1) The believer needs to see the necessity of the dividing of soul and spirit and as the sacrifice is laid on the altar, definitely consent to the work being done.

(2) The will of the believer must be steadily placed on God's side in the experimental working out of the " dividing " as the circumstances of life require it.

(3) The basis of the Cross as set forth in Romans 6:1-14 must be steadily maintained. As the believer reckons himself " dead indeed unto sin " (Romans 6:11) and actively carries out the command not to " LET SIN reign " in his mortal body, thus finding the "flesh" crucified with its " affections and lusts " (Galatians 5: 24), so must he now reckon himself dead indeed unto sin in its more subtle forms through the soul-life, i.e., the evil " self " conditions, such as inordinate self-love, self-pity, etc.

(4) The believer fulfilling these conditions must now carry out in practice his light, purpose and faith and steadily be faithful to all that he is shown by the Spirit of God, refusing deliberately all intrusion of the soul life and choosing to open himself to the higher life of Christ in his spirit.

(5) The believer must seek in all things to " walk after the spirit "; to discern what is spirit and what is soul, so as to follow the one and refuse the other; to understand the laws of the spirit so as to walk in them and become in reality a

" spiritual " man.

As the believer fulfils these conditions he becomes in truth a new man for the power of the Cross as the sword of the Spirit has been wielded by the hands of the heavenly High Priest, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit; it has tracked the soul-life even to joints and marrow, to the inner recesses of the soul in the source of its activity and the very " marrow " of its affections; yes, it has even discerned the soulish life in mind and feelings; and in the very conceptions of the mental powers. Now the believer more and more joyfully and easily walks according to the written Word, and takes up the " Cross " as brought to bear upon him daily in the providence of God. Apprehending with ever clearer vision the fact of his death with Christ upon the Cross, the spirit of the man is more and more divided from the soul and joined in essential union with the Risen Lord who is a Life-giving Spirit-so that he becomes " one spirit " with Him and his human spirit a channel for the outflow of the Spirit of Christ to a needy world.

* " We have become so accustomed to the expression ' taking up one's Cross ' in the sense of being prepared for trials ... that we are apt to lose sight of its primary and proper sense here-a preparedness to go forth even to crucifixion "-Fausset.

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Volume 1: Chapter 14

SPIRITUAL BELIEVERS AND THE SOUL

THE DIVIDING OF SPIRIT AND SOUL

Our lengthy discussion as to the difference between spirit and soul and their respective operations has been to lead us to this present point. For a believer who strives after God the element to be apprehensive about is the inordinate activity of the soul beyond the measure set by God. The soul has been in ascendancy for such long duration that in the matter of consecration it even presumes to take upon itself the task of realizing that act to God's satisfaction. Many Christians are unaware how drastically the cross must work so that ultimately their natural power for living may be denied. They do not know the reality of the indwelling Holy Spirit nor that His authority must extend to gathering under His control the thoughts, desires and feelings of the entire being. Without their having an inner appreciation of this, the Holy Spirit is unable to accomplish everything He wishes to do. The greatest temptation for an earnest and zealous saint is to engage his own strength in God's service rather than to wait humbly for the Holy Spirit to will and to perform.

The call of the cross of the Lord Jesus is to beckon us to hate our natural life, to seek opportunity to lose, not to keep, it. Our Lord wants us to sacrifice self and be yielded wholly to the working of His Spirit. If we are to experience afresh His true life in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we must be willing to present to death every opinion, labor and thought of the soul life. The Lord additionally touches upon the issue of our hating or loving our self-life. The soul is in

variably "self-loving." Unless from the very depth of our heart we abhor our natural life, we shall not be able to walk genuinely by the Holy Spirit. Do we not realize that the basic condition for a spiritual walk is to fear our self and its wisdom and to rely absolutely upon the Spirit?

This war between the soul and the spirit is waged secretly but interminably within God's children. The soul seeks to retain its authority and move independently, while the spirit strives to possess and master everything for the maintenance of God's authority. Before the spirit achieves its ascendancy the soul has tended to take the lead in all regards. Should a believer allow self to be the master while expecting the Holy Spirit to help and to bless him in his work, he undoubtedly will fail to produce spiritual fruit. Christians cannot anticipate a walk and work pleasing to God if they have not crushed their soul life by persistently denying its authority and unconditionally laying it in the dust. Except all power, impatience, and activity of the natural life are deliberately and one by one delivered to the cross and a ceaseless vigil is maintained, it will seize every chance to revive itself. The reason for so many defeats in the spiritual realm is because this sector of the soul has not been dealt with drastically. If soul life is not stripped away through death but is allowed to mingle with the spirit, believers shall continue in defeat. If our walk does not exclusively express God's power it shall soon be vanquished by man's wisdom and opinion.

Our natural life is a formidable obstacle to spiritual life. Never satisfied with God alone, it invariably adds something extra to God. Hence it is never at peace. Before the self is touched God's children live by very changeable stimulations and sensations. That is why they exhibit a wavy up and down existence. Because they allow their soulful energies to mix in with spiritual experiences their ways are often unstable. They accordingly are not qualified to lead others. Their unrelinquished soul power continually deflects them from letting the spirit be central. In the excitement of soulful emotion the spirit suffers great loss in freedom and sensation.

Joy and sorrow may imperil the believer's self-control and set self-consciousness on a rampage. The mind, if overly active, may affect and disturb the quietness of the spirit. To admire spiritual knowledge is good, but should it exceed spiritual bounds the result shall be merely letter, not spirit. This explains why many workers, though they preach the most excellent truth, are so cold and dead. Many saints who seek a spiritual walk share a common experience—one of groaning because their soul and spirit are not at one. The thought, will and emotion of their soul often rebel against the spirit, refuse to be directed by the spirit and resort to independent actions which contradict the spirit. The life in their spirit is bound to suffer in such a situation.

Now given a condition like this in the believer, the teaching in Hebrews 4.12 takes on paramount significance. For the Holy Spirit instructs us therein how to divide spirit and soul experientially. The dividing of these two is not a mere doctrine; it is pre-eminently a life, a must in the believer's walk. just what is its essential meaning? It means, first of all., that by His Word and through His indwelling Spirit God enables the Christian to differentiate in experience the operations and expressions of the spirit as distinct from those of the soul. Thus he may perceive what is of the spirit and what is of the soul.

The dividing of these two elements denotes additionally that through willing cooperation the child of God can follow a pure spiritual path unimpeded by the soul. The Holy Spirit in Hebrews

4 sets forth the high-priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus and also explains its relationship to us. Verse 12 declares that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." And verse 13 follows by informing us that "before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." These therefore tells us how much the Lord Jesus fulfills His work as High Priest with respect to our spirit and soul. The Holy Spirit compares the believer to a sacrifice on the altar. During the Old Testament period when people presented an offering, they bound their sacrifice to the altar. The priest then came and killed it with a sharp knife, parting it into two and piercing to the division of the joints and marrow, thus exposing to view all that formerly had been hidden from human sight. Afterwards it was burned with fire as an offering to God. The Holy Spirit uses this event to illustrate the work of the Lord Jesus towards believers and the experience of the believers in the Lord. Just as the sacrifice of old was cut asunder by the priestess's knife so that the joints and marrow were exposed and divided, even so the believer today has his soul and spirit split apart by the Word of God as used by our High Priest, the Lord Jesus. This is that the soul may no longer affect the spirit nor the spirit any more be under the soul's authority; rather, each will find its rightful place, with neither confusion nor mixture.

As at the first the Word of God had operated on creation by separating light from darkness, so now it works within us as the Sword of the Spirit, piercing to the separation of the spirit and soul. Hence the noblest habitation of God-our spirits-is wholly separated from the base desires of our souls. Wherefore we come to appreciate how our spirit is the dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit and how our soul with all its energy shall indeed do the will of God as revealed to the human spirit by the Holy Spirit. No room can there be then for any independent action.

As the priest of old split the sacrifice, so our High Priest today divides our soul and spirit. As the priestly knife was of such sharpness that the sacrifice was cut into two, piercing to the separation of the closely knit joints and marrow, so the Word of God which the Lord Jesus currently uses is keener than any two-edged sword and is able to split cleanly apart the most intimately related spirit and soul there may be.

The Word of God is "living" for it has living power: "living and active" because it knows how to work: "sharper than any two edged sword" since it can pierce into the spirit. What God's Word has penetrated is much deeper than the soul; it reaches into the innermost spirit. God's Word leads His people into a realm more profound than one of mere sensation; it brings them into the realm of the eternal spirit. Those who wish to be established in God must know the meaning of this penetration into the spirit. The Holy Spirit alone can teach us what is soul life and what is spirit life. Only after we learn how to differentiate experientially these two kinds of life and come to apprehend their respective values, are we delivered from a shallow, loose, sensational walk into that which is deep, firm and spiritual. Only then do we come into rest. The soul life can never furnish us rest. But please note that this must be known in experience; simply understanding in the mind will merely make us more soulish.

We need to pay special attention to this piercing and dividing. The Word of God plunges into the soul as well as into the spirit in order to effect the division of these two. The Lord Jesus in His crucifixion had His hands and feet and side pierced. Are we willing to let the cross work in our

soul and spirit? A sword pierced through Mary's soul (Luke 2. 35). Although her "Son" was given by God, she was required to let go of Him and to relinquish all her authority and demands upon Him. Even though her soul craved to cling tenaciously to Him Mary must deny her natural affection.

The cleaving of soul and spirit means not only their separation but also a cracking open of the soul itself. Since the spirit is enveloped in the Soul, it cannot be reached by the Word of life save through a cracked shell. The Word of the cross plunges in and splits open a way into and through the soul so that God's life can reach the spirit within and liberate it from the bondage of its soulish shell. Having received the mark of the cross, the soul now can assume its proper position of subjection to the spirit. But if the soul fails to become a "thoroughfare" to the spirit, then the former surely will become the latter's chain. These two never agree on any matter. Before the spirit achieves its rightful place of pre-eminence it is challenged persistently by the soul. While the spirit is striving to gain freedom and mastery the strong soul power exerts its utmost strength to suppress the spirit. Only after the cross has done its work on the soulish life is the spirit liberated. If we remain ignorant of the damage this discord between the spirit and soul can bring or remain unwilling to forsake the pleasure of a sensuous walk, we shall make hardly any spiritual progress. As long as the siege thrown up by the soul is not lifted the spirit cannot be freed.

Upon carefully studying the teaching of this fragment of Scripture, we may conclude that the dividing of spirit and soul hinges upon two factors: the cross and God's Word. Before the priest could use his knife the sacrifice had to be placed on the altar. The altar in the Old Testament speaks of the cross in the New Testament. Believers cannot expect their High Priest to wield God's sharp Sword, His Word which pierces to the separation of soul and spirit, unless first they are willing to come to the cross and accept its death. Lying on the altar always precedes the plunging of the sword. Hence all who desire to experience the parting of soul and spirit must answer the Lord's call to Calvary and lay themselves unreservedly on the altar, trusting their High Priest to operate with His keen Sword to the dividing asunder of their spirit and soul. For us to lie on the altar is our free will offering well pleasing to God; to use the sword to divide is the work of the priest. We should fulfill our part with all faithfulness, and commit the rest to our merciful and faithful High Priest. And at the appropriate time He shall lead us into a complete spiritual experience.

We need to follow the footsteps of our Lord. As He was dying, Jesus poured out His soul to death (Is. 53.12) but committed His spirit to God (Luke 23.46). We must do now what He did before. If we truly pour out the soul life and commit our spirit to God we too shall know the power of resurrection and shall enjoy a perfect spiritual way in the glory of resurrection.

THE PRACTICE

We have just seen how the High Priest operates if we accept the cross. We shall consider next the practical side; that is, how we may arrive at the experience of having the Lord Jesus divide our soul and spirit.

(1) Know the necessity of having the spirit and soul divided. Without this knowledge no such request will be made. Christians ought to petition the Lord to show them the abhorrence of a mixed spirit-and-soul life and also the reality of that deeper walk in God which is wholly spirit and uninterrupted by the soul. They should understand that a mixed life is a frustrated life.

(2) Ask for the separation of soul and spirit. After knowing, there must be a genuinely earnest desire in the heart, a requesting that this mingled soul and spirit be cut apart. Just here the question rests with the human will. Should believers prefer to enjoy what they themselves consider the best life and not desire to have their soul and spirit divided, God will respect their personal rights and not force them into such experience.

(3) Yield specifically. If believers definitely desire the experience of having their soul and spirit separated, they must consign themselves to the altar of the cross in a specific manner. They must be willing to accept totally every consequence of the operation of the cross and be conformed to the death of the Lord. Before they encounter the cleaving of soul and spirit believers need to bend their will continuously and incessantly towards God and actively choose to have this cleavage. And as the High Priest accomplishes this division in them their heart attitude should be that He should not stay His hand.

(4) Stand on Romans 6.11. God's children need to watch lest in seeking to experience the separation of soul and spirit they fall back into sin. Remember that this separating is built upon their having died to sin. Hence they should maintain daily the attitude of Romans 6.11, considering themselves verily dead to sin. Additionally, they should stand on Romans 6.12 and not permit sin to reign in their mortal bodies. This attitude will deprive their natural life any opportunity to sin through the body.

(5) Pray and study the Bible. Christians ought to search the Bible with prayer and meditation. They should let God's Word penetrate thoroughly into their souls so as to enable their natural life to be purified. If they actually do what God says, their soul life shall not be able to continue its free activity. This is the meaning of 1 Peter 1.22: "having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth."

(6) Daily bear the cross. Because the Lord desires to sever our spirit and soul He arranges crosses in our everyday affairs for us to bear. To take up the cross daily, to deny self at all times, to make no provision for the flesh-not even for a moment, and to be shown constantly by the Holy Spirit what are the activities of the soul in our lives: this is spiritual life. Through faithful obedience we shall be led to encounter the dividing of soul and spirit so that we may experience a pure spiritual walk.

(7) Live according to the spirit. This is a condition not only for our preservation but also for a distinct cleavage between spirit and soul. We must seek to walk by our spirit in all respects, distinguishing what is of the spirit and what is of the soul and resolving as well to follow the former while rejecting the latter. Learn to recognize the working of the spirit and follow it.

These are the conditions which we on our side must fulfill. The Holy Spirit requires our cooperation. The Lord will not be able to do His part should we fail to do ours. But were we to

discharge our responsibility, our High Priest would tear apart our spirit and soul with the sharp Sword of His Spirit in the power of His cross. Everything which belongs to emotion, sensation, mind and natural energy would be separated one after another from the spirit so as to leave no trace of fusion. To lie on the altar is what we must do, but to divide the soul from the spirit with the well-honed knife is what our High Priest undertakes. If we truly commit ourselves to the cross our High Priest shall not fail to execute His ministry in separating our spirit and soul. We need not worry about His part. Upon seeing we have fulfilled the requirements for His working He shall part our spirit and soul at the appropriate time thereafter.

Those who have apprehended the danger of a mixture of these two organs cannot but seek deliverance. Open though the road is to deliverance, it nevertheless is not without its difficulties. Believers must persevere in prayer that they may see clearly their own pitiful state and understand the indwelling, working, and demands of the Holy Spirit. They need to know the mystery and reality of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. May they honor such holy presence; may they be careful not to grieve Him; may they know that, aside from sin, what grieves Him the most as well as what harms themselves the deepest is to walk and labor according to their own life. The first and original sin of man was to seek what is good, wise and intellectual according to his own idea. God's children today often make the same mistake. They should realize that since they have believed in the Lord and have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, they ought to give the Spirit complete authority over their souls. Do we think because we have prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to reveal His mind and to work in us, that all shall accordingly be done? That assumption is not the truth; for unless we deliver to death specifically and daily our natural life, together with its power, wisdom, self, and sensation and unless we equally desire honestly in our mind and will to obey and rely upon the Holy Spirit, we shall not see Him actually performing the work.

The Lord's people should understand that it is the Word of God which parts their soul and spirit. The Lord Jesus is Himself the living Word of God, so He Himself effects the division. Are we disposed to let His life and accomplished work stand between our soul and spirit? Are we ready to have His life so fill our spirit that the soul life is immobilized?

The Bible is God's written Word. The Lord Jesus uses the teaching of the Bible to separate our soul and spirit. Are we willing to follow the truth? Are we ready to do what the Scriptures teach? Can we obey the Lord in accordance with the teaching of Scripture without putting in our opinion as well? Do we consider the authority of the Bible as sufficient without seeking human help in our obedience? We must obey the Lord and everything He teaches us in His Word if we would desire to enter upon a true spiritual path. This is the Sword which is operative to the cleaving of our soul and spirit.

THE SOUL UNDER THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL

Very early in this volume we likened our whole being spirit, soul, and body-to the ancient Jewish temple of God's habitation. God dwells in the Holy of Holies. A curtain separates it from the Holy Place. This curtain seems to enclose God's glory and presence within the Holy of Holies, barring His glory from the Holy Place. Men of that time therefore can only know the things

outside the curtain in the Holy Place. Apart from faith they in their outward life cannot sense the presence of God.

This curtain however, only exists temporarily. At the appointed hour, when the flesh of our Lord Jesus (which is the reality of the curtain, Heb. 10.20) was crucified on the cross, the curtain was rent from top to bottom. What separated the Holiest and the Holy Place was removed. God's aim was not to dwell permanently just in the Holy of Holies. Quite the contrary. He desired to extend His presence to the Holy Place too. He was merely waiting for the cross to complete its work, for it is the cross, alone, which can rend the curtain and permit God's glory to shine out from the Holiest Place.

God today would have His own enjoy such a temple experience in their spirit and soul: if only the cross is allowed to perfect its work in them. As they ungrudgingly obey the Holy Spirit the communion between the Holy and the Holiest grows deeper day by day until they experience a great change. It is the cross which effects the rending of the curtain; that is, the cross so functions in the life of the believer that he has a rent-curtain experience between his spirit and soul. His natural life renounces its independence and waits upon the spirit life for direction and supply.

The curtain was torn in two, "from top to bottom" (Mark 15.38). This has to be God's doing, not man's. When the work of the cross is finished God tears the curtain. This cannot be achieved either by our labors or by our strength, not even by our entreaty. The moment the cross accomplishes its task at that moment is the curtain rent. Let us therefore renew our consecration and offer ourselves to God without reservation. Let us be willing to have our soul life committed to death in order that the Lord Who dwells in the Holiest may finish His work. If he observes that the cross has wrought thoroughly enough in us the Lord shall indeed integrate the Holiest and the Holy within us just as He centuries ago rent the curtain by His might so that His Holy Spirit might flow out from His glorious body.

Thus shall the glory in the shelter of the Most High overwhelm our daily sensuous life. All our walk and work in the Holy Place shall be sanctified in the glory of the Holiest. Like our spirit is, so shall our soul too be indwelt and regulated by the Holy Spirit of God. Our mind, emotion and will shall be filled by Him. What we have maintained by faith in the spirit we now also know and experience in the soul, nothing lacking and nothing lost. What a blessed life is this! "And the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house" (2 Chron. 7.1-2). However lovely our activities of priestly service may have seemed in the Holy Place, they all shall cease in the glorious light of God. Henceforth His glory governs everything. No more is animal activity adored.

This brings us to the other, and equally significant, aspect of the dividing of spirit and soul. Insofar as the soul's influence and control of the spirit is concerned, the work of the cross is to effect the division of the two; but insofar as the spirit's filling and reigning is concerned, the cross works towards the surrender of the soul's independence so that it may be reconciled completely to the spirit. Believers, should seek to experience oneness of spirit and soul. Were we to allow the cross and the Holy Spirit to operate thoroughly in us we would discover that what the soul has relinquished is scarcely a fraction of what it ultimately gains: the dead has now come into fruition, the lost is now kept for eternal life. When our soul is brought under the reins

of the spirit it undergoes an immense change. Beforehand it seems to be useless and lost to God because it is employed for self and often moves independently; afterwards God gains our soul, though to man it may appear to be crushed. We become as "those who have faith and keep their souls" (Heb. 10.39). This is much more profound than what we commonly term "saved," because it points especially to life. Since we have learned not to walk by sensation and sight, we are now able to save our life by faith into serving and glorifying God. "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1.21). As God's Word is implanted we receive its new nature into us and are thus enabled to bear fruit. We obtain the life of the Word from the Word of life. Although the organs of the soul still remain, these organs no longer function through its power; rather, they operate by the power of God's Word. This is "the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1.9).

Human nerves are rather sensitive and are easily stirred by outside stimuli. Words, manners environments and feelings greatly affect us. Our mind engages in so many thoughts, plans and imaginations that it is a world of confusion. Our will is agitated to perform many acts according to our sundry delights. None of the organs of our soul can bring us into peace. Singly or collectively, they disturb, they confuse, they shift us around. But when our soul is in the spirit's hand we can be released from such disturbances. The Lord Jesus implores us: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11.29). If we are favorably inclined to yield to the Lord, to take up His yoke, and to follow Him, our soul shall not be aroused inordinately. If we learn of Him by seeing how He, when despised by men, continued to follow God's will and not His Own, our soul shall return to tranquillity. The reason for our hurt feelings lies in the fact that we are not amenable to being treated as our Lord was and are loathe to submit ourselves to the will and ordering of God. Were we to deliver our natural energies to death and capitulate entirely to the Lord, our soul, though so nervously sensitive, would rest in the Lord and not misunderstand Him.

The soul which comes under the Holy Spirit's authority is a restful one. Once we busily planned, today we calmly trust the Lord. Once we were flushed with anxieties, today we are like a child quieted at its mother's breast. Once we entertained many thoughts and ambitions, today we consider God's will best and rest ourselves in Him. In obeying the Lord wholly, we rejoice in heart fully. With complete consecration comes perfect peace. "As bondmen of Christ doing the will of God from the soul" (Eph. 6.6 Darby). We do not rely upon the soul to execute God's will, rather we perform His will from the soul, that is, with our whole heart. The soul which once rebelled against God's desire is now perfectly committed to Him through the operation of the cross. That which carried out its own will, or tried to do God's will by its own idea, is now of one heart with God in all things.

A soul under the rule of the Holy Spirit never worries for itself. "Do not be anxious about your life (original, soul)" (Matt. 6.25). We now seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness because we believe God will supply our daily need. Once touched by the cross through the Holy Spirit, the soul no longer is able to be anxious about itself. While self-consciousness is the soul's prime expression, yet believers actually lose their self in God; hence they can trust God utterly. Every work of the soul, including self-love, self-seeking and self-pride, have been so eliminated that believers are no longer self-centered.

Because the cross has done its task we do not busily plan any more for ourselves. Instead of suffering anxiety we can restfully seek God's kingdom and righteousness. We know if we care for God's cares that God will take care of our cares. Once we wondered at miracles, now we live by the God of miracles and know in experience how God provides every need. This all flows naturally since God's power is backing us. The cares of this life emerge as very small items indeed along our daily path.

"Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4.19). Many people know God as the Creator but not as Father; believers, though, should experience Him not only as Father but also as Creator. As the latter God reveals to us His power. By this we will understand and acknowledge that the whole universe is in fact in His hand. Formerly it was hard for us to believe the idea that things in the world could not move against His will; but now we know that every element in the universe-be it human, natural, or supernatural-is under His careful scrutiny and clever ordering. We now acknowledge that all things come to us either through His order or by His permission. A soul governed by the Holy Spirit is a trusting one.

Our soul ought to desire the Lord as well as to trust Him. "My soul clings to thee" (Ps. 63.8). No more do we dare be independent of God nor do we dare serve the Lord according to the idea of the soul. Rather, we today follow Him with fear and trembling and trail after Him closely. Our soul genuinely clings to the Lord. No more is there independent action, but instead a full surrender to Him. And this is not by compulsion; we do it gladly. What we henceforth hate is our life; what we wholly love is the Lord.

Such persons cannot but utter the cry of Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Luke 1.46). No longer is there self-importance, either in public or in private. These believers recognize and admit their incompetence and only wish to exalt the Lord with humbleness of heart. They will not steal the Lord's glory any further but magnify Him in their souls. For if the Lord is not magnified in the soul, nowhere else is He magnified either.

Only such as these count not their life (original, soul) of any value (Acts 20.24) and can lay down their lives (original, souls) for the brethren (I John 3.16). Unless self-love is abandoned the believer shall forever shrink back when called actually to take up the cross for Christ. He who lives a martyr's life and is willing to nail his self to the cross is able as well to die a martyr's death if ever the need should arise. He can lay down his life for his brother if occasion demands it because in ordinary days he has denied himself continuously and has not sought his own right or comfort but has poured out his soul for the brethren. True love towards the Lord and the brethren arises out of no love for self. He "loved me" and "gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2.20). Love flows from the denial of the self-life. Blood shedding is the source of blessing.

Such a life is in truth one of prosperity, as is written: "thy soul prospers" (3 John 2 Darby). This prosperity originates not with what self has gained but with what self has denied. A soul lost is not a life lost, for the soul is lost in God. Soul life is selfish and therefore binds us. But the soul renounced shall abide in the boundlessness of God's life. This is liberty, this is prosperity. The more we lose the more we gain. Our possessions are not measured by how much we receive but by how much we give. How fruitful is this life!

To forsake the soul life, however, is not as easy as deliverance from sin. Since it is our life, the choice is ours to make daily not to live by it but by the life of God. The cross needs to be borne faithfully and to be borne increasingly faithfully. Let us gaze upon our Lord Jesus Who "endured the cross, despising the shame": "Consider him . . . , that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls" (Heb. 11M ASV). The race set before us is none other than that of His despising the shame and enduring His cross. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" (Ps. 103.1)

LESSON FOUR

(Chapter 1—Part 4 of *The Spiritual Man*)

The Holy Spirit and the Believer's Spirit

Believers today very much lack knowledge as to the existence and operation of the human spirit. Many are unaware that in addition to their mind, emotion and will they also have a spirit. Even when they have heard of the spirit, many Christians either consider their mind, emotion or will as the spirit or else plainly confess they know not where their spirit is. Such ignorance enormously affects cooperation with God, control over self, and war against Satan, the performance of which in all cases requires the operation of the spirit.

It is imperative that believers recognize a spirit exists within them, something extra to thought, knowledge and imagination of the mind, something beyond affection, sensation and pleasure of the emotion, something additional to desire, decision and action of the will. This component is far more profound than these faculties. God's people not only must know they possess a spirit; they also must understand how this organ operates -its sensitivity, its work, its power, its laws. Only in this way can they walk according to their spirit and not the soul or body of their flesh.

The spirit and soul of the unregenerate have become fused into one; therefore they do not know at all the presence of the deadened spirit; on the other hand, they are very well aware of strong soulical sensation, This foolishness continues even after being saved. That is why believers sometimes walk after the spirit and sometimes after the flesh even though they have received spiritual life and have experienced to some degree victory over the things of the flesh. To be unaware of the demand, movement, supply, sense, and direction of the spirit naturally curtails the life of the spirit and allows the natural life of the soul to go unchallenged as the living principle of one's walk. The magnitude of this ignorance far exceeds common admission of it among believers. Because of their ignorance concerning the spirit's operation, those who honestly desire deeper experience upon having overcome sin may all too easily be led astray into seeking so called "spiritual" Bible knowledge with their minds, or a burning sensation of the Lord's presence in their physical members, or a life and labor emanating from their will power. They are deceived into overly esteeming their soul experiences and thus fall into conceiving themselves as ever so spiritual. Their soul life is inordinately nourished. They become so subjective as to assess their experience as unquestionably spiritual. Accordingly, they are hindered from making any genuine spiritual progress. For this reason God's children must be very humble before Him and seek to know the teaching of the Bible and the functioning of the spirit through the Holy Spirit in order that they may walk by the spirit.

Regeneration of Man*

Why must a sinner be born anew? Why must he be born from above? Why must there be a regeneration of the spirit?

Because man is a fallen spirit. A fallen spirit needs to be reborn that it may become a new one. just as Satan is a fallen spirit, so is man; only he has a body. Satan's fall came before man's; we therefore can learn about our fallen state from Satan's plunge. Satan was created as a spirit that he might have direct communion with God. But he fell away and became the head of the powers of darkness. He now is separated from God and from every godly virtue. This, however, does not signify that Satan is non-existent. His fall only took away his right relationship with God. Similarly, man in his fall also sank into darkness and separation from God. Man's spirit still exists but is separated from God, powerless to commune with Him and incapable of ruling. Spiritually speaking, man's spirit is dead. Nonetheless, as the spirit of the sinful archangel exists forever so the spirit of sinful man continues too. Because he has a body his fall rendered him a man of the flesh (Gen. 6.3). No religion, of this world, no ethics, culture or law can improve this fallen human spirit. Man has degenerated into a fleshly position; nothing from himself can return him to a spiritual state. Wherefore regeneration or regeneration of the spirit is absolutely necessary. The Son of God alone can restore us to God, for He shed His blood to cleanse our sins and give us a new life.

Immediately the sinner believes in the Lord Jesus he is born anew. God grants him His uncreated life that the sinner's spirit may be made alive. The regeneration of a sinner occurs in his spirit. God's work begins without exception within the man, from the center to the circumference. How unlike Satan's pattern of work! He operates from the outer to the inner. God aims first to renew man's darkened spirit by imparting life to it, because it is this spirit which God originally designed to receive His life and to commune with Him. God's intent after that is to work out from the spirit to permeate man's soul and body.

This regeneration gives man a new spirit as well as quickens his old one. "A *new spirit* I will put within you"- "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Ezek. 36.26; John 3.6).

The "spirit" in these passages has God's life in view, for it is not what we originally possessed; it is accorded us by God at our regeneration. This new life or spirit belongs to God (2 Peter 1.4) and "cannot sin" (1 John 3.9); but our spirit, though quickened, may yet be defiled (2 Cor. 7.1) and in need of being sanctified (I Thess. 5.23).

When God's life (which can equally be called His Spirit) enters our human spirit, the latter is quickened out of its coma. What was "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4.18) is now made alive again. Hence "although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness" (Rom. 8.10). What we are given in Adam is a spirit made dead; what we receive in Christ at regeneration is both the dead spirit quickened and the new spirit of God's life: the latter, something Adam never had.

In the Bible God's life is often labeled "eternal life." "Life" here is *zoe* in Greek, denoting the higher life or spirit life. This is what every Christian receives at his regeneration. What is the function of that life? "This is eternal life," prayed Jesus to His Father, "that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17.3). Eternal life means *more* than

mere future blessing to be enjoyed by believers; it is equally a kind of spiritual ability. Without it no one can know God nor the Lord Jesus. Such intuitive knowledge of the Lord comes solely upon receiving God's life. With the germ of God's nature within him, an individual can ultimately grow into a spiritual man.

God's aim in a regenerated man is for that man by his spirit to rid himself of everything belonging to the old creation, because within his regenerated spirit lie all the works of God towards him.

The Holy Spirit and Regeneration

When regenerated, man's spirit is made alive through the incoming of God's life. The Holy Spirit is the prime mover in this task. He convinces the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (John 16-8). He prepares human hearts to

believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior. The work of the cross has been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, but it is left to the Holy Spirit to apply this finished work to the sinner's heart. We ought to know the relationship between the cross of Christ and its application by the Spirit. The cross accomplishes all, but the Holy Spirit administers to man what it has accomplished. The cross grants us position; the Holy Spirit gives us experience. The cross brings in the fact of God; the Holy Spirit brings about the demonstration of that fact. The work of the cross creates a position and achieves a salvation by which sinners can be saved; the task of the Holy Spirit is to reveal to sinners what the cross has created and achieved so that they may in fact receive it and be saved. The Holy Spirit never functions independently of the cross: without the cross the Holy Spirit has no proper ground from which to operate: without the Holy Spirit the work of the cross is dead, that is, it produces no effect upon men even though it is already effective before God.

While it is the cross which achieves the whole work of salvation it is the Holy Spirit Who operates directly upon men for their salvation. Hence the Bible characterizes our regeneration as a work of the Holy Spirit: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3.6). The Lord Jesus explains further on that regenerated man is "every one who is born of the Spirit" (v.8). Believers are born anew because the Holy Spirit brings to bear the work of the cross upon them and communicates God's life to their spirit. He is none other than the Executor of God's life. "We live by the Spirit" (Gal. 5.25). If whatever men know comes through their brain without the Holy Spirit regenerating their spirit, then their knowledge will help them not one whit. If their belief rests in man's wisdom and not in God's power, they are merely excited in their soul. They will not last long, for they are not yet newly born. Regeneration comes just to those who believe in their heart (Rom. 10.10).

Besides bestowing life to believers at new birth, the Holy Spirit executes a further work of abiding in them. How regrettable for us if we forget this! "A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you ... and I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezek. 36.26-27). Note that immediately after the clause "a new spirit I will put within you" there follows this one of I will put my *Spirit* within you." The first statement signifies that believers shall receive a new spirit through the renewal of their deadened spirit by the incoming of life. The second has reference to the indwelling or the abiding of the Holy Spirit in that renewed spirit of theirs. Believers at new

birth obtain not only a new spirit but also the Holy Spirit dwelling within. Is it not sad that many fail to understand the newness of their spirit and the abiding of the Holy Spirit in their new spirit? Christians need not delay many years following regeneration and then suddenly wake up and seek the Holy Spirit; they have His entire personality abiding in them-not just visiting them-at the moment they are saved. The Apostle exhorts us on this wise: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4.30). The use of the word "grieve" here and not "anger" reveals the Holy Spirit's love. "Grieve" it says and not "Cause to depart," for "he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14.17). While every born-again believer does have the Holy Spirit permanently residing in him, nevertheless the plight of the indwelling Spirit may not be the same in all saints-He may be either grieved or gladdened.

We should understand the relationship between regeneration and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Unless a new spirit is available to Him the Holy Spirit cannot find a place to abide. The holy dove found no place where to set her foot in the judged world; she could take up her abode only in the new creation (see Gen. 8). How positively essential regeneration is! Without it the Holy Spirit cannot at all dwell in man. God's children receive within them the permanent abiding of God's Spirit. just as this new spirit emerges through a life-producing relationship with God and is therefore inseparable from Him, so the abiding of the Holy Spirit is eternally unchangeable. Few are those who know they have been born anew and thus possess new life; but fewer still are those who know that from the moment they believed in the Lord Jesus they have the Holy Spirit indwelling them to be their energy, their guide, their Lord. It is for this very reason that many young Christians are slow in spiritual progress and never seem to grow. This sad state reflects either the foolishness of their leaders or their personal faithlessness. Until God's servants dissolve their prejudice which holds that "the indwelling Holy Spirit is but for the spiritual," they can hardly lead people on to any degree of spirituality.

The regenerative work of the Spirit of God embraces far more than convincing us of sin and leading us to repentance and faith in the Savior. It verily confers upon us a new nature. The promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling us follows closely the promise of having a new spirit. Actually they form two parts of one promise. In convincing men of sin and leading them to believe in the Lord, the Spirit is just preparing the groundwork for His Own indwelling. The singular glory of this dispensation of grace is that God's Spirit indwells believers in order to manifest the Father and the Son. God already has imparted to His children His Spirit; they now should faithfully acknowledge the Holy Spirit and loyally submit themselves to Him. Both the Day of Resurrection and that of Pentecost have passed; the Spirit has long since come. But many simply experience new birth without knowing in addition His abiding in them. They are living on the wrong side of Resurrection and Pentecost!

Regardless the dullness of Christians in recognizing the dwelling of the Person of God's Spirit in them, God nonetheless has given Him to them. This is an immutable fact which no condition of the Christian can gainsay, Because they have been regenerated they automatically have become a holy temple fit for habitation of the Holy Spirit. If only these would claim by faith this part of God's promise as they did the other part, they would gloriously experience both. But if they should stress new birth and be content merely possessing a new spirit, they shall forfeit the possibility of experiencing a vigorous and joyful life and miss many blessings which God has provided them in the Lord Jesus. If on the other band they accept God's promise in its totality,

trusting in the divine fact that at regeneration God has given a new life plus the indwelling of the very Person of the Holy Spirit, then their spiritual life shall advance tremendously.

By faith and obedience believers may experience the abiding presence of the Spirit on the same day they receive their new spirit. The Person Who dwells within shall reveal Christ in them, sanctify them, and lead them on to true spiritual heights. Even so, Christians often do not appreciate the exalted position which this Person occupies, and thus descend to despising His indwelling and to following instead the dictates of their mind. These individuals ought to humble themselves before such light, learn to respect such a Holy Presence, and be willing to allow Him to work. They should tremble before Him for love's sake, not daring to impose their will in the slightest but always remembering how God has highly exalted them by virtue of His abiding presence. Any who desire to abide in Christ and live a holy life like His must accept by faith and obedience God's provision for them. The Holy Spirit already is in our spirit. Therefore the question before us now is, are we willing to let Him work from within?

The Holy Spirit and Man's Spirit

Having realized how the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in believers at new birth, we must next observe exactly where He does dwell. By so doing, it is our hope that we shall know better His operation within us.

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3.16) The Apostle Paul implies here that the Holy Spirit dwells in us as God so did in the temple of old. Though the entire temple symbolizes the place of God's presence and serves as a general picture of God's habitation, it is nevertheless in the Holy of Holies where God actually dwells, with the Holy Place and the outer court standing for those spheres of divine activity which are in accordance with God's presence in the Holiest. Answering truly to this typology, God's Spirit dwells now in our spirit, the antitype in our time of the Holy of Holies.

The dweller and his dwelling must share the same character. Only man's regenerated spirit-and not the mind, emotion or volition of his soul and not his body either fit to be God's dwelling place. The Spirit is both a builder and a dweller. He cannot dwell where He has not built: He builds to dwell and dwells only in what He has built.

The holy anointing oil may not be poured on the flesh; accordingly, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit cannot make His home in man's flesh for it includes everything man bad or was before regeneration. He cannot dwell even in the spirit of an unregenerated person, not to mention in the mind, emotion or will of his soul or in his body. Inasmuch as the holy anointing oil is not poured on the flesh, just, so the Holy Spirit does not abide in any part of the flesh. He has no connection with the flesh other than striving against it (Gal. 5.17). Unless there is an element within man unlike the flesh, the Holy Spirit finds Himself unable to dwell in man. It is therefore indispensable for the spirit of man to be regenerated so that He may abide in the new spirit.

Why is it so important to understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in man's innermost depth, deeper within than his organs of thought, feeling and decision? Because unless the child of God perceives this, invariably he shall seek His guidance in his soul. With understanding he shall be

delivered from the deception and error of looking to what is outward. The Holy Spirit lives in the remotest recess of our being; there and only there may we expect His working and obtain His guidance. Our prayers are directed to "our Father who art in heaven," but the heavenly Father guides from within us. If our Counsellor, our Paraclete, resides in our spirit then His guidance must come from within. How tragically deceived we will be if we seek dreams, visions, voices, and sensations in our outer man rather than seeking Him in our inner man!

Frequently many children of God turn within themselves, that is, they look into their soul to determine whether they have peace, grace or spiritual progress. This is most harmful and is not of faith. It diverts them from gazing upon Christ to a looking at themselves. There is a peering within, however, which is completely different from the above. It is faith's greatest act. It is a search for guidance by looking to the Holy Spirit Who indwells their spirit. Although a believer's mind, emotion and will cannot discern the things within, yet he ought to believe, even when in darkness, that God has given him a new spirit in which His Spirit dwells. Just as God dwelling in the darkness behind the curtain of the Holy of Holies was feared though not seen by those in the Holy Place and outer court, even so is the Holy Spirit Who dwells in man's spirit incomprehensible by the soul and the body.

Thus are we able to recognize what is authentic spiritual life. It is not to be discovered or experienced in the many thoughts and visions of the mind, nor in the many burning and exhilarating feelings of the emotion, nor in the sudden shaking, penetrating and touching of the body by outside force. It is to be found in that life which emanates from the spirit, from the innermost part of man. To walk truly after the Spirit is to understand the movement of this most hidden area and to follow it accordingly. However wonderful may be those experiences which occur through the components of the soul, they are not to be accepted as spiritually valid as long as they remain in the outward and run no deeper than sensations. Only what results from the operation of the Holy Spirit within man's spirit can be accounted spiritual experience. Hence to live a spiritual life requires faith.

"It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8.16). Man's spirit is the place where man works together with God. How do we know we have been born anew and are therefore children of God? We know because our inner man has been quickened and the Holy Spirit dwells therein. Our spirit is a regenerated, renewed one, and He Who dwells in, yet is distinct from, this new spirit is the Holy Spirit. And the two of them bear witness together.

LESSON FIVE

(Chapter 2—Part 4 of *The Spiritual Man*)

A Spiritual Man

A PERSON WHOSE SPIRIT is regenerated and within whom the Holy Spirit abides can still be fleshly for his spirit may yet be under the oppression of his soul or body. Some very definite actions are required if he is to become spiritual.

Generally speaking we will encounter at least two great perils in our life but are enabled to overcome not only the first but the second of them as well. These two perils with their corresponding triumphs are: that of remaining a perishing sinner or becoming a saved believer and that of continuing as a fleshly believer or developing into a spiritual one. As sinner-turned-believer is demonstrably realizable, so carnal-turned-spiritual is likewise attainable. The God Who can change a sinner into a Christian by giving him His life can equally transform the fleshly Christian into a spiritual one by giving him His life more abundantly. Faith in Christ makes one a regenerated believer; obedience to the Holy Spirit makes him a spiritual believer. just as the right relationship with Christ generates a Christian, so the proper relationship with the Holy Spirit breeds a spiritual man.

The Spirit alone can render believers spiritual. It is His work to bring men into spirituality. In the arrangement of God's redemptive design the cross performs the negative work of destroying all which comes from Adam while the Holy Spirit executes the positive work of building all which comes from Christ. The cross makes spirituality possible to believers; but it is the Holy Spirit Who renders them spiritual. The meaning of being spiritual is to belong to the Holy Spirit. He strengthens with might the human spirit so as to govern the entire man. In our pursuit of spirituality, therefore, we must never forget the Holy Spirit. Yet we must not set aside the cross either, because the cross and the Spirit work hand in hand. The cross always guides men to the Holy Spirit, while the Latter without fail conducts men to the cross. These two never operate independently of each other. A spiritual Christian must experimentally know the Holy Spirit in his spirit. He must pass through several spiritual experiences. For the sake of clarity we shall discuss them in a somewhat sequential fashion, although in actual practice they frequently occur simultaneously.

Quite a few remarks will be made concerning how to be spiritual, but let us not forget what we have learned heretofore.* We should realize by now that what hinders one from being spiritual is the flesh. So if a person maintains a proper attitude towards it he shall encounter no difficulty in making progress. It is surprisingly true that the more spiritual one becomes the more he knows the flesh, because he increasingly discovers it. Had he not known it, how could he be spiritual? Hence we cannot neglect what has been discussed earlier concerning the flesh, since it serves as the basis for seeking spirituality. Unless there is this fundamental dealing with the flesh, whatever progress one may make shall inevitably be superficial, shallow, and unreal. But if one

knows how to resist his flesh in all things-denying its activity, power, and opinion-he may be regarded as already spiritual. Nevertheless we would still like to cite some positive measures which are related directly to the spirit.

The Dividing of Spirit and Soul

The salient implication of Hebrews 4.12 is whether we are living by intuitive guidance in the spirit or by the naturally good or bad influence of the soul. The Word of God must judge in this particular respect, for only God's sharp Sword can differentiate the source of our living. As a man's knife cuts and divides joints and marrow, so God's Sword too pierces and separates the most intimately linked spirit and soul. Initially such dividing may be simply a matter of knowledge, but -it is essential that it enter the realm of experience; otherwise it shall in fact never be understood. Believers should allow the Lord to introduce this cleaving of spirit and soul into their practical walk. Not only must they seek it positively with consecration, prayer, and yieldedness to the operation of the Holy Spirit and the cross, but also they must actually possess such experience. Their spirit needs to be liberated from the soul's binding enclosure. These two must be parted cleanly even as the spirit and soul of the Lord Jesus were not one bit mixed. The intuitive spirit needs to be freed wholly from any influence which may come from soulful mind and emotion. The spirit must be the sole residence and office of the Holy Spirit. It must be released from every disturbance of the soul.

The various experiences of having his outer and inner man divided will make a believer spiritual. A spiritual believer differs from others for the simple reason that his entire being is governed by his spirit. Such spirit-control connotes more than the Holy Spirit's authority over the soul and body of man; it also signifies that man's *own* spirit, upon being elevated as head over the whole man through the working of the Holy Spirit and the cross, is no longer ruled by the soul and body but is powerful enough to subject them to its rule.

The division of these two organs is necessary for entering spiritual life. It is that preparation without which believers shall continue to be affected by the soul and hence shall always pursue a mixed course: sometimes walking according to the spirit life but at other times walking according to the natural life. Their pathway fails to be marked by purity, for both spirit *and* soul are their life principles. This mixture holds believers fast within a soulful framework which damages their walk as well as hinders the important work of the Spirit.

Were a believer's outer and inner life definitely separated so that he walks not according to the former but according to the latter, he would sense instantaneously any movement in his soul and immediately shake off its power and influence as though being defiled. Indeed, everything belonging to the soulful is defiled and can defile the spirit. But upon experiencing the partition of soul and spirit, the latter's intuitive power becomes most keen. As soon as the soul stirs, the spirit suffers and will resist right away. The spirit may even be grieved at the inordinate stirring of the soul in others. It will in fact repulse a person's soulful love or natural affection as something unbearable. Only after experiencing such separation do Christians come into possession of a genuine sense of cleanliness. They then know that not sin alone, but all which belongs to the soulful, is defiled and defiling and ought to be resisted. Nay, it is far more than simply knowing,

for any contact with what is soulisbwhether in themselves or in others-causes their intuitive spirit to feel defiled and to demand instant cleansing.

United to the Lord in One Spirit

In his first Corinthian letter, Paul informed his readers that whoever "is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (6.17). And note that he did not say, "one soul with him." The risen Lord is the lifegiving Spirit (15.45). His union with the believer is therefore a union with the believer's spirit. The soul, the seat of man's personality, belongs to the natural. All it can and is to be is a vessel for expressing the fruit of the union between the Lord and the believer's inner man. Nothing in his soul partakes of the Lord's life; it is solely in the spirit that such a union is effected. The union is one of spirits with no place for the natural. Should it be mixed in with the spirit it will cause impurity to the union of spirits. Any action taken according to our thought, opinion or feeling can weaken the experimental side of this **union**. Things of the same nature unite perfectly. Inasmuch as the spirit of the Lord is pure, ours likewise needs to be as pure in order to be united truly with Him. If a believer clings to his own wonderful ideas and is unwilling to lay aside his preference and opinion, his union with the Lord will not be expressed in experience. The union of spirits permits no adulteration from anything soulisb.

Wherein lies this union? It is in identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom. 6.5). This verse explains our union with the Lord as one of being united with His death and resurrection. This simply indicates we are completely one with Him. By accepting His death as our death we enter into this union with the Lord. By additionally accepting His resurrection we who have died with Him shall be resurrected as well. Through faith's acceptance of His resurrection we shall stand experientially in the place of resurrection. Because the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1.4) and was made alive in the spirit (1 Peter 3.18), we too, when united with Him in resurrection, actually are united with Him in His resurrected Spirit. Henceforth we are dead to everything pertaining to ourselves and alive to His Spirit alone. This requires our exercising faith.* Once identified with His death, we lose the sinful and the natural in us; once identified with His resurrection, we are united with His resurrection life. Thus our inner being which is now united with the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. "You have died ... through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead . . . , so that we serve . . . in the new life of the Spirit" (Rom. 7.4,6). Through Christ's death we are joined to Christ, even in His resurrected life. Such union enables us to serve in the new life of the Spirit, free from any adulteration.

*See Part Three, Chapter 1, on the two essentials for deliverance from sin.

How marvelous is the cross It is the foundation for everything spiritual. The purpose and end of its working is to unite the believer's spirit with the resurrected Lord into one spirit. The cross must go deeply to rid him of the sinful and the natural within him that he may be joined to the positive resurrection life of the Lord and thus become one spirit with Him. A believer's spirit, together with all which is natural and transient in him, needs to pass through death so that it may be purified and then united to become one spirit with the Lord in the freshness and purity of

resurrection. Spirit is joined with Spirit to become one spirit. And the outcome will be: to serve the Lord in "newness of spirit" (Rom. 7.6 Darby). What is of the natural, of self, and of animal activities has no more place in the believer's walk and labor. Both the soul and the body may then but exhibit the purpose, work, and life of the Lord. The Spirit life leaves its imprint on everything, and everything speaks of the outflowing of the Spirit of the Lord.

This is ascension life. The believer is joined to the Lord Who sits at the right hand of God. The Spirit of the enthroned Lord flows into the spirit of the believer, who is on the earth yet not of the world; the enthroned life is accordingly lived out upon the earth. The Head and the body share the same life. With such a union He is able to pour forth the power of His life through the believer's spirit. As a tube which is connected to a fountain is able to conveying water, so too the believer's spirit which is united with the Spirit of the Lord is capable of transmitting life. The Lord is not just the Spirit; He is the *life-giving* Spirit as well. When our spirit is joined intimately with the life-giving Spirit, it is filled with life; and nothing can limit that life. How we need to have this in our spirit that we may triumph continually in our daily walk. Such a union clothes us with the victory of the Lord Jesus. It gives us the knowledge of His will and mind. It builds and expands the new creation within us by the rich inflow of the Lord's vitality and nature. Through death and resurrection our spirit ascends-even as the Lord has ascended on high-and experiences "the heavenly places," having trodden all that is earthly underfoot. Our inner being is in ascendancy, far above any obstacle or disturbance. Yes, it is continually free and fresh and discerns everything with the transparent sight of heaven. How radically different this life of heaven on earth is from one that is swayed by emotion. The former kind displays heavenly nature and is persistently spiritual.

Knowing the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

God's children already have the Holy Spirit abiding in them, but they may not recognize Him or obey Him. They need to do so completely. They must realize that this indwelling presence is a Person, One Who teaches, guides, and communicates the reality of Christ to them. Until they are willing to acknowledge the foolishness and dullness of their soul and are ready to be taught, they block the way of this Person. It is necessary for them to let Him regulate everything so as to reveal the truth. Except they know in the depth of their being that God's Holy Spirit is indwelling them and unless with their spirit they wait for His teaching, they will not welcome His operation upon their soul life. Only as they cease to seek anything by themselves and only as they take the position of the teachable shall they be taught by the Spirit truth which they are able to digest. We know He verily abides in us when we understand that our spirit, which is deeper than thought and emotion, is God's Holy of Holies by which we commune with the Holy Spirit and in which we wait for His communication. As we acknowledge Him and respect Him, He manifests His power out from the hidden part of our being by extending His life to our soulical and conscious life.

The Christians at Corinth were of the flesh. In exhorting them to depart from their carnal state, Paul repeatedly reminded them of the fact that they were God's temple and that the Holy Spirit lived in them. Knowing He indwells them helps Christians to overcome **their carnal condition**. They must know and understand perfectly by faith that He abides in them. Christians should not be content merely with knowing mentally the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as given in the Bible;

they also need to know Him experimentally. They will then commit themselves without reservation to Him for renewal and submit every part of their soul and body to His correction.

The Apostle put to those at Corinth this question: "Do you not know that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3.16) Paul seemed to be surprised at their ignorance of such a sure fact. He viewed the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the foremost consequence of salvation, so how could they miss it? However low a Christian's spiritual measure may be, even as low as that of those Christians at Corinth (alas, many probably do not rise higher than that), he nevertheless ought to be clear on this fact without which he shall long remain carnal and never become spiritual. Even if you have not yet *experienced* His indwelling, could you not at least believe he *does* abide in you? Can we refrain from worship, respect, and praise when we consider how the Holy Spirit-Who is God Himself, One of the three Persons in the Triune God, the very life of the Father and the Son-comes to live in us who belong to the flesh? What grace for the Holy Spirit to dwell in the likeness of sinful flesh just as the Lord Jesus once took upon Himself the same likeness!

The Strengthening of the Holy Spirit

In order for man's innermost organ to gain dominion over the soul and the body and thus serve as channel for the life of the Spirit to be transmitted to others, there must be His strengthening. Paul prays for believers "that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened With might through his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3.16). He so prays because he considers it infinitely important. He asks God to strengthen by His Spirit their "inner man," **which is the new man** in them after they have trusted in the **Lord**.

Therefore the prayer is that the believer's spirit may be strengthened by God's Spirit.

From this we may deduce that the spirits of some saints are weak while those of others are strong. Whether they are potent or impotent depends upon whether or not they have received His strengthening. Since those at Ephesus had been sealed already with the Holy Spirit (1.13-14), the Apostle's prayer for them must be concerned with a gift other than His indwelling. His prayer indicates they must have not only the Holy Spirit indwelling them but also have His special power inundating their spirit so as to render their inner man strong. It is possible for us to possess a weak spirit although having God indwelling us.

To be filled with might in the inner man is the urgent need of Christians. However, unless they appreciate how feeble theirs is they will not ask for the invigoration of the Holy Spirit. Often the children of God cannot rise up to answer the Lord's call to service simply because, though

their physical condition is good, their feelings are low, cold, and reluctant. Or even when their emotions are quite high, passionate, and willing, they find themselves unable to serve

the Lord because now the body reacts lazily. Such phenomena betray the weakness of the spirit in its dominion over feeling and the physical body. The disciples found them selves in precisely that situation in the Garden of Gethsemane: "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"

(Matt. 26.41). Willingness by itself is not sufficient; the spirit also must be strong. If it is sturdy it can overcome the infirmity of the flesh. Why do believers sometimes find themselves dragging and failing while laboring for souls? Lack of power in their spirit is the explanation. The same holds true in the case of environment. How easily we are affected by the confusion of the outside world. Were our spirits hardy we would be able to meet the most disturbing situation with peace and rest. Prayer is the acid test of the inner man's strength. A strong spirit is capable of praying much and praying with all perseverance until the answer comes. A weak one grows weary and fainthearted in the maintenance of praying. A vigorous spirit can move forward in the midst of adverse environment or feeling, but a frail one is impotent to stand against opposition. Great is the need of power in the spirit for spiritual warfare with Satan. Only those who have might in the inner man understand how to exercise their spiritual strength in resisting and attacking the enemy. Otherwise the battle will be make-believe, fought in the imagination of the mind or the excitement of the emotion, and perhaps fought with the weapons of flesh and blood.

In order for the inner man to be strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit, the children of God must discharge their responsibility. They need to yield specifically to the Lord, forsake every doubtful aspect in their life, be willing to obey fully God's will, and believe through prayer that He will flood their spirit with His power. Without delay God will answer the expectation of their heart, once all obstacles on their part are removed. Believers do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit's filling, because He has descended already. What they need only wait for is for themselves to fulfill the condition for His filling, which is, they must let the cross perform a deeper incision upon them. Should they be faithful in believing, and obeying, then within a very short time the power of the Holy Spirit will saturate their spirit and strengthen their inner man for living and for laboring. Some may receive His filling immediately upon once surrendering themselves to the Lord, for they already have met the conditions for such filling.

This invasion of God's power in us, this infilling of His Spirit, happens in the human spirit. It is the inner and not the outer man which is activated by His power and thence becomes strong. This is most important to recognize, for it helps us to exercise simple faith in our desire for the filling of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3.14), rather than to anticipate some bodily sensations such as a shaking, a jerking, or a hurling to the ground. Yet Christians need to be watchful lest they use **faith** as an excuse for not experiencing the empowering of **the Holy Spirit**. The conditions for filling must be accomplished and the attitude of believers must be firm. God will fulfill His promise.

By reading what the Apostle affirms in the succeeding verses in Ephesians 3 about apprehending, knowing, and filling, we are certain this strengthening with might in the inner man renders it highly sensitive. Like the body, the spirit has its functions and consciousness. Prior to the mighty inflow of the Holy Spirit's power into their spirit, believers scarcely can detect its intuitive power; but afterwards its intuitive force becomes most distinctive and hence readily discovered. As the inner man is energized, its intuitive power is increased. Believers are able to sense its slightest movement.

The effect of having the spirit filled with God's power is to afford it full sway over the soul and the body. Every thought, desire, sensation and intent is now governed by the spirit. The soul can no longer act independently: it becomes instead the spirit's steward. Furthermore, through the

believer's spirit the Holy Spirit is able to impart God's life to thirsty and dying men. However, this filling of the Holy Spirit differs from the baptism with the Holy Spirit, because the latter is for the purpose of service while the former solves the problem of life (naturally it will affect service too)

Walking According to the Spirit

Transformation from soulish to spiritual does not guarantee that believers never again will walk according to the flesh. On the contrary, an ever present danger exists of falling back into it. Satan is constantly alert to seize every opportunity to cause them to plunge from their lofty position to a life below par. It is therefore highly necessary for God's children to be watchful at all times and to follow the Spirit so that they may remain spiritual.

"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 ... (Now) those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set ... the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8.4-6). To follow the spirit is to walk contrary to the flesh. Not following the spirit is walking by the flesh. Many Christians oscillate between these two: now following the one, now following the other. They ought to walk according to the inner man *alone*, which is, to walk according to the spirit's intuition and not for a moment according to the soul or body. In thus following the spirit they invariably shall "set their minds on the things of the spirit." And the result shall be "life and peace."

To live by the spirit means to walk according to intuition. It is to have all one's life, service, and action in the spirit, ever being governed and empowered by it. This preserves the saint in life and peace. Since he cannot remain in a spiritual state unless he walks according to the spirit, then at the very least the saint must understand its various functions and laws if he is to walk well.

To live after the spirit is the Christian's daily task. He ought to perceive that we can live neither by the noblest of feelings nor by the loftiest of thoughts. We must walk according to the guidance accorded us through our intuition. The Holy Spirit expresses His feeling through our spirit's delicate sense. He does not operate directly on our minds, suddenly inducing us to think of something. All His works are done in our innermost depths. If we desire to know His mind we should conduct ourselves in accordance with the intuition of our spirit. At times, however, we may sense something there without comprehending what it means, what it demands or what it is communicating. Whenever this happens, we must commit ourselves to prayer, asking that our mind may be given understanding. Once we apprehend the meaning of what we have sensed intuitively, we thereafter should behave accordingly. The mind can instantly be enlightened and made to understand the meaning of intuition; but abrupt thoughts which originate with the mind void of intuition ought not to be followed. Solely intuitive teaching represents the Spirit's thought. Only this should we follow.

Such a walk by the spirit requires *reliance* and *faith*. We have seen before how all good actions of the flesh exhibit an attitude of independence towards God. The very nature of the soul is independency. Should believers act in accordance with their thought, feeling and desire, they have no need to spend time before God, to wait for His guidance. Those who follow "the desires

of body and mind" (Eph. 2.3) need not rely upon God. Except Christians realize how useless, how undependable, and how utterly weak they are in seeking to know the will of God, they shall never cultivate a heart of reliance upon Him. To receive God's guidance in their spirit they must wait upon Him therewith; they must refrain from taking their feeling or thought as a guide. Let us remember that whatever we do or can do without trusting, seeking, and waiting upon God is or will be done in the flesh. With fear and trembling we must rely upon God for guidance in the inner depths. This is the sole way to walk according to the spirit.

To walk in this fashion requires faith of the believer. The opposite of sight and feeling is faith. Now it is the soulish person who gains assurance by grasping the things which can be seen and felt; but the person who follows the spirit lives by faith, not by sight. He will not be troubled by the lack of human assistance, nor will he be moved by human opposition. He can trust God even in utter darkness for he has faith in God. Because he does not depend upon himself, he can trust the unseen power more than his own visible power.

Walking after the spirit involves both the initiation of a work by revelation and execution of it through the Lord's strength. Frequently believers beseech God for spiritual power to do a work which has not been revealed at all in their intuition. This is simply impossible, for what is of the flesh is flesh. On the other hand believers frequently **know the will** of God through revelation in their intuition but bring their own strength to the work to perform it.* This likewise is impossible, for how can they begin with the Holy Spirit and end up with the flesh? Those who follow the Lord must be brought to the place of no confidence in the flesh. They must confess they can originate no good idea and must admit they possess no power to fulfill the Holy Spirit's work. All thought, cleverness, knowledge, talent and gift which the world superstitiously worships-must be set aside in order to enable one to trust the Lord wholly. The Lord's people should persistently acknowledge their own unworthiness and incompetency. They dare not initiate anything before receiving God's order nor attempt to execute God's command in self-reliance.

To live by the spirit we must move in accordance with the delicate sense of its intuition and depend on its enabling to accomplish the revealed task. Well do we begin if we follow intuition instead of thought, opinion, feeling or tendency; well do we end if we rely on the Spirit's power and not on our talent, strength or ability. Simply keep in mind that the moment we cease to follow our intuitive sense at that very moment we begin to walk after the flesh and end up minding the things of the flesh. This in turn injects death into the spirit. Only if we "walk not according to the flesh can we walk "according to the spirit."

Our aim is to be a spiritual man but not a spirit. If we recognize this distinction our lives shall never be cut and dried. We today are human beings and shall be so eternally, yet the highest achievement of a human being is to develop into a spiritual man. The angels are spirits; they have neither body nor soul. But we humans possess both. We are to be spiritual *men* and not spirits. The spiritual man shall continue to retain his soul and body; otherwise, he would be reduced to being a spirit instead of a man. No, what is meant by being a spiritual man is that he is under the control of his spirit which has become the highest organ of his whole person. Let us not be mistaken on this point. A spiritual man retains his soul and body; being spiritual does not annihilate these organs nor their respective functions, because these make man what he is. So

although the spiritual man does not live by them, he certainly has not annihilated them either. They instead have been renewed through death and resurrection so that they are perfectly united to the spirit and have become instruments for its expression. Hence the emotion, mind and will remain in a spiritual man but are subject entirely to **the guidance of the** intuition.

The emotion of a spiritual man is completely under his spirit's regulation, no longer asserting an independent course as it once did. It does not block the spirit nor resist its move because it does not insist upon its own affection and feeling. The emotion now rejoices solely in what the spirit likes, loves only what the spirit directs, feels merely what the spirit permits. It has become its life: when the spirit stirs, emotion responds.

The mind of the **spiritual man likewise cooperates with the** spirit, wandering no more as in the past. It does not object to the spirit's revelation by raising its reason and argument, neither does it disturb the peace of the spirit with many confused thoughts, nor does it rebel against the spirit by boasting in its own wisdom. Quite the reverse, the mind cooperates fully with the intuition in advancing on the spiritual journey. If the spirit unfolds any revelation the mind discerns its meaning. It will assist the spirit to fight should the latter plunge into warfare. If the Holy Spirit desires to teach any truth, the mind will help the spirit to understand. The latter, though, has the authority to stop the mind's thinking as well as to initiate it.

The spiritual man also retains his will, yet it too is no longer independent of God but now decides according to the dictate of the spirit, having abandoned self as its center. The will does not insist upon its desire as before. It consequently is fit to obey God. No more is it hard and stiff but is completely broken; hence it cannot resist God or strive against Him. It has been tamed of its wild nature. Today when the spirit receives revelation and apprehend God's wish, the will decides to follow. It stands at the spirit's door like a courier, awaiting its every command.

The body of a spiritual man is subjected to the spirit as well. Because it has been cleansed by the precious blood and has had its passions and lusts dealt with by the cross, it can serve today as an obedient servant to the spirit's order as that order is communicated to the body from the spirit through the soul. By no means does it entice the soul into many sins by its passions and lusts as it formerly did. Instead the body now answers swiftly all the spirit's directions. The latter through the renewed will has complete authority over the body. Gone are the days when the body pressed a weak inner man. The spirit of a spiritual man has grown strong and the body is under its power.

The Apostle Paul has described the authentic condition of a spiritual man in I Thessalonians: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5.23). Hence the portrait of the spiritual man which can be drawn from everything which has been said is as follows:

(1) He has God dwelling in his spirit, sanctifying him totally. Its life inundates his entire person so that his every component lives by the spirit life and functions in the spirit's strength.

(2) He does not live by soul life. His every thought, imagination, feeling, idea, affection, desire and opinion is renewed and purified by the Spirit and has been brought into subjection to his spirit. These no longer operate independently.

(3) He still possesses a body, for he is not a disembodied spirit; yet physical weariness, pain, and demand do not impel the spirit to topple from its ascended position. Every member of the body has become an instrument of righteousness.

To conclude, then, a spiritual man is one who belongs to the spirit: the whole man is governed by the inner man: all the organs of his being are subject completely to it. His spirit is what stamps his life as unique-everything proceeds from his spirit, while he himself renders absolute allegiance to it. No word does he speak nor act does he perform according to himself; rather does he deny his natural power each time in order to draw power from the spirit. In a word, a spiritual man lives by the spirit.

LESSON SIX

(Chapter 3—Part 4 of *The Spiritual Man*)

Spiritual Work

AS A BELIEVER GOES on his spiritual way he gradually begins to realize that to live for himself is a sin, yea, the greatest sin of his life. To live for himself is as it were a grain of wheat which having fallen into the earth refuses to die and hence remains alone. To seek the filling of the Holy Spirit in order to be a powerful spiritual person is solely to please himself, to make himself happy. For were he to live purely for God and His work this believer would not consider his personal happiness or feeling. He certainly would understand the meaning of spirituality. But in the depth of his heart lodges instead a soul's self-love.

All God's children are God's servants. Each of them receives some gift from the Lord: none is excepted (Matt. 25 * 15). God places them in His church and apportions to each a ministry to fulfill. God's objective is not to make the believer's spirit a reservoir of spiritual life which withers after a little while: if God's life becomes stagnant in him he begins to feel parched. No, spiritual life is for spiritual work; spiritual work expresses spiritual life. The secret of that kind of living lies in the incessant flowing of that life to others.

Spiritual food of a believer is nothing more nor less than accomplishing God's work (John 4.34). The kingdom of God suffers greatly at the hands of "spiritual believers" who bus themselves with prayer and Bible study and attend only *to their* spiritual need. The Lord's people should simply trust God for the sustenance of both their physical and spiritual needs. If they are willing to endure hunger in order to accomplish what God wants them to do, they shall be satisfied. Spiritual food is simply to do His will. Preoccupation with one's own supply causes lack, whereas concern with God's kingdom brings satisfaction. He who is occupied with the Father's business and not with his own shall find himself perpetually full.

The child of God should not be overanxious to make new gains; what he essentially requires is to keep what he already has, for not losing is itself a gain. The way to retain what he possesses is to engage it. Burying it beneath the earth is a sure way to lose it. When a believer allows the life in his spirit to flow freely, he not only shall gain others but shall gain himself as well. One gains by losing self for others and not by hoarding for oneself. The life within a spiritual man must be released by performing spiritual labor. If one's inner being is always open and free (it must of course be closed to the enemy), the life of God shall flow out from him to the salvation and edification of many. The moment spiritual exertion ceases, at that precise moment spiritual life is blocked. These two are inseparable.

No matter what earthly occupation the believer may have, he is apportioned a measure of work by God as well. One who is spiritual knows his place in the body of Christ; as a consequence he also knows the limits of his work. Each member has his usefulness; his work lies in discharging

that usefulness. Some gifts are dispensed to benefit particular members; while others, the whole body. A Christian ought to recognize the limits of his gift and to labor within those bounds. But many fail. They either withdraw from their work and thus stifle the development of their spiritual life, or they overextend themselves to their harm. Misusing hands and feet damages a person just as much as not using his hands and feet at all. One sure means of losing life, as we have seen, is to try to keep spiritual life to oneself; yet to work indiscriminately can equally impede life.

Spiritual Power

We must desire to be filled with **the Holy Spirit experientially** if we desire to have power in **witnessing for Christ and** in combating Satan. More and more **people are in hot pursuit** of such experiences today. But the question should be raised as to what lies behind such a quest. How many covet that they may boast? How many desire more glory for their flesh? How many hope people will fall effortlessly under their power? We must discern clearly why we solicit the power of the Holy Spirit. If our motive is neither of God nor one with God, we certainly will not be able to obtain the power. God's Holy Spirit does not fall on man's "flesh"; He descends only on God's newly created spirit within the man. We cannot allow the outward man, that is, the flesh, to persist while petitioning God to immerse our inner man, the spirit, in His Spirit. So long as the flesh continues unscathed the Holy Spirit of God shall never descend upon man's spirit, for man would only grow more fleshly and boastful if power were granted him.

It is often observed that Calvary precedes Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is not willing to dispense power to men and women who have not been dealt with by the cross. The path which leads to the upper room in Jerusalem winds by way of Calvary. Only those who are conformed to the death of the Lord can receive the power of the Lord. The Word of God affirms that "upon man's flesh shall it (holy anointing oil) not be poured" (Ex. 30.32 Darby). God's Holy Oil will not be poured upon the flesh, whether it be exceedingly defiled or highly refined. Where the mark of the cross is lacking, there the oil of the Spirit is absent. Through the death of the Lord Jesus God pronounces His verdict upon all who are in Adam: "all must die." just as the Heavenly Power did not descend until the Lord Jesus died, even so should the believer not expect that Power if he has yet to know the death of the Lord Jesus in experience. Historically, Pentecost followed Calvary; experientially, being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit follows the bearing of the cross.

The flesh is condemned forever before God and by God is sentenced to death. Are we not attempting the impossible if we desire not its death but rather seek to adorn the flesh with the Holy Spirit that it may be more powerful in service? What is our intention after all? Personal attraction? Fame? Popularity? The admiration of spiritual believers? Success? Being pleasing to man? Self edification? People with mixed motives, those of double mind, shall not be able to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We perhaps may judge our motive pure, but our High Priest, through different circumstances, will enable us to know our true heart. Not until the work in hand has failed and we are despised and rejected shall we begin to discern the intent of our heart. Any who are genuinely used by the Lord always have gone this way. The time when we receive the power is after the cross has performed its task.

But are there not many of God's children who, never having had the deeper experience of the cross, are yet powerful in witnessing and appear to be greatly used by the Lord? The Bible

indicates that there is an oil very much like the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30.33). It is compounded *like* the holy anointing oil, but it is not the holy anointing oil. Do not be taken in or flattered by your own success or fame. Take note only as to whether or not the old creation, including everything which comes by birth, has gone through the cross. Any power we possess before the flesh is put to death is certainly not the power of the Holy Spirit. Those with spiritual insight who live on the other side of the curtain well appreciate that such success has not a shred of spiritual value.

Only after a person has actually condemned his flesh and begins to walk according to the spirit will he receive the real power from God. Otherwise it would be his flesh that would be endued with spiritual power. How can one's spirit receive special power if the flesh has not experienced death, since the flesh rules by its own energy and invariably suppresses the spirit? The power of God only descends upon that spirit which is full of His Holy Spirit. This is the sole possibility. No other way can there be for the dynamism of the Spirit to flow out. Is it not true that when a vessel is any added power will naturally overflow? To already full, receive power, therefore, it is necessary for us to die to the old creation and learn how to walk in the Spirit.

Every Christian ought to seek the power of the Holy Spirit. To understand it mentally is not enough. His spirit must be engulfed by the Heavenly Power. The effectiveness of one's work depends upon whether he has the experience of being so immersed in the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit requires an outlet, but alas, in how many can He actually find that outlet? There are hindrances of sin, of pride, of coldness, of self-will, or of reliance on the soul life. God's Power has no exit We have too many other sources of energy besides His.

In seeking the might of the Holy Spirit we must keep our mind clear and our will alive, thereby guarding ourselves from the enemy's counterfeit. We also must let God purge from our life anything sinful, unrighteous or doubtful, that our total being may be presented to the Lord. We then should "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3.14). Rest in God trusting that He will fulfill His Word in due course. Do not, however, forget His promise. Should there be delay, use the opportunity for closer scrutiny of your life beneath His light. Gladly accept any feeling which does come with the power; but if God deems it suitable not to accompany power with feeling, simply believe He has indeed fulfilled His Word.

How does one judge whether he has received the promise or not? By looking into his experience. He who has received power has his spiritual senses sharpened and also possesses an utterance-not of this world to witness for the Lord. His work is effective and bears lasting fruit. Power is the basic ingredient for spiritual service.

Upon receiving the enablement of the Holy Spirit a believer grows very sensitive to his spirit's senses. He should keep his inner man continually free, allowing the Holy Spirit to flow out His life in and through his being. To keep the inner man free is to maintain it in an operative condition for the Holy Spirit. Suppose God, for instance, sends a believer to lead a meeting. This one's spirit must be open. He should not come to the meeting with a spirit loaded down with many cares or weights, else this shall afflict the whole meeting with heaviness, creating a difficult and unbearable situation. The one who leads should not carry his burden to the meeting and expect the congregation to set him free. Anyone who relies on the response of the

congregation to relieve him of his burden is doomed to failure. When he enters the meeting place the leader's spirit must be light and unbound. Many who attend are teeming with burdens. Hence the leader first must release them through prayer, hymn, or truth before he can deliver God's message. He cannot expect to unshackle others while he is himself bound with unbroken fetters.

It should be clearly borne in mind that a spiritual gathering is the communion of spirit with spirit. The messenger delivers his message out of his spirit, and the hearer receives God's Word with his. Were the spirit of the messenger or the hearer to be weighed down and under bondage, it would be powerless to open to God and respond to His Word. Accordingly, the leader's spirit should be free in order that initially he may unloose the spirit of the congregation and then may deliver God's message to them.

We must have the Heavenly Power to achieve powerful work; but we must keep our spirit constantly open to let that Power freely flow from our spirit. The manifestation of power varies in its measure. The experience a Christian has of Calvary measures that of Pentecost. If man's spirit is unbound, God's Spirit can work.

Occasionally in working one may experience his inner man being shut in, especially in performing personal work. This may be due to the condition of the other party. The latter may not have an open spirit or mind to receive the truth, or he may harbor improper thoughts which block the spirit's outflow. Such a state will hem in the spirit of the worker. We know quite often whether we are able to perform any spiritual service by merely observing the attitude of the other party. If we find our inner being is closed in him, we are not able to deliver the truth to that one.

Now were we to force ourselves to labor upon encountering the shutting in of our spirit, we would probably work not with it but with our mind. Yet only work done with the spirit accomplishes lasting results. Whatever is produced by the mind lacks spiritual power. Our efforts shall lose their effectiveness if initially we do not prepare ourselves through prayer and by setting our spirit free for the delivery of God's Word. We must learn how to walk after the spirit so that eventually we may know how to work by it.

The Inauguration of Spiritual Work

To inaugurate a work is no small matter. Christians should never initiate anything presumptuously on the basis of need, profit, or merit. These may not indicate God's will in the slightest. Perhaps He will raise up others to undertake this task or He may suspend it till some other time. Men may feel regretful, but God knows what is best. Hence need, profit and merit cannot serve as indicators for our work.

The book of Acts is the best aid in approaching our work. We do not find there anyone consecrating himself as a preacher nor anyone deciding to do the Lord's work by making himself a missionary or a pastor. What we do see is the Holy Spirit Himself appointing and sending men out to do the work. God never enlists men to His service: He simply sends whom *He* wants. We do not see anyone choosing *himself*: it is God who chooses His worker. There is positively no ground for man's flesh. When God selects, not even a Saul of Tarsus can withstand; when God does not select, even , a Simon cannot buy it. God is the sole master of His work, "for He will

not permit any human mixture in it. Never does man come to work, but it is always God Who *sends* out to do his work. Spiritual service consequently must be inaugurated by the Lord Himself calling us. It should not be initiated through the persuasion of preachers, the encouragement of friends, or the bent of our natural temperament. None who are shod with fleshly shoes can stand on the holy ground of God's service. Many failures and much waste and confusion which have resulted are due to men's *coming* to work, instead of being *sent out* to work.

The chosen worker is not free to move, even after he is chosen. From the fleshly viewpoint no labor is as restrained as spiritual labor. We read in the book of Acts such phrases as: "the Spirit said to him" (10.19); "being sent out by the Holy Spirit" (13.4); "having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit" (16.6). Other than obeying orders, one has no authority to decide anything. In those days the works of the Apostles were performed by heeding the mind of the Holy Spirit apprehended in their intuition. How simple it is If spiritual work must be contrived and controlled by believers themselves, who then is competent save those who are naturally capable, clever, and learned? *But*, God has discarded all which belongs to the flesh. Believers can be used by the Lord to do the most effective work, but only if their spirits are holy, alive, and full of power before the Lord. God has never delegated to believers authority over the control of His work, because He desires them to listen to what He tells them in their spirit.

Despite a great revival in Samaria, Philip was not responsible for the follow-up labor of strengthening. He must leave immediately for the desert in order that a "heathen" eunuch might be saved. Ananias had not heard of Saul's conversion, but he could not refuse to go to pray for Saul when sent, though by standards of human judgment he was casting his life away by walking directly into the persecutor's hand. Peter could not resist what the Holy Spirit had set forth, even though Jewish tradition forbade Jews from visiting anyone of another nation and associating with him. Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Holy Spirit; yet He retained the authority to forbid them from entering Asia; subsequently, though, He did lead Paul to Asia and established the church at Ephesus. All acts are in the hands of the Spirit; believers simply obey. Had it been left to human thoughts and wishes, many places which ought to have been visited would not have been and many others would have been visited which ought not to be. These experiences from Acts inescapably tell us that we too must follow the guidance of God's Spirit in our intuition and not follow our thoughts, reasons or wishes. They also indicate that He does not guide us by our counsels, desires or judgments because these often contradict the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our spirits. How then dare we follow our mind, emotion or will if even the Apostles did not move on that basis?

All works which God calls us to accomplish are revealed in the intuition of the spirit.* We shall deviate from God's will if we follow the thought of our mind, the feeling of our emotion or the desire of our will. Only what is born of the Spirit is spirit; nothing else is. In all their labors Christians must wait on God until they receive revelation in their intuition; otherwise the flesh will assert itself. God will undeniably grant us the spiritual strength for the task He calls us to execute. Here, then, is an excellent principle to remember: never extend beyond the strength of our spirit. If we undertake more than what we there have, we will draw invariably upon our natural strength for help. This shall be the beginning of vexation. Overstretching in work hinders

us from walking according to the spirit and disables us from achieving true spiritual accomplishment.

How people today have seized upon reason, thought, idea, feeling, wish and desire as the governing factors in works. These emanate from the soul and contain not an ounce of spiritual value. These can be good stewards but they most assuredly are not good masters. We shall be defeated if we follow them. Spiritual service must emerge from the spirit: nowhere else but here shall God reveal His will.

Workers must never permit soulical sensations to transcend spiritual relations while helping others. They should minister spiritual help in all purity; any soulical feeling can be harmful. This often is a danger and a snare to workers. Even our love, affection, concern, burden, interest and zeal must be entirely under the spirit's guidance. Negligence in keeping this law causes untold moral and spiritual defeats. If we allow natural attraction and human admiration or the lack of these to govern our efforts we will surely fail in our work and our lives shall be ruined. To obtain genuine fruitfulness we frequently need to disregard fleshly relationships or, in the case of those dearest to us, at least relegate them to a subordinate place. Our thoughts and desires must be offered completely to the Lord.

We will undertake whatever we know intuitively through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the flesh has no possibility of participating in God's service. The measure of our spiritual usefulness depends upon how penetratingly the cross has cut into our flesh. Do not look at apparent success; rather, look at how much is done by God's crucified ones. Nothing can cover the flesh, not even good intention, zeal, or labor and though they be in the name of the Lord Jesus and for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. God Himself will work; He brooks no interference from the flesh. We should realize that in the matter of serving God there is even the possibility of offering "Unholy fire," that which is unspiritual. This arouses God's wrath. Any fire which is not kindled by the Holy Spirit in our spirit is but unholy fire and is deemed sinful in God's sight. Not all deeds done for God are His deeds. Doing for Him is not enough; the question is, who is doing the doing? God will not recognize any labor as His if it simply reflects the believer's activity and is carried out in his strength. God's recognized work must be done by God Himself through the spirit of the believer. Whatever comes from the flesh shall perish with the flesh; only what comes from God remains forever. Doing what is ordered by Him can never fail.

The Aim of Spiritual Work

Spiritual work aims to give life to man's spirit or to build up the life in the spirit. Our labor will be nil in worth or effectiveness if it is not directed towards the spirit lying in the very depths of man. What a sinner needs is life, not some sublime thought. A believer needs whatever can nourish his

spiritual life, not mere Bible knowledge. If all we communicate are excellent sermonic divisions, wonderful parables, transcendent abstractions, clever words, or logical arguments, we are but supplying additional thoughts to people's minds, arousing their emotions once again, or activating their will to make one more decision. With a moribund spirit do they come and with just as moribund a spirit do they depart despite our heavy labors on their behalf. A sinner needs

to have his spirit resurrected, not to be able to argue better, shed profuse tears, or make a firmer resolve. Likewise a believer does not require outward edification, since his real lack is inward life more abundant - how he can grow spiritually. Should we focus our attention on the outward man and neglect the inward man, our work will be utterly vain and superficial. Such work equals no work at all, and perhaps it is even worse than no work, for a lot of precious time is undeniably wasted!

Man can be moved to tears, can confess his sins, can consider redemption reasonable, can profess his interest in religion, can sign a decision card, can read the Bible and pray, can even testify with joy; but still his spirit has not received God's life and therefore remains as dead as before. Why? Because man's soul is capable of performing all these things. To be sure, we do not despise these motions; nevertheless we recognize that except the spirit is quickened these pious acts are but rootless blades which will be totally withered beneath the scorching sun. When a spirit is born anew it may display these same manifestations in the outward soul: in the depth of its being, however, it receives a new life which enables the person to *know God* and to know Jesus Christ Whom God has sent. No work possesses any spiritual effectiveness save that which quickens the spirit into an intuitive knowledge of God.

We ought to perceive that it is quite possible to exercise "false faith" and experience "false regeneration." Many confuse understanding with believing. The former simply means the mind understands the reason of the truth and reckons it believable. The latter, according to the spiritual sense, involves being united; that is, by believing that the Lord Jesus died for us we unite ourselves with His death. People can understand doctrine without necessarily believing in the Lord

Jesus. What we stress is that men are not saved by their good deed, rather do they obtain eternal life through believing the Son of God. Men must *believe* in God's Son. Many believe the doctrine of atonement but fail to believe in the Savior Who atones. Their regeneration is false should they only fill the basin with the blood of the lamb without applying it on the doors of their heart. Countless are the professing Christians who lack the intuitive knowledge of God, although they

live like true regenerated Christians-clean, pious, helpful, frequently praying and reading the Bible, even attending services. They can bear and converse about God, yet they do not *know God*, they have no personal knowledge of Him. "My own know me ... and they will heed my voice" (John 10.14, 16). Those who neither know the Lord nor heed His voice are not His sheep.

Since man's relationship with God begins at regeneration and is carried on completely in the spirit, it is evident that all our work must have its center here. To court apparent success by merely whipping up people's enthusiasm results in a work without God. Once having learned the central place of the spirit, our efforts should undergo a drastic change. We do not labor without objective, simply following what we think is good; we have a distinctive aim, that of building up man's inner depths. In the past we laid stress on the natural; now now must we emphasize the spiritual. Spiritual service means nothing other than our working by our spirit for the quickening of the spirits of others. Nothing else can be so termed.

When in fact we recognize that nothing we have can impart life to man, then we shall discover how utterly useless we in ourselves are. When we cease depending upon ourselves and using what we have we will see indeed how very weak we are. Not until then will we learn how much power our inner man has. Since we usually rely so heavily on the soul by which to live, we naturally do not appreciate how weak our spirit actually is. Now that we trust solely in **the spirit's power** we come to perceive the real dynamic of our spiritual life. If we are determined to give life to man's spirit and not just assist the mind to understand, the emotion to be stirred, or the will to decide, we will realize instantly that unless the Holy Spirit verily uses us we are absolutely undone. "Who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1.13). How can we beget them if God does not beget them? We now know all works must be done by God; we are but empty vessels. Nothing in us is able to beget them: nothing in them is capable of self-begetting. It is God Who pours out His life through our spirit. Spiritual work is therefore God doing His work. Whatever is not done by Him is not accounted as such.

We should beseech God to reveal the nature and greatness of His work to us. If we understand how much His work requires His great power, we shall be ashamed of our ideas and abashed by our selfreliance. We shall see that all our efforts are but "dead works." Though at times God in special mercy blesses our labors far beyond their due, we should nonetheless refrain from interpreting this as a green light to proceed on that course. Whatever is achieved by ourselves is worthless as well as dangerous. We ought to recognize that God's work is accomplished neither by charged atmosphere, attractive environment, romantic thought, poetic imagination, idealistic view, rational suggestion, burning passion, nor excited will. These might well be suitable were spiritual work merely a dream and not a reality. But such an endeavor is to regenerate the spirit of man and to give resurrection life to him. It can accordingly be accomplished only by God Himself in that Power which raised the Lord Jesus from death.

Thus we see that unless we communicate *God's life* to men our labor merits no praise in heaven. Whatever does not originate in the inward man where God's Spirit dwells is powerless to impart life, no matter how compatible or how incompatible that work may be with reason and feeling. False spiritual enablement may produce results seemingly alike but it can never grant authentic life to man's dead spirit. It may achieve anything and everything except the one real objective of spiritual work.

If we truly aim to bring life to others the power we use must obviously be God's. But in case we employ soul power, failure is inevitable because the soul, though itself alive (Gen. 2.7 Darby), cannot quicken others; for "it is the spirit that gives life" (John 6.63). Note also that "the last Adam (the Lord Jesus) became a life-giving spirit" (I Cor. 15.45). As the Lord Jesus "Poured out his soul to death" (Is. 53.12), so everyone who would serve as a channel for His life must likewise deliver his natural life to death in order that he may work with spirit life for the regeneration of others. However attractive the soul life may be, it possesses no reproductive force. It is impossible to draw on natural power as the energizing force for performing spiritual labor. Old creation can never be the source for new creation, nor can the old serve as the helper to the new. If we labor by the revelation of the Holy Spirit and in His strength, our audience shall be convinced and have their spirits enlivened by God. Else what we give them simply becomes a masterful idea which may stimulate temporarily but leaves no lasting result. The same work may be employed in both cases, but what originates with the spirit power becomes spiritual life while

that which draws upon self-power turns into natural reasoning. Furthermore, whatever is done in the energy of our natural life will whet people's appetite for more of such feeling and reasoning, automatically and unavoidably drawing them to the one who supplies such needs. The ignorant regard this as spiritual success since many are being gathered; but the discerning can perceive that no life exists in their spirit. The effect of such endeavor in the realm of religion is similar to that of opium or alcohol on the body. Man needs life, not ideas or excitement.

The responsibility of Christians is consequently just this: to present their spirits to God as vessels and to consign to death everything pertaining to themselves. Should they neither block their spirit nor attempt to give to others what they have in and of themselves, God can use His children greatly as channels of life for the salvation of sinners **and the upbuilding** of the saints. Without that, then whatever the listener receives is but the thought, reason and feeling of the worker; he never accepts the Lord as Savior nor is his dead spirit quickened. Realizing that our aim is to furnish life to man's spirit, we ourselves obviously must be duly prepared. By genuinely relinquishing our soul life and relying entirely on the inner man, we shall see that the words the Lord speaks through our mouths continue to be **"spirit and life" (John 6.63)**.

The Cessation of Spiritual Work

Spiritual work invariably flows with the current of the Holy Spirit--never reluctantly, never under compulsion, hence without need of fleshly strength. This does not imply of course that there is no opposition from the world or attack from the enemy. It simply means the work is done in the Lord with the consciousness of having His anointing. If God still requires the work, the believer will continue to sense himself flowing in the current, no matter how difficult his situa-

tion may be. The Holy Spirit aims at expressing spiritual life. Labor accomplished in Him correspondingly develops life in the spirit. Unfortunately many of God's servants frequently are pressed by environment or other factors into working mechanically. As soon as the individual is aware of it, he ought to inquire whether such "mechanical work" is desired by the Spirit or whether God would call him away to other service.

God's servants should know that a task begun spiritually that is, in the Spirit--may not necessarily continue that way. Many works are initiated by Him, but after He has no more need of them men often desire to keep them going. To regard as forever spiritual whatever is begun by the Holy Spirit is inevitably to change the spiritual into the fleshly. A spiritual Christian can no longer enjoy the anointing of the Spirit in a work that has become mechanical. When a task is already given up by God as unnecessary and yet is maintained by the Christian because of the outside organization (with or without form) which surrounds it, then it must be carried on by drawing upon his own resources rather than upon the power of God. Should a saint persist in laboring after the spiritual work is terminated, he must employ his soul power as well as physical power to continue on with it. In true spiritual service one must completely deny his natural talent and gift; only in this way can he produce fruit for God. If not, each effort not led by the Holy Spirit does collapse if not supported by one's brain, talent, or gift.

A worker must observe carefully which part of his labor the Holy Spirit anoints. Then he will be able to cooperate with Him and operate within the current of His power. The worker's duty is to

discern the current of the Spirit and to follow it. A task should be discontinued if it no longer enjoys God's anointing' is out of His current, and creates a sluggish, languid feeling. Another undertaking should be found which flows with the current. The spiritual man discerns more quickly than others. The matter for him to determine is, where is the Holy Spirit's current? Where is it flowing? Any labor that oppresses spiritual life, that fails to express the life of the spirit, or that hinders God's Spirit from overflowing has become a definite obstacle, however well it began. That work should be either cancelled or corrected so that the believer can obey life in the spirit. The worker may have to alter his relationship to the work.

Many cases can be cited to illustrate how the Lord's people are entangled in "organization," to the detriment of their life. At first these servants of God received tremendous spiritual power and were mightily used by God to save and build up man. Later arose the need for some kind of "organization" or "method" to preserve the grace that was given. Due to needs, requests, - and sometimes orders, these servants were required to undertake so-called "edifying" Work. Thus they were bound by environment and no longer had the freedom to follow the Holy Spirit. Gradually their spiritual life ebbed, though the outside organized work still continued in prosperity. Such has been the story of numberless defeats.

What tragedy lurks within spiritual work today Many consider their labor a burden. Are there not many who say: I am so busy with work that I have little time to commune with the Lord. I hope I can find the opportunity to suspend the work temporarily so that I may repair my spirit **for the next task.**" How fraught with danger this is **Our work ought to be the fruit** -of our spirit's fellowship with the Lord. Every task should be undertaken joyfully as the overflow of the life of the spirit. If it becomes a weight and separates the life of the spirit from the Lord Jesus, then it ought to be terminated. Since the current of the Spirit has changed its course, one must seek to discover its re-location and follow accordingly.

Wide is the disparity between the Holy Spirit terminating our work and Satan hindering it. Yet people frequently are confused by these two. If God should say "Stop" and the believer continue, he will descend from working with his spirit into maintaining the work with his brain, talent, and strength. He may attempt to resist the enemy; without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, however, he cannot succeed. The whole warfare becomes fake. Whenever a child of God encounters resistance in the spirit he should distinguish immediately whether this opposition emanates from God or from the enemy. Should it be the latter his resistance by the spirit through prayer will release his inner man and thus he can advance with God, But if it is not from the enemy, the believer shall find as he advances that his own spirit becomes more oppressed, heavily burdened, and void of liberty.

In sum, then, the servants of God today must set aside every work which is not appointed by Him, that should long have been forsaken, which monopolizes everything, that does not come from the spirit, which oppresses the spirit and deflects spiritual work, and that is even good but nonetheless deprives them of other and nobler tasks.

LESSON SEVEN

(Chapter 1—Part 5 of *The Spiritual Man*)

Intuition

To understand more clearly what spiritual life is we must analyze the spirit explicitly and assimilate all its laws. Only after we are really acquainted with its different functions are we able to know the laws which govern them; only after we become familiar with those laws can we walk according to the spirit; that is, according to the laws of the spirit. This is indispensable for experiencing the spiritual life. We should never fear appropriating too much knowledge concerning the spirit; but we should be extremely apprehensive if we use our mind excessively in such pursuit.

God's glad tidings to men is that the fallen can be regenerated and the fleshly can receive a new spirit. This new spirit serves as the basis for new life. What we commonly term spiritual living is but to walk by this spirit which we obtain at regeneration. It is something to be deplored that believers are so ignorant of the functions of the spirit as well as of other matters pertaining to it. Although they may know the relationship of the spirit to man in name, they are unable to identify their spirit in experience. Either they do not realize where their spirit is or else they interpret their own feelings or thoughts to be functions of the spirit. An analysis of its functions hence becomes absolutely essential, for without, them no believer can move according to the spirit.

The Functions of the Spirit

Mention was made previously that the functions of the spirit could be classified as intuition, communion, and conscience. While these three *can* be distinguished, still, they are closely entwined. It is therefore difficult to treat of one without touching upon the others. When we talk for example about intuition, we naturally must include communion and conscience in our discussion. Thus in dissecting the spirit we necessarily must look into its triple functions. Since we have seen already how the spirit comprises these three abilities, we shall proceed next to uncover what these exactly are in order that we may be helped to walk according to the spirit. We may say that such a walk is a walk by intuition, communion and conscience.

These three are merely the *functions* of the spirit. (Furthermore, they are not the *only* ones; according to the Bible, they are but the *main* functions of the spirit). None of them is the spirit, for the spirit itself is substantial, personal, invisible. It is beyond our present comprehension to apprehend the substance of the spirit. What we today know of its substance comes via its various manifestations in us. We will not attempt here to solve future mysteries but only attempt to discover spiritual life; sufficient for us is the knowledge of these abilities or functions and of the way to follow the spirit. Our spirit is not material and yet it exists independently in our body. It must therefore possess its own spiritual substance, out of which arise various abilities for the

performance of God's demands on man. Hence what we desire to learn is not the substance but the functions of the spirit.

Previously we have compared man to **the temple and man's spirit to the Holy** of Holies. We **shall proceed further** with this metaphor by comparing the intuition, communion and conscience of **the spirit to the ark in the Holy of Holies**. First, within the ark lies the law of God which instructs the Israelites what they should do; God thereby reveals Himself and his will through the law. In like manner God makes Himself and His will known to the believer's intuition that he may walk accordingly. **Second, upon the ark and** sprinkled with the blood is the mercy seat whereon God manifests His glory and receives man's worship. Similarly, every person redeemed by the blood has the spirit quickened; through this quickened spirit he worships and communes with God. As God formerly communed with Israel on the mercy seat, so He today communes with the believer in his blood-cleansed spirit. Third, the ark is called "the Ark of Testimony" because therein are kept the Ten Commandments as God's testimony to Israel. just as the two tablets of law silently accused or excused the doings of Israel, so the believer's conscience, on which God's Spirit has written the law of God, bears witness for or against the conduct of the believer. "My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 9.1).

Observe with what respect the Israelites paid the ark! In crossing the Jordan River they had no other guidance save the ark, but they followed it without hesitation. In fighting against Jericho, they did nothing except march behind it. Later, they could not stand before the Philistines when they tried to use the ark according to their way. Was not Uzzah smitten to death as he put out his fleshly hand to hold the ark? How joyful Israel was when they had prepared a habitation for it (Ps. 132). These incidents ought to teach us to be exceptionally careful with our ark, which is our spirit with its threefold functions. If we walk in this fashion, we shall have life and peace; if we allow the flesh to interfere, we can encounter nothing but total defeat. Victory depended not on what or how Israel thought but on where the ark led. Spiritual usefulness lies in the teaching of our intuition, communion and conscience and not in the thought of man.

Intuition

As the soul has its senses, so too has the spirit. The spirit is intimately related to the soul and yet is wholly unlike it. The soul possesses various senses; but a spiritual man is able to detect another set of senses-lodged in the innermost part of his being which is radically dissimilar from his set of soulical senses. There in that innermost recess he can **rejoice**, grieve, anticipate, love, fear, approve, condemn, decide, discern. These motions are sensed in the spirit and are quite distinct from those expressed by the soul through the body.

We can learn about the sensing of the spirit and its manysided character from the following verses:

"The spirit indeed is willing Matt. 26.41

"Perceiving in his spirit" Mark 2.8

"He sighed deeply in his spirit" Mark 8.12

"My spirit *rejoices* in God my Savior" Luke 1.47

"The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" John 4.23

"He was deeply *moved* in spirit and *troubled*" John 11.33

"When Jesus had thus spoken, he was *troubled* in spirit" John 13.21

"His spirit was *provoked within* him as he saw that the city was full of idols" Acts 17.16

"He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being *fervent* in spirit" Acts 18.25

"Paul *purposed* in the spirit" Acts 19.21 ASV

I go *bound* in the spirit unto Jerusalem" Acts 20.22 ASV

"(Be) *fervent* in spirit" Rom. 12.11 ASV

"For what person *knows* a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him" I Cor. 2.11

"I will *sing* with the spirit" 1 Cor. 14.15

"If you *bless* with the spirit" I Cor. 14.16

"I had no rest in my spirit" 2 Cor. 2.13 Darby

"We have the same spirit of *faith*" 2 Cor. 4.13

"A spirit of *wisdom* and of revelation" Eph. 1.17

"Your love in spirit" Col. 1.8 literal

From these many passages we can see readily that the spirit clearly senses and that such sensing is manifold. **The Bible is** not telling us here how our heart senses but rather how our *spirit* does. And it would appear that the sensing of the spirit is as inclusive as that of the soul. The spirit like the soul has its thoughts, feelings, and desires. But how we must learn to distinguish the spiritual from the soulical! We shall come to appreciate this difference if we are matured through the deeper work of the cross and the Spirit.

It is while a Christian lives spiritually that his spiritual sense develops fully. Before he experiences the dividing of soul and spirit and union with the Lord in one spirit, his spiritual sense is rather dull. But once he has had the power of the Holy Spirit poured into his spirit, his inner man is strengthened and it possesses the sense of the matured. Only then can he fathom the various senses of his spirit.

This spiritual sensing is called "intuition," for it impinges *directly* without reason or cause. Without passing through any procedure, it comes forth in a *straight* manner. Man's ordinary sensing is caused or brought out by people or things or events. We rejoice when there is reason to rejoice, grieve if there is justification to grieve and so forth. Each of these senses has its respective antecedent; hence we cannot conclude them to be expressions of intuition or direct sense. Spiritual sense, on the other hand, does not require any outside cause but emerges directly from within man.

Great similarities do exist between the soul and the spirit. But believers should not walk according to the soul, that is, they should not follow its thoughts, feelings and desires. The way God ordains for His children is a walk after the spirit; all other paths belong to the old creation and hence possess no spiritual value. But how to walk after the spirit? It is living by its intuition because the latter expresses the thought of the spirit which in turn expresses the mind of God.

Oftentimes we think of a certain thing we have good reason to do and our heart delights in it and finally our will decides to execute it; yet somehow, in the inner sanctuary of our being there seems to arise *an unuttered and soundless* voice strongly opposing what our mind, emotion or volition has entertained, felt, or decided. This strange complex seems to infer that this thing ought not to be done. Now such an experience as this may change according to altered conditions. For at other times we may sense in the inner depths that same wordless and noiseless monitor greatly urging, moving and constraining us to, perform a certain thing which we view as highly unreasonable, as contrary to what we usually do or desire, and as something which we do not like to do.

What is this complex which is so unlike our mind, emotion and will? It is the intuition of the spirit: the spirit is expressing itself through our intuition. How distinctive the intuition is from our emotional feeling. Frequently we feel inclined to execute a certain act, but this inward, unarticulated intuition sharply warns against it. It is totally counter to our mind. The latter is located in the brain and is of a reasoning nature, while intuition is lodged elsewhere and is often opposed to reasoning. The Holy Spirit expresses His thought through this intuition. What we commonly refer to as being moved by the Spirit is but the Holy Spirit making us know His will intuitively by working upon our spirit. just here can we differentiate between what comes from God's Spirit and what from ourselves and Satan. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in our spirit which is at the center of our being, His thought, expressed through our intuition, must arise from that innermost region. How contrary this is to thought which originates at the periphery of our being. If a notion should come from our outward man-that is, from the mind or emotion then we realize it is but our own and not that of the Holy Spirit; for whatever is His must flow from the depths. The same distinction applies to what comes forth from Satan (those of demon possession excepted). He dwells not in our spirit but in the world: "he who is in you (the Holy Spirit) is greater than he who is in the world (Satan)" (I John 4.4). Satan can only attack us from the outside in. He may work through the lust and sensations of the body or through the mind and emotion of the soul, for those two belong to the outward man. It therefore behooves us to **learn to distinguish** our feelings as to whether they originate with the inner, or come from the outer, man.

The Anointing of God

The intuition of which we have been speaking is exactly the locus where occurs the anointing that teaches: "You have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all *know*.... But the anointing which you received from him *abides in you*, and you have *no need that any one should teach you*; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him" (I John 2.20, 27). This portion of Scripture informs us quite lucidly where and how the anointing of the Holy Spirit teaches us.

But before we delve into this passage may we first explain the meaning of "knowing" and "understanding." We usually do not make a distinction between these two words; in spiritual matters, however, the difference between them is incalculable: the spirit "knows" while the mind "understands." A believer "knows" the things of God by the intuition of his spirit. Strictly speaking, the mind can merely "understand"; it can never "know." Knowing is the work of intuition; understanding, the task of the mind. The Holy Spirit enables our spirit to know; our spirit instructs the mind to understand. It may appear difficult to distinguish these two in the abstract, but they are as disparate as wheat from weed in experience. So ignorant are modern believers in their quest to know the thought of the Holy Spirit that they do not even realize how to distinguish "knowing" from "understanding."

Is it not true that we frequently experience this indescribable sense within us which makes us *know* whether or not to do a certain thing? We may say we know the mind of the Holy Spirit in our spirit. Nevertheless our mind may still fail to *understand* what the meaning of it all is. In spiritual matters it is possible for us to know without understanding it. Are there not times when, reaching our wit's end, we receive the teaching of the Holy Spirit in our spirit and jubilantly shout "I know it!"? And are there not times when our mind natural intellect may be, any individual who honestly and faithfully follows the Lord will be taught by the Anointing. The most learned doctor shares in the same foolishness with the dullest country folk when it comes to spiritual affairs; nay, the learned may make more mistakes than the dullard. False teachings are currently rampant. Many there are who with deceiving words disguise lies as truths. How necessary is this power of discernment in the spirit! The most appealing teaching, the cleverest brain, and the most enlightened advisors are undependable; only those who adhere intuitively to the teaching of the Anointing are preserved from being deceived in this time of theological confusion and supernatural manifestations. We should ask the Lord to make our spirit more active and pure. We should follow the still small voice that comes from our intuition instead of being overawed by people's knowledge and drawn away from the warning sounded within us. Otherwise we shall fall into heresy or become fanatical. If we quietly follow the teaching of the Anointing we shall be delivered from the compulsion of a noisy emotion and a confused mind.

Dealing with People

Never should we judge other people; yet we surely need to know them so that we may comprehend both how to live with them and how to assist them. The ordinary way for man to know others is to inquire, observe and investigate—all of which, unfortunately, often lead us to blunder. Now we are not suggesting that these are categorically useless, but we do affirm that they occupy merely a secondary place in the knowledge of people. A pure spirit frequently

discloses unmistakable discernment. Well do we remember when as children how we made certain remarks concerning various individuals we saw. As time went on how accurate these remarks proved to be. Many years have now passed; our knowledge, experience and observation have altogether been increased; yet somehow our ability to know people seems to be diminishing. When we made those remarks as children we had no suitable reason to advance for doing so **other than** that we felt that way in our hearts. Many years later our "sense" of that time was shown to have been correct. As a child we never spoke out after once having carefully investigated or inquired, nor could we have ever given any good reason for so speaking. What was it then? It was the operation of a pure intuition. Obviously the example we have just set forth pertains to the natural. Nonetheless, in the things of God our spiritual condition must be converted and become as a little child if we desire to discern spiritually.

Let us observe our Lord Jesus. "And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them" (Mark 2.8). Do we not see there the working of intuition? The Scripture does not state that the Lord Jesus thought or felt in his heart nor does it say the Holy Spirit told Him. It was His spirit that displayed this perfect ability. The spiritual sense in the man Jesus Christ was exceedingly pure, sensitive and noble; hence His spirit detected immediately how the surrounding people questioned in their heart. He spoke to them according to what He intuitively knew. This ought to be the normal condition of every spiritual person. Our spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit is free to work and, filled with the power of knowledge, it can exercise control over our whole being. just as the human spirit of the Lord Jesus operated during His earthly pilgrimage, even so shall our spirit be activated by the indwelling Spirit.

Revelation

To know things in our intuition is what the Bible calls revelation. Revelation has no other meaning than that the Holy Spirit enables a believer to apprehend a particular matter by indicating the reality of it to his spirit. There is but one kind of knowledge concerning either the Bible or God which is valuable, and that is the truth revealed to our spirit by God's Spirit. God does not explain Himself via man's reasoning; never does man come to know God through rationalization. No matter how clever man's mind is nor how much it understands about God, his knowledge of God remains veiled. All he can do is rationalize what is behind the veil, because he has not penetrated the reality hidden from view. Since he has not yet "seen," man can "understand" but never can he "know." If there is no revelation, personal revelation, Christianity is worth nothing. Everyone who believes in God must have His revelation in his spirit, or else what he believes is not God but mere human wisdom, ideals or words. Such a faith cannot endure the test.

This kind of revelation is not a vision, a heavenly voice, a dream, or an external force which shakes the man. One may encounter these phenomena and still not have revelation. Revelation happens in the intuition-quietly, neither hastily nor slowly, soundless and yet with a message. How many denominate themselves Christians, though the Christianity they embrace is simply a kind of philosophy of life or of ethics, a few articles of truth, or some supernatural manifestations. Such an attitude will issue neither in a new birth nor in a new spirit. Numerous are these "Christians" whose ,spiritual usefulness measures up to zero. Not so are those who have

received Christ, for by the grace of God they have perceived in their spirit the reality of the spiritual realm, which opens to them like the lifting of a veil. What they today *know* is far more profound than what their mind has comprehended; yea, it seems as though a new meaning has been imparted to all which they had only understood or comprehended in the past. Now everything is thoroughly and genuinely known, because the spirit has seen it. "We speak of what we *know*, and bear witness to what we *have seen*" (John 3.11). This is Christianity. Searching with intellect never delivers men; revelation in the spirit alone gives true knowledge of God.

Eternal Life

Many say, "If we believe, we have eternal life." What is this life we secure? It does point, to be sure, to future blessing, But what does eternal life mean for *today*? "And *this is* eternal life, that they *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (John 17.3). This life constitutes for the here and now a new ability to know God and the Lord Jesus. This is indeed true. Whoever believes in the Lord and enjoys eternal life has obtained an intuitive knowledge of God which he never possessed before. Having eternal life is not a slogan; it is a reality which can be demonstrated and exhibited in this present hour. Those without this life' can rationalize about God but they enjoy no personal knowledge of Him. Only after one has received new life in regeneration does he intuitively and *actually know* God. People may understand the Bible, yet their spirit abides in death. They may be familiar with theology, still their spirit remains unquickened. They may even zealously serve in the name of the Lord, but no new life is engendered within their spirit. The Bible perceptively asks, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (job 11.7 ASV) No amount of mental laboring can equip us to know God. Apart from the quickened spirit within man no one is able to apprehend Him, not even with his brain. The Bible recognizes just one kind of knowledge, and that is the knowledge in the spirit's intuition.

God's Way of Guiding

As at the beginning a believer acquires his first knowledge of God in his spirit, even so must he continue to know God in his spirit. In a Christian life nothing is of any spiritual benefit unless it flows from revelation in the intuition. Whatever does not issue from the spirit is not of God's will. Whatever we think or feel or decide, if not preceded by revelation in the spirit, is reckoned as dead in the eyes of God. Should a believer follow his sudden thought, the "burning fire" in his heart, his natural inclination, his perfect reason, or his rationalization, he is but activating his old man again. God's will is not to be so known; He reveals Himself solely to man's spirit. What is not revealed there is purely human activity.

The head is where God's will is understood, but it is never the source of His will. The will of God originates in Himself, Who by His Holy Spirit reveals it to the spirit of man. In turn the latter causes the outward man to understand through the mind what the inner man has known. Thus the Christian is able to practice God's will. Now if instead of seeking His purpose in the spirit a Christian should daily search his mind, he will be confused, since thoughts often change. He who follows his mind is not capable of saying at any moment, I truly know this is the will of God." Such deep faith and assurance emerges only when one has received revelation in his spirit.

The revelation of God in our spirit is of two kinds: the direct and the sought. By direct revelation we mean that God, having a particular wish for the believer to do, draws nigh and reveals it to the latter's spirit. Upon receiving such a revelation in his intuition the believer acts accordingly. By sought revelation we mean that a believer, having a special need, approaches God with that need and seeks and waits for an answer through God's movement in his spirit. The revelation young believers receive is mostly the sought type; that of the more matured ones is chiefly the direct kind. We should quickly add, however, that these are not exclusively so, only predominantly so. There lies the difficulty with the young believer. While he ought to wait before the Lord, denying his thought, feeling and desire, he often becomes impatient waiting for His revelation and substitutes his own disguised will for that of God. As a consequence he falls under the accusation of his conscience. Granted that he genuinely has a heart to follow God's intent, he nonetheless unwittingly follows the thought of his mind because he lacks spiritual knowledge. Who can avoid mistakes if he walks without revelation?

Now we find true spiritual knowledge in this: only what is appropriated in the spirit is spiritual knowledge; the rest is wholly the mental kind. Let us inquire a moment, how does God know things? How does He make His judgment? By what knowledge does He control the universe? Does He ascertain with His mind like man? Does He need to think carefully before He understands? Does God depend upon philosophy, logic and comparison to know a matter? Must He search and investigate before He hits upon the solution?

Is the Almighty compelled to rely upon His brain? **Decidedly** not. God has no necessity to indulge in such sweating exercises. His knowledge and judgment is intuitive. As a matter of fact intuition is the common faculty of all spiritual beings. The angels obey what they know as God's will intuitively; they do not arrive at a conclusion by way of argument, reason or contemplation. The difference between knowing intuitively and knowing mentally is immeasurable. Upon this very distinction hangs the outcome of spiritual success or defeat. If it had been intended that a believer's action or service was to be governed by rationalization and common sense, no one would ever have attempted to carry out those many glorious spiritual works of the past and the present, because all of them supersede human reasoning. Who would have dared do them if he had not first known God's will intuitively?

Everyone who walks intimately with God, enjoying secret communion and spiritual union, will receive God's revelation in his intuition and know unmistakably what he should do. His actions obviously will attract no sympathy from men, for they know not what he has seen. According to worldly wisdom, his actions are utterly meaningless. Do not spiritual believers suffer many oppositions of this kind? Have not the worldly-wise labeled them as mad? Even their fleshly brethren pass similar judgment on them. And the reason? Because the old created life in worldly people or in believers cannot understand the way of the Holy Spirit. How the more rational believers do in fact criticize their less rational brethren as "blindly zealous," not realizing that these "blindly zealous" are the truly spiritual ones, walking by the revelation they intuitively have received.

We should be careful not to confuse intuition with emotion. In their zeal emotional Christians may display many phenomena similar to those of spiritual Christians, but the origin of these phenomena cannot be traced to intuition. Likewise in discernment rational Christians may act in

many ways like those who are spiritual, yet once again no revelation in intuition is involved. As emotional believers are soulish so are the rational. The spirit possesses a zeal which surpasses the emotional kind. The spiritual are "justified in the spirit" (I Tim. 3.16 ASV), not approved by the affections or reasons of the flesh. Should we drop from the exalted position of the spirit into following the feeling and reasoning of the flesh, we shall lose ground instantly and shall retreat, like Abraham of old, into the visible and tangible Egypt for help. The spirit and the soul move independently. As long as the spirit has not yet ascended to hold sway over the total man, the soul shall never cease to strive against it.

When a person's spirit has been quickened and subsequently strengthened by the power and discipline of the Holy Spirit, his soul cedes its usurped place and returns to submission. Increasingly the soul becomes the spirit's servant; similarly, the body, once subdued, becomes the spirit's servant. The spirit receives revelation of God in its faculty of intuition, while the soul and the body unitedly execute the will of the spirit. There is no end to such progress. Some of the Lord's people may have more to deny than others, for their spirit is not as pure because they have been far too long saturated with mental knowledge and affections. Many are so full of prejudice that they do not enjoy an open spirit to accept God's truth. What they need are those requisite dealings which can free their intuition to receive everything from God.

We need to appreciate how fundamental is the difference between spiritual and soulical experiences: spiritual experience is so designated because it begins with God and is known in our *spirit*: soulical experience arises from the *man himself* and does *not* emerge through the spirit. It is therefore quite possible for an unregenerated man to know fully the Bible, to grasp accurately and expertly the essential doctrines of Christianity, to apply zealously all his talents to service, and to sway his audience with wonderful eloquence, and yet remain within the realm of the soul without so much as having crossed over one step, his spirit as dead as ever. People shall never enter the kingdom of God through our encouragement, persuasion, argument, inducement, excitement, or attraction; entrance can be gained only by new birth, by nothing less than the resurrection of the spirit. The new life which invades us at regeneration brings with it many inherent abilities, not the least of which is the intuitive power of knowing God.

Does it hence mean that man's mind or brain is totally useless? Of course not. It obviously has its part to play. But we need to remember that intellect is of secondary, not of primary, importance. We do not sense God and the realities of God by our intellect; else eternal life would be meaningless. This eternal life or new life is the spirit mentioned in John 3. We apprehend God through this newly obtained eternal life or spirit. The mind's role is to explain to our outward man what we know in our spirit and additionally to form it into words for others to understand. Paul stresses most emphatically in his letters that the gospel he preaches does not originate with man: it is not acquired wholesale from one man's mind and retailed to the mind of others but is discovered through revelation. Although a believing man may have the best of minds, his teaching is nevertheless not to be derived from his thinking, whether sudden or progressive. His mind merely cooperates with his spirit in communicating to others the revelation his intuition has received. The brain is but the transmitting, not the receiving, mechanism of spiritual knowledge.

God communes with us entirely in the spirit. Save by its intuition there is no way of knowing God. In his spirit man soars into the eternal unseen realm of God. Intuition may be characterized

as the brain of the inner sanctuary. When we say man's spirit is dead, we are indicating his intuition is insensitive to God and His realities. When we say the spirit controls the whole man, we mean the various parts of the soul and all the members of the body adhere closely to God's intuitively known will. We wish to underscore our point that regeneration is totally indispensable. Man's soulful faculties cannot perceive God: nothing else can be a substitute for intuition. Except a man receives a new life from God and has his intuition resurrected, he is eternally separated from God.

How fundamental new birth is. It is not just a term, nor is it purely a moral alteration, but the life of God actually enters our spirit and quickens its intuition. How utterly impossible for man to please God with his good deeds: they are simply the operations of the soul: his intuition is dead to God. Equally impossible is it for man to beget himself anew, because there is nothing in him which can produce new life. Unless God generates him he is not able to beget himself. Also worthless in the work of God is man's understanding of teachings, for the work must be done by God. What then can man do other than deliver himself into the hands of God for Him to work? His spirit shall remain forever dead unless he confesses that everything pertaining to man is useless and unless he stands in the place of death with the Lord Jesus and accepts His life.

Man's way cannot envisage acceptance of the Lord Jesus as Savior and a quickening of his spirit's intuition, but insists on substituting his mind for intuition. He thinks and cogitates until he creates many philosophies, ethics, or religions. But what is God's pronouncement? "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55.9). However intensively man may contemplate, his thoughts are earthly and not heavenly. After regeneration, God enables our intuition to know His thought and to apprehend His way so that we may follow Him. Yet how forgetful believers are! We forget what we learned at regeneration. Countless are those saints who daily walk by their head and heart. In service we still attempt to move people's mind, emotion and will by our intellect, zeal and effort. God desires to teach us the fact that in service the soul, ours and everyone else's, is void of any spiritual value or worth. He actually allows us to be defeated in spiritual work and to become despondent, cold and fruitless in order that He may destroy our natural life with its wisdom, fervor, and ability. Such a lesson as this cannot be learned in one or two days. God must instruct us throughout our lifetime in order to make us realize that apart from following the **spirit's intuition** everything else is vain.

Now comes the crisis. Which will we follow when intuition and soul clash in their opinions? This will determine who is to rule over our life and which way we shall go. Our outer, man and our inner man-the man of the flesh and the man of the spirit-are struggling for supremacy. In the early days of our Christian walk our spirit fought with the lusts of our flesh; today it is a battle between our spirit and our soul. Formerly the engagement was over the issue of sin; presently it is not a matter of good and evil but of natural good versus God's goodness. We contended for the quality of things before, but now we are concerned with the source of things. It is a conflict of the inward against the outward man, a war between God's will and man's good intention. To learn how to walk after the spirit is a lifetime's occupation for the new man. If one wholly follows the spirit, he shall overcome the man of the flesh completely. Through the strengthening by the Holy Spirit of the spirit in the new man, the believer shall be able to destroy totally his minding of the flesh so as to mind the things of the spirit. This is life and peace.

LESSON EIGHT

(Chapter 2—Part 5 of *The Spiritual Man*)

Communion

We communicate with the material world through the body. We communicate with the spiritual world through the spirit. This communication with the spiritual is not carried on by means of the mind or emotion but through the spirit or its intuitive faculty. It is easy for us to understand the nature of the communion between God and man if we have seen the operation of our intuition. In order to worship and fellowship with God man must possess a nature similar to His. "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4.24). There can be no communication between different natures; hence both the unregenerate whose spirit obviously has not been quickened and the regenerate who does not use his spirit to worship are equally unqualified to have genuine fellowship with God. Lofty sentiments and noble feelings do not bring people into spiritual reality nor do they forge personal communion with God. Our fellowship with Him is experienced in the deepest place of our entire being, deeper than our thought, feeling and will, even in the intuition of our spirit. A close scrutiny of I Corinthians 2.9-3.2 can provide a very clear view of how man communes with God and how man knows the realities of God through the spirit's intuition.

The Heart of Man

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (v.9). The larger context of this one verse speaks of God and the things of God. What He has prepared can neither be seen or heard by man's outward body nor conceived by his inward heart. The "heart of man" includes among other facets man's understanding, mind and intellect. Man's thought cannot envisage God's work, for the latter transcends the former. It is therefore evident that he who desires to know and commune with God cannot depend solely upon his thought.

The Holy Spirit

"God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything; even the depths of God" (v.10). This verse sets forth the fact that the Holy Spirit *searches* everything and not that our mind conceives all. Only the Holy Spirit knows the depths of God. He knows what man does not know. By His intuition the Spirit searches everything. God is thus able to reveal through Him what our heart has never conceived. This "revealing" is not acquired after much thinking, for our heart cannot even conceive it. It is a revelation; it does not require the help of our thought.

The next two verses tell us how God reveals Himself.

“For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God” (vv.11 and 12). No one knows man's thoughts except the spirit of man; likewise, no one knows the things of God but the Holy Spirit. Man's spirit as well as God's Spirit apprehend things directly, not by deducing or searching. They perceive through the faculty of intuition. Since the Holy Spirit alone knows the things of God, we must receive the Holy Spirit if we also would know those things. The spirit of the world is cut off from communication with God. It is a dead spirit: it cannot effect communion with Him. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, comprehends the things of God; therefore, by receiving in our intuition what the Holy Spirit knows, we too shall understand the realities of God. "We have received ... the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God."

How then do we *know*? Verse 11 tells us man knows by his spirit. The Holy Spirit unfolds to our spirit what He knows intuitively so that we too may know intuitively. When the Holy Spirit discloses the matters pertaining to God He does so not to our mind nor to any other organ but to our spirit. God knows this is the sole place in man which can apprehend man's things as well as His things. The mind is not the place for knowing these things. While it is true that the mind can think and conceive many matters, it nonetheless cannot *know* them.

From this we can appreciate how highly God esteems the regenerated spirit of man. Before new birth man's spirit was dead. God had no way of unfolding His mind to such a man. The cleverest brain fails to know the mind of God. Both God's fellowship with man and man's worship of God are contingent upon the regenerated spirit of man. Without this revitalized component God and man are hopelessly separated-neither can come or go to the other. The first step towards communion between God and man must be this quickening of man's spirit.

Because man enjoys a free will he has authority to decide his own matters. That explains why he continues to encounter many temptations following new birth. Due to his foolishness or perhaps his prejudice he may not yield the rightful position to his spirit and its intuition. God accepts this spirit as the one place where He will commune with man and man with Him. But the believer still walks by his mind or emotion. How many times he completely ignores the voice of intuition. His principle of living is to adhere to what he himself considers reasonable, beautiful, delightful, or interesting. Even should he have a heart to do God's will, he usually will take either his impulsive idea or his more logical thought as the mind of God, not realizing that what he ought to follow is the thought expressed by the Holy Spirit in his intuition. He sometimes may be willing to hear the voice of intuition, but failing to keep his feelings quiet he finds that voice blurred and confused. Walking after the spirit consequently becomes an occasional affair instead of forming a daily continuous experience in the Christian's life.

If the initial knowing of God's will is so difficult, who can wonder at the lack of further and more profound revelation? How then can we ever truly know in our spirit God's plan for the end of this age, the reality of spiritual warfare, and the deeper truths of the Bible? For our worship merely corresponds to what we think is best or what we feel on the spur of the moment. And to commune with the Lord in our intuition naturally becomes an unheard of phenomenon.

A believer must recognize that the Holy Spirit alone comprehends the things of God-and that intuitively. He is the one Person Who can convey this knowledge to man. But for anyone to obtain such knowledge he must appropriate it through the proper means; namely, he must receive with his intuition what the Holy Spirit intuitively knows. The conjunction of these two intuitions enables man to apprehend the mind of God.

"And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit" (v.13). How are we going to impart to others the things of God which we have discerned in our spirit's intuition? Having come to know the realities of God, our responsibility now is to proclaim them. The Apostle Paul declares he does not transmit them in terms taught by human wisdom. That wisdom belongs to a man's mind and is the product of man's brain. Paul categorically asserts that he does not employ the words which come from the mind to communicate what his spirit knows concerning the things of God. Paul in himself possesses great wisdom. He is perfectly able to formulate many new and wonderful phrases and to deliver his message eloquently with good organization and illustrative parables. He knows how to make his audience understand what he means to say. He nevertheless refuses to use the terminology taught by human wisdom. This declaration and attitude of the Apostle Paul indicate that man's mind is not only useless in *knowing* the things of God but is also secondary in *imparting* spiritual knowledge.

The Apostle articulates God's realities in phraseology taught by the Spirit. In his intuition he receives His instruction. Nothing in the life of a Christian is of any value save that which is in his spirit. Even in relating spiritual knowledge he needs to employ spiritual words. Intuition appropriates not only the thing which the Holy Spirit unfolds but also the words taught by the same Spirit, in order to explain to others what has been revealed. How often a believer tries to impart to others what has been revealed so clearly to him by God; yet try as he may, he finds no words to convey the fundamental meaning of what has been disclosed. Why? Because he has not received words in his spirit. At other times, as he waits before the Lord, the believer senses something rising in the center of his being perhaps but a few words. With those few words, however, he is able to communicate adequately at a meeting what has been revealed to him. He comes to realize how God actually uses him to testify for the Lord.

Such experiences attest the importance of the "utterance" given by the Holy Spirit. There are two kinds of utterance, the natural and the Spirit-given. The type of utterance recorded in Acts 2.4 is indispensable in spiritual service. However eloquent our natural utterance, it remains powerless to truly communicate the things of God. We may view ourselves as having spoken quite well; yet we have not succeeded in expressing the thought of the Spirit. Spiritual words, that is, terminology received in the spirit, can alone articulate spiritual knowledge. If we are burdened with the message of the Lord in our spirit, as though a fire were burning within, and yet have not the means to discharge that burden, we should wait for the "utterance" to be given by the Spirit so that we may proclaim the message of our spirit and discharge that burden. Should we inadvertently employ language taught by human wisdom instead of waiting for the words bestowed intuitively by the Holy Spirit, we shall find our spiritual effectiveness comes to nought. Speech merely grounded in earthly wisdom can only move people to say that the theory advanced is indeed good. Sometimes we enjoy many spiritual experiences, but we are at a loss how to articulate them until other believers unlock them with a word. This is because until the

moment we heard others uttering our experience in simple terms, we still had not received in our spirit explicit words from the Lord.

Spiritual truths must be explained with spiritual phrases. We must employ spiritual means to reach spiritual ends. This is what the Lord especially wishes to teach us today. Spiritual goals need to be perfected through corresponding spiritual processes. The fleshly as fleshly will never become spiritual. If we hope to arrive at our spiritual objectives with our minds and emotions, we as it were are expecting sweet water to pour forth from fountains of bitter water. All matters pertaining to God-such as seeking His will, obeying His commandments, proclaiming His message-are effective only if they arise out of fellowship with God in the spirit. Whatever is performed through our thoughts, talents or methods is accounted by God as dead.

The Soulical and the Spiritual

"The unspiritual (original, *soulical*) man does not *receive* the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to *understand* them because they are spiritually discerned" (via). The soulical are those who have not yet been born anew and who hence do not possess a new spirit. Since their intuitive faculty is dead to God's all which they have are the faculties of the soul. They are well able to decide what they like through reason and affection but, not having a regenerated spirit, they are powerless to receive the things of the Spirit of God. Although these individuals can think and observe, they still lack basic intuitive power; they cannot take in what God reveals exclusively to man's spirit. How utterly inadequate are the natural endowments of man. He truly has much, but nothing can substitute for the operation of intuition. Because man is dead to God, no organ exists in him by which he can take in the things of God. Nothing in a soulical man is capable of communing with Him. Man's most respectable mind, intellect and reasoning are as corrupt as his lusts and passions; both equally are incompetent to apprehend God. Even a regenerated man, if he attempts to communicate with God by using his mind and observation (just as the unregenerate does) instead of exercising his renewed spirit, is absolutely impotent to perceive the realities of God. Those elements which belong to us naturally do not change their operations following regeneration. A mind is still a mind and a will, a will: these can never be turned into organs capable of communion with God.

Not only can the soulical person not receive the things of God, he even regards them as folly. According to the valuation of his mind, matters known by intuition are downright foolishness because they are all unreasonable, against human nature, contrary to worldly wisdom, or in conflict with common sense. The mind delights in whatever is logical, open to analysis, and psychologically appealing. God, however, is not governed by man's law and hence His actions are folly to the soulical. The folly mentioned in this particular chapter unquestionably refers to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. The word of the cross. speaks not only of the Savior Who died in our stead but also of the believers who have died with the Savior. Everything naturally belonging to believers must go through the death of the cross. The mind may accept this as a theory, but it surely will oppose it as a practice.

Since the soulical person does not welcome this word of the cross, he obviously cannot comprehend what it is all about. Reception precedes knowledge. The ability or inability to receive

tests the presence or absence of a quickened spirit. The capacity or incapacity to know manifests the vital or the moribund character of the intuitive faculty. The spirit first must be quickened before one is able to take in the things of God. With an enlivened spirit one is also given the intuitive ability to appropriate the things of God. Who knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man? A soulical person cannot discern God's realities because he does not enjoy that new spirit which carries within it the intuitive power of discernment.

The Apostle Paul proceeds to explain why the soulical man is incompetent to receive and to know matters pertaining to God: "Because they are spiritually discerned." Do we not notice how the Holy Spirit repeatedly stresses the fact that man's spirit is the place of communion with God? The focal point of this particular portion of Scripture is to prove and demonstrate that man's spirit is basic to, and exclusive in, any fellowship with God and the knowledge of divine matters.

Each element has its own particular use. The spirit is employed to know the heavenly realities. Now we are not trying to disparage the use of the sours faculties. They *are* useful, but here they must play a *secondary* role. They should be under control and not be the controller. The mind should submit to the spirit's rule and should follow what intuition fathoms of the will of God. It ought not conceive its own ideas and then demand that the whole man comply. Emotion too should obey the dictates of the spirit. Its love or hate must follow the affection of the spirit and not its own. The will also should bend to what God has revealed intuitively in the spirit. It must not prefer those choices which are other than the will of God. Were these soulical faculties kept in secondary position the believer would make tremendous strides in his spiritual walk. Unfortunately most Christians give them first place, thus eliminating the spirit's position. Is it any wonder that they do not live a spiritual life nor are of any spiritual worth? The spirit needs to be restored to its ordained position. A believer must learn to wait *in the spirit* for the revelation of God. Unless it ascends to its rightful place a man is barred from knowing what the spirit alone can know. That is why verse 13 adds, "interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit," for only the spiritually sensitive can know things in the spirit.

"The spiritual man **judges all** things, but is himself to be judged by no one" (v.15). The spiritual man is one whose spirit dominates and who has a highly sensitive intuition. It is qualified to perform its functions because its quietness is undisturbed by the mind, emotion and will of the soul. Why can the spiritual man judge all matters? Because his intuition leans on the Holy Spirit for its knowledge. Why is he not judged by anyone? Simply because no one knows how and what the Holy Spirit imparts to his intuition. If a believer's knowledge depends on his intellect, then besides those who are naturally talented no one can judge in all respects. Learning and worldly education would be indispensable. And such a learned one would also be judged by those who are as wise or even wiser than he, for they certainly could understand the train of his thought. Spiritual knowledge, however, is based on the spirit's intuition. There is no limit to a Christian's knowledge if he is spiritual and possesses a sensitive intuition. His mind may be dull but the Holy Spirit is able to lead him into spiritual reality and his spirit is able to enlighten his mind. The way the Spirit reveals Himself does indeed surpass the expectation of man.

" For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (v.16). Here is posed a problem. No one in the world has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him because all men are soulical, The only way to apprehend God is by intuition.

How can a person whose spirit is dead ever know the mind of God? This explains why no such persons as this can judge the spiritual man, for none of these have known the mind of the Lord. These are naturally the soulical people. On the other hand, the spiritual ones know the mind of the Lord for they have a responsive intuition. But the soulical cannot know because their intuition is not operative; hence they enjoy no fellowship with God. The meaning here is that the soulical can neither know the mind of the Lord nor that of those spiritual ones who are fully committed to Him.

"But we. . ." indicates that the "we" is different from those soulical people. "We" includes all the saved believers, many of whom perhaps continue to be fleshly. "But we have the mind of Christ." We who have been regenerated, whether babes or grownups, possess the mind of Christ and discern His thoughts. Because we have a resurrected intuition we are able to know and have known already what Christ has prepared for us in the future (v.9). The soulical do not know, but we, the regenerate, do know. The difference is in having or not having the spirit.

The Spiritual and the Fleshly

"But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready" (3.12). These words are closely related to the preceding verses and their teaching follows the line laid down above which speaks of the spirit of man. Now we all recognize that the dividing of the Scriptures into chapters and verses was contrived for the convenience of the readers and was not something at all revealed by the Holy Spirit. These words of verses 1 and 2 of I Corinthians 3 should be read in connection with those of the preceding chapter.

How incisive is Paul's spiritual sense. He is acquainted with all his readers, whether they are spiritual or fleshly, whether wholly controlled by the spirit or frequently governed by the flesh. He does not therefore disregard the condition of his readers' receptivity and pour out his thoughts at random simply because he is speaking of spiritual affairs. He will only communicate "spiritual things with spiritual" (v.13 RSV marginal). Paul's communication depends not on how much *he* knows, but on how much his *readers* can assimilate. There is no boasting here of his own knowledge. The Apostle has spiritual phraseology as well as spiritual knowledge; he accordingly knows how to deal with believers of all kinds. Not all terms which articulate the deep mystery of God are spiritual terms; only those which are taught in the spirit by the Holy Spirit are. And they are not necessarily profound words: they may in fact be very common and ordinary: yet *these* words are taught by the Holy Spirit and apprehended in the spirit. When these are uttered they then produce considerable spiritual results.

What the Apostle writes in these two verses and in verse 15 of the previous chapter resolves one interesting paradox; namely, if the spirit of man knows the things which belong to man and the spiritual man judges all things, why then are there so many spirit-renewed Christians who nonetheless do not sense that they have a spirit or who are not able to know the deep things of God through their spirit? The answer is: "the spiritual man judges all things" (v.15). Though all Christians possess a regenerated spirit, not all Christians are spiritual. Many are still fleshly. Man's intuition has in truth been quickened, but man must give intuition its rightful place, providing it opportunity to operate. Or else it will be suppressed, unable to commune with God,

or to know what it could know. Spiritual Christians do not walk by their soul life; they have delivered all its faculties to the cross and relegated them to a position of submission so that their intuition can receive God's revelation freely. Afterwards their mind, emotion and will voluntarily comply with this revelation. Such is not the case with fleshly Christians. Regenerated and alive to God intuitively, they have every opportunity to be spiritual; but they remain bound to the flesh instead. The lusts of the flesh remain so exceedingly powerful as to drive these Christians to sin. Their carnal mind is still full of wandering thoughts, reasons and plans; their emotion runs wild with many carnal interests, desires and tendencies; and their will formulates many worldly judgments, arguments and opinions. They are so occupied in following the flesh that they have neither time nor inclination to listen to the voice of intuition. Since the voice of the spirit is usually very soft, it cannot be heard unless it is listened to attentively with everything else quieted. How then can it be heard if the various parts of the flesh are inordinately active? When believers are governed by the flesh they become influenced by it to such an extent that their spirit grows dull and they are unable to take solid food.

The Bible compares a newly regenerated believer to a baby. The life in his spirit which he newly possesses is as tiny and weak as a baby naturally born. There is nothing wrong with his being a baby as long as he does not remain too great a time in that stage. Every adult must begin as a child. But should he persist as such very long, his spirit never progressing beyond what it was when he was first regenerated some years before, then something is drastically wrong. Man's spirit can grow; the spirit's intuition is able to wax stronger. A newly regenerated person is like a new-born baby who has no selfconsciousness and whose nerves are wobbly in function. His spiritual life may be compared to a spark of fire. His intuitive power is extremely weak and not effective. But a baby must grow daily. His knowledge must increase continuously through exercise, training, and growth until he has become fully self-conscious and knows how to skillfully exercise all his senses. Even so must a believer. Upon regeneration he needs to gradually exercise his intuition. Each exercise means an increase in experience, knowledge and spiritual stature. just as a man's senses are not born with matured awareness, so a believer's intuition is not born highly sensitive.

All this does not signify, however, that the soulish Christians who long remain babes have no outward dealings with their sins, experience no increase in their knowledge of the Bible, exert no effort to serve the Lord, or receive no gift of the Holy Spirit. The saints at Corinth encountered all of these. They "were enriched in (Christ) with all speech and all knowledge ... not lacking in any spiritual gift" (I.Cor. 1.5,7). From the human point of view, are these not signs of growth? We probably would regard the Corinthian believers as most spiritual; yet the Apostle viewed them as babes, as men of the flesh. Why is it that the increase in speech, knowledge and gifts was not considered growth? This uncovers an intensely significant fact, which is, that though the saints at Corinth grew in these outward endowments they failed to grow in their spirit. Their intuition did not wax stronger. Increase in preaching **eloquence**, **Bible** knowledge and spiritual gift is not reckoned as increase of spiritual life! If the believer's spirit-that which is capable of communing with God-does not grow stronger and keener, God judges that he has not grown at all!

How many of the Lord's people today are developing in the wrong direction! Many assume that upon being saved they must seek higher Bible knowledge, better utterance in preaching, and

more spiritual gifts. They forget it is their spirit that must advance. Speech, knowledge and gift are purely outward matters; by contrast intuition is inward. Quite sad is the sight of that Christian who allows his spirit to persist as a babe, but who concomitantly fills his soul life with speech, knowledge and gift. These articles are valuable, but how can they be compared with the value of the spirit? What God has newly created in us is this spirit (or spiritual life), and what should develop into matured manhood is likewise this spirit. Should we commit the serious mistake of seeking the enrichment of the soul life instead of the increase of this spiritual life with its intuition, we shall have made no progress at all in God's eye. God considers our spirit allimportant; and so He cares for its growth. No matter how much our mind, emotion and will may gain by speech, knowledge and gift, it is all deemed by God as vain if our spirit is not developing.

We daily expect to have more power, more knowledge, more gifts, more eloquence; yet the Bible contends that even if we have more of these elements we do not necessarily progress in spiritual life. On the contrary, our spiritual walk may remain the same without advancing a mile. Paul candidly reminds the believers at Corinth: "You were not ready for it; and *even yet you* are not ready." In what were they unprepared? They were not prepared to serve God with their intuition, to know more of God intuitively, to receive His revelation in their intuition. They were obviously not ready when they first believed in the Lord; but now years later, though enriched in speech, knowledge and gifts, they still were not so. By those two words-"even yet"-the Apostle signified that though they were replete with outward enrichments their spiritual life had made no progress since they first believed. Real advancement is measured by the growth of the spirit and its intuition; the rest belongs to the flesh. This should be impressed indelibly on our hearts.

How sad that believers today seem to achieve progress in almost every sphere except in that of their spirit. After trusting the Lord for many years, they continue to lament: "I do not feel I have a spirit." The difference between our mind and God's mind is wide. We, like those at Corinth, try successfully to garner much so-called spiritual knowledge by exercising the intellect of our mind. Unfortunately the increase of our mind does not and cannot substitute the maturing in our intuition. To God we appear unchanged. We must henceforth remember that the increase God preeminently desires is not in our outward man but in the inward man and its intuition. He expects the new life which we receive at regeneration to enlarge. And all which belongs to the old creation He expects to be denied.

A believer fails to be spiritual because he is influenced too much by the flesh. Only one whose intuition is alive and who enjoys uninterrupted communion with God knows the deep truths of God. If the intuitive power is weak, what else can be absorbed except milk? Milk is pre-digested food. What this denotes is that the soulish believer cannot maintain clear fellowship with God in the spirit's intuition and hence must depend upon other more advanced Christians for the things of God. Matured Christians fellowship with God in their intuition and then transform what they have been shown into milk for the babes in Christ. The Lord permits such a thing in the life of a beginner, but He takes no pleasure in having His people remain dull and powerless in communing directly with Him. Feeding on milk indicates the person is far less capable of communing with God directly and instead relies on others to transmit God's message to himself. The matured has his intuition fully exercised to distinguish good from evil. We are of no spiritual

utility if we have many ideas but do not possess the ability to commune with God and know His realities with our intuition.

The Christians at Corinth ranked high in speech, knowledge, gifts, but how was their spiritual life? Almost totally inactive. The church at Corinth was a carnal church, for all she had she had in the mind.

Many of the Lord's people currently commit the same error as did the saints at Corinth. The words of the Lord are spirit and life, but these people do not accept the words accordingly. They investigate theological problems with a very cold mind and search the hidden meaning of the Bible with the design of presenting the best interpretation. They satisfy their lust for knowledge. They communicate what they have found by writing and preaching. Excellent though their thoughts, arguments and outlines may be, seemingly most spiritual too, God nevertheless looks on these achievements as dead weights because they have not been achieved in the spirit. They have simply passed from one man's mind to another man's mind. Some readers or hearers may protest that they are helped, but the question is, *what* is helped? Beyond assisting the mind to acquire additional ideas, nothing else has happened. Such knowledge adds nothing to spiritual effectiveness. Only what comes from the spirit can enter the spirits of others; that which comes from the mind can only reach the minds of others. Finally, what comes from the Holy Spirit enters our spirit, and whatever the Holy Spirit transmits through our spirit can reach the spirits of others.

The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation

In our communion with God the spirit of wisdom and revelation is imperative. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1.17). When a new spirit is received at regeneration its functions await development, for they presently lie dormant there. The Apostle Paul prayed for the regenerated believers at Ephesus, desiring that they receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they might know God intuitively. Whether this ability is a hidden function of the believer's spirit which is activated through prayer or whether it is something added by the Holy Spirit to the believer's spirit as a result of prayer, we do not know. Yet one thing is certain: this spirit of wisdom and revelation is essential to one's communion with God. We also recognize that it can be obtained through prayer.

Although our intuition is capable of communing with God it requires wisdom and revelation. We need it to know what is of God and what is of ourselves. We must have wisdom to discern the enemy's counterfeit as well as his attack. We also require it to know how to conduct ourselves among men. In a thousand different ways we need God's wisdom, for we are foolish and prone to make mistakes. How difficult for us to execute God's will in all matters, but He will grant us the necessary equipment. He does not impart it to our brain; rather, He dispenses the spirit of wisdom to us so that we may have wisdom in our spirit. God gives it to our intuition for He will lead us through intuition into the way of wisdom. While our mind may indeed remain dull, our intuition is full of wisdom. Often when our own wisdom seems to have reached its end, there gradually rises from within us another kind to guide us. Wisdom and revelation are closely linked because all God's disclosures are those of wisdom. If we live naturally we have no way to

figure out God. Nothing but darkness resides in the natural man. God and matters divine stretch far beyond the reaches of our mind. And although our spirit may even be quickened, it still dwells in darkness if there is no unfolding from the Holy Spirit. A *quickened* spirit only indicates that it is *at last capable of receiving Gods revelation. It does not mean that it can now move independently.*

In our communion with God He frequently gives revelation. We ought to pray for such. The spirit of revelation implies that God reveals in the spirit. The spirit of wisdom and revelation signifies where God reveals Himself and how He imparts to us His wisdom. An impulsive thought is not to be interpreted as belonging to the spirit of revelation. Only what we intuitively know of the mind of God through the operation of the Holy Spirit in our spirit ever constitutes the spirit of revelation. God communes with us there and nowhere else.

The spirit of wisdom and revelation affords us true knowledge of God; all else is skin deep, imaginary, superficial, and therefore false. We frequently speak of God's holiness, righteousness, mercy' love, and other virtues. Man's mind is capable of conceiving these attributes of God, yet such mental knowledge is like looking through a stone wall. When however a believer has received revelation from God concerning His holiness, he sees himself corrupted to the core and void of any cleanliness before the light of God's dwelling in unapproachable light where no sinful, natural man can draw nigh. Oh, that many among us might be given such an experience as *that*. And thereafter let us compare the one who has received such a disclosure of God's holiness with the other who, has no such experience yet easily speaks of His holiness. They may perhaps employ the same terminology, but the word articulated by the first seems to be many times weightier than that of the second person. The first one appears to speak with his whole being and not just with his lips. The spirit of revelation alone explains it. And this applies equally to all other truths in the Bible. Sometimes we understand a certain truth and recognize its importance, but only after that particular truth is gradually unfolded by God to our spirit are we able to, speak with a special emphasis.

Whatever we gather outwardly which is not inwardly disclosed can neither move ourselves nor others. Revelation in the spirit alone contains spiritual potency. To commune with God is to receive His revelation in the spirit. Rare are God's disclosures for many of us because rarely do we wait on Him for them. How can we compare a preoccupied natural life with a life walked according to revelation? But if we are willing to provide God the opportunity, we shall receive revelation quite often indeed. The life of the Apostles abundantly substantiates this assertion.

Spiritual Understanding

There is a soulish as well as a spiritual wisdom. The first springs from man's mind while the second is supplied to the spirit by God. Education may remedy any lack of understanding and wisdom in a natural man, but it cannot alter his natural endowment. Spiritual wisdom, though, may be realized through believing prayer (James 1.5). One thing which we ought to keep in mind is, that in redemption "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10.34). He places all sinners, wise or foolish, on the *same* footing, and confers upon them the *same* salvation. As the entire being of the wise is totally corrupted so is that of the foolish. In God's sight the mind of the wise is as nonefficacious as that of the foolish. Both need the regeneration of the spirit; and after that it is

no easier for the wise man than for the foolish to know the words of God. Now of course it is quite difficult for a very foolish person to know God; but is it less difficult for the wisest among men? Not at all, because God must be known in the spirit by everyone. Their minds may be unlike, yet both their spirits are dead and hence equally foolish and deficient in divine matters. Man's natural cleverness does not help him to know God and God's truth. No doubt the wise one is easier to reason with and is quicker in understanding, but it is altogether limited to the mental realm, utterly contrary to intuitive knowledge.

Do not assume that after regeneration the wise have advantage over the foolish in making spiritual progress. Unless they are more faithful and submissive, their better mental comprehension adds nothing to their intuitive knowledge. Man's old creation never serves as the source of the new creation. Spiritual advancement is measured by faithful obedience. Natural endowment does not affect spiritual life one way or the other, although it yields priority to the flesh. In spiritual experience everybody begins at the same starting-point, passes through the same processes, and obtains the same results. All regenerated believers, including the naturally wise, must consequently seek spiritual understanding, without which no one can maintain normal fellowship with God. Nothing can take the place of spiritual understanding.

"That you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1.9-10). This is what Paul prayed for on behalf of the saints at Colossae. In this prayer we find that true knowledge of God's will is preceded by spiritual understanding and followed by: (1) leading a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him; (2) bearing fruit in every good work; and (3) increasing in the knowledge of God.

No matter how good man's natural endowment is, he cannot know God's will by that means. It requires spiritual comprehension to know His will and to commune with Him. Only spiritual understanding can penetrate the spiritual realm. The natural kind may grasp some teachings but these stay in the mind and are unable to flow as life. Because spiritual understanding comes from the spirit it can transform what is understood into life. Have we now perceived that all true knowledge emerges from the spirit? The spirit of revelation moves hand in hand with spiritual understanding. God grants us the spirit of wisdom and revelation as well as spiritual comprehension. The wisdom and revelation we obtain in the spirit needs to be understood spiritually. Revelation is what we receive from God; understanding assists us to comprehend what is revealed. Spiritual understanding furnishes us the meaning- of all the movements within our spirit so that we may comprehend God's will. Communion with God includes receiving His revelation in the spirit-that is, in the spirit's intuition-and then apprehending the meaning of this revelation by spiritual understanding. Our comprehension does not arise naturally but is enlightened by the spirit.

It is clear from these two verses in Colossians that if we desire to please God and to bear fruit we must know God's will in our spirit. Our spirit's relationship with God is the foundation for pleasing Him and bearing fruit. How vain for us to expect God's pleasure while walking according to the soul. God is pleased with nothing but His Own will. Nothing else can satisfy His heart. Our anguish is that we do not know God's will. We search and think, yet we seem unable

to touch His mind. We should therefore remember that the way to know God's mind lies not in much searching and judging but in spiritual understanding. Nothing but man's spirit can judge God's will, for it has an intuitive power to discern His movement.

If we apprehend God in this way continuously we shall increase in the knowledge of Him. Intuition can grow and grow. It knows no bounds. Its development means the development of the believer's entire spiritual life. Each true communion we have with God trains us to commune better next time. We should seek to be perfect; accordingly, we must seize every opportunity to train our spirit to know God better. Today our need is to truly know Him, to appropriate Him in the depth of our being. How often we think we have discerned His will and yet later we discover we have been mistaken. Since our need is to know God and His will, we must seek to be filled with the knowledge of that will in all spiritual understanding.

I

LESSON NINE

(Chapter 3—Part 5 of *The Spiritual Man*)

Conscience

BESIDES THE FUNCTIONS OF INTUITION and communion, our spirit performs still another important task—that of correcting and reprimanding so as to render us uneasy when we fall short of the glory of God. This ability we call con-, science. As the holiness of God condemns evil and justifies good, so a believer's conscience reproves sin and approves righteousness. Conscience is where God expresses His holiness. If we desire to follow the spirit (and since we never reach a stage of infallibility), we must heed what our inward monitor tells us regarding both inclination and overt action. For its works would be decidedly incomplete if it were only *after* we have committed error that conscience should rise up to reprove us. But we realize that even before we take any step—while we are still considering our way—our conscience together with our intuition will protest immediately and make us uneasy at any thought or inclination which is displeasing to the Holy Spirit. If we were more disposed today to mind the voice of conscience we would not be as defeated as we are.

Conscience and Salvation

While we were sinners our spirit was thoroughly dead; our conscience was therefore dead as well and unable to function normally. This does not mean the conscience of a sinner stops working altogether. It does continue to, operate, though in a state of coma. Whenever it comes out of this coma it does nothing but condemn the sinner. It has no strength to lead men to God. Dead as it is to Him, God nonetheless desires the conscience to perform some feeble work in the heart of man. Hence in man's dead spirit conscience appears to do a little more work than the other functions of the spirit. The death of intuition and of communion seems to be a greater one than that of conscience. There is of course a reason for the variation. As soon as Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil his intuition and communion died completely towards God, but his power of distinguishing good and evil (which is the function of conscience) was increased. Even today, while the intuition and communion of a sinner are altogether dead to God, his conscience retains something of its movement. This does not imply that man's conscience is alive; for according to the Biblical meaning of aliveness only that which has the life of God is reckoned as living. Anything void of God's life is considered dead. Since the conscience of a sinner does not embrace the life of God it is accounted dead, though it may appear to be active according to man's feeling. Such activity of the conscience augments the anguish of a sinner.

In initiating His work of salvation the first step of the Holy Spirit is to awaken this comatous conscience. He uses the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai to shake and enlighten this darkened conscience so as to convince the sinner of his violation of God's law and of his inability to answer God's righteous demand and additionally to convict him as one who is condemned and who deserves nothing but perdition. If one's conscience is willing to confess whatever sins have

been committed, including the sin of unbelief, it will be sorrowful in a godly way, earnestly desiring the mercy of God. The tax-collector in our Lord's parable who went up to the temple to pray illustrates such a work of the Holy Spirit. It is what the Lord Jesus meant in his statement: "When (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16.8). Should a man's conscience be closed to the conviction, however, then he can never be saved.

The Holy Spirit illuminates a sinner's conscience with the light of God's law so as to convict him of sin; the same **Spirit also enlightens** man's conscience with the light of the gospel so as to save him. If a sinner, upon being convicted of his sin and hearing the gospel of God's grace, is willing to accept the gospel and by faith take it, he will see how the precious blood of the Lord Jesus answers all the accusations of his conscience. Doubtless there is sin, but the blood of the Lord Jesus has been shed. What ground is left for accusation since sin's penalty has been fully paid? The blood of the Lord has atoned for all the sins of a believer; hence there is no more condemnation in the conscience. "If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin" (Heb. 10.2). We may stand before God without fear and trembling because the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on our conscience (Heb. 9.14). Our salvation is confirmed by the fact that the precious blood has quieted this voice of condemnation.

Since the terrifying light of the law and the merciful light of the gospel both shine upon it, dare we overlook man's conscience in the preaching of the Word? Is our aim in preaching merely to make people understand in their mind, be moved in their emotion, and decide with their will without in the slightest touching their conscience? The Holy Spirit cannot do the work of regeneration through the precious blood if one's conscience has not been convicted of sin. We must stress the precious blood and the conscience proportionally. Some strongly insist on the latter but overlook the former; consequently sinners try hard to repent and to do good, hoping in this way to propitiate God's wrath with their own merits. Others emphasize the precious blood but neglect conscience. This results in a mental acceptance of the blood and a rootless "faith" because their conscience has not been reached by the Holy Spirit. Thus these two must be presented equally. Whoever is aware of an evil conscience will accept the full meaning of the precious blood.

Conscience and Communion

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9.14). In order to commune with God and to serve Him one first must have his conscience cleansed by the precious blood. As a believer's conscience is cleansed he is regenerated. According to the Scriptures the cleansing by the blood and the regeneration of the spirit occur simultaneously. Here we are informed that before one can serve God he must receive a new life and have his intuition quickened through the cleansing of the conscience by the blood. A conscience so cleansed makes it possible for the intuition of the spirit to serve God. Conscience and intuition are inseparable.

"Let us *draw near* with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10.22). We do not draw

near to God physically as did the people in the Old Testament period, for our sanctuary is in heaven; nor do we draw near soulfully with our thoughts and feelings since these organs can never commune with God. The regenerated spirit alone can approach Him. Believers worship God in their quickened intuition. The verse above affirms that a sprinkled conscience is the basis for communion with God intuitively. A conscience tinged with offense is under constant accusation. That naturally will affect the intuition, so closely knit to the conscience, and discourage its approach to God, even paralyzing its normal function. How infinitely necessary to have "a true heart in full assurance of faith" in a believer's communion with God. When conscience is unclear one's approach to Him becomes forced and is not true because he cannot fully believe that God is for him and has nothing against him. Such fear and doubt undermine the normal function of intuition, depriving it of the liberty to fellowship freely with God. The Christian must not have the slightest accusation in his conscience; he must be assured that his every sin is entirely atoned by the blood of the Lord and that now there is no charge against Him (Rom. 8.33-34). A single offense on the conscience may suppress and suspend the normal function of intuition in communing with God, for as soon as a believer is conscious of sin his spirit gathers all its powers to eliminate that particular sin and leaves no more strength to ascend heavenward.

A Believer's Conscience

A believer's conscience is quickened when his spirit is regenerated. The **precious blood of the Lord Jesus** purifies his conscience and accordingly gives it an acute sense **that it should obey the will of the Holy Spirit**. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in man and the work of conscience in man are intimately related and mutually joined. If a child of God desires to be filled with the Spirit, to be sanctified, and to lead a life wholly after God's will, he must adhere to the voice of conscience. Should he not grant it its rightful place, he shall fall inescapably into walking after the flesh. To be faithful to one's conscience is the first step toward sanctification. Following its voice is a sign of true spirituality. If a Christian fails to let it do its work he is barred from entering the spiritual realm. Even if he regards himself (and is so regarded by others) as spiritual, his "spirituality" nevertheless lacks foundation. If sin and other matters contrary to God's will and unbecoming to saints are not restrained as dictated by its voice, then whatever has been superimposed through spiritual theory shall ultimately collapse because there is no genuine foundation.

Conscience testifies as to whether we are clear towards God and towards men and as to whether our thoughts, words and deeds follow the will of God and are not in any way rebellious to Christ. As Christians advance spiritually the witness of conscience and the witness of the Holy Spirit seem to close ranks. This is because conscience, being fully under the control of the Holy Spirit, daily grows more sensitive until it is attuned perfectly to the voice of the Spirit. The latter is thereby able to speak to believers through their consciences. The Apostle's word that "my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 9.1) carries within it this meaning.

If our inward monitor judges us to be wrong we must in fact be wrong. When it condemns, let us repent immediately. We must never attempt to cover our sin or bribe our conscience. "Whenever our hearts condemn us" can we be less condemned by God, since "God is greater than our hearts" (I John 3.20) ? Whatever conscience condemns is condemned by God. Can the holiness of God

pursue a lower standard than our conscience? If conscience insists we are wrong, we must be wrong indeed.

What should we do when we are wrong? Cease proceeding to do the incorrect thing if we have not yet done it; repent, confess, and claim the cleansing of the precious blood if we have done it already. It is to be regretted that so many Christians today do not follow these rules. Immediately after the reproof of their inner voice, they lay plans to quench its protest. They usually employ two methods. One is to argue with it, trying to marshal reasons for their action. They suppose that anything reasonable must be God's will and will be condoned by the conscience. What they do not understand is that conscience never argues or reasons. It discerns God's will through intuition and condemns everything which is not according to Him. Conscience speaks for God's will, not for reason. Christians ought not walk by reason but by God's will as disclosed in their intuition. Whenever they disobey any movement there, conscience raises its voice to condemn. Explanation may satisfy the mind but never conscience. As long as the issue condemned is not removed it shall not cease condemning. During the initial stage of a Christian's walk conscience only bears witness to right and wrong; as spiritual life grows, it bears witness as well to what is of God and what is not of God. Although many things appear good to human eyes, they are nonetheless condemned by conscience because they do not originate with God's revelation but are initiated instead by the Christians themselves.

The other method is to ease conscience with many other works. To solve the dilemma of refusing to obey their inner voice of accusation on the one hand but continuing to be afraid of its condemnation on the other, believers resort to many good works. They replace God's will with laudable deeds. They have not obeyed God, yet they insist that what they now do is just as good as what He has revealed—perhaps even better, broader in scope, more profitable, greater in influence. They highly esteem such works; God, however, deems them of no spiritual account whatsoever. He looks neither at the aggregate of fat nor at the number of burnt offerings but solely at the sum of obedience to Him. Nothing, regardless how commendable the intention, can move God's heart if the revelation in the spirit has been neglected. Doubling the consecration will not silence the accusing **monitor; its** voice must be followed; that and nothing else can ever please God. Conscience simply demands our obedience; it does not require us to serve God in any spectacular way.

Let us therefore not deceive ourselves. In walking according to the spirit we shall hear the directions of conscience. Do not try to escape any inward reproach; rather, be attentive to its voice. By constantly walking in the spirit we are constrained to humble ourselves and to heed the correction of conscience. Children of God should not make a general confession by acknowledging their innumerable sins in a vague manner, because such confession does not provide conscience opportunity to do its perfect work. They ought to allow the Holy Spirit through their conscience to point out their sins one by one. Humbly and quietly and obediently they should permit their conscience to reprove and condemn them of every individual sin. Christians must accept its reproach and be willing, according to the mind of the Spirit, to eliminate everything which is contrary to God. Are you reticent to let conscience probe your life? Dare you let it explore your real condition? Will you allow it to parade before you one after another all the things in your life as they are beheld by God? Will you grant conscience the right to dissect every one of your sins? In case you dare not, in case you are not willing to be so

examined, then does not such drawing back prove that there remain many elements in your life which have not been judged and committed to the cross as they ought to have been: that there are still matters in which you have not wholly obeyed God nor fully followed the spirit: that some issues continue to hinder you from having perfect fellowship with God? If so, you cannot contend before God that "there is nothing between You and me."

Only an unconditional and unrestricted acceptance of the reproach of conscience with a corresponding willingness to do what is revealed can show how perfect is our consecration, how truly we hate sin, how sincerely we desire to do God's will. Often we express a wish to please God, to obey the Lord, to follow the Spirit; here is the test as to whether our wish is real or fancied, perfect or incomplete. If we are yet entangled in sin and not completely severed from it, most likely our spirituality is largely a pretense. A believer who is unable to follow his conscience wholly is unqualified to walk after the spirit. Before conscience has its demand realized, what else but an imaginary spirit will lead the person, since the true spirit within him continues to petition him to listen to the monitor within? A believer can make no genuine spiritual progress if he is reluctant to have his evil conscience judged in God's light and clearly dealt with. The truth or falsity of his consecration and service depends on his willing obedience to the Lord-both to His command and to His reproach.

After one has permitted conscience to begin operating, he should allow it to perfect its work. Sins must be treated progressively one by one until all have been eliminated. If a child of God is faithful in his dealing with sin and faithfully follows his conscience, he shall receive light increasingly from heaven and have his unnoticed sins exposed; the Holy Spirit shall enable him to read and to understand more of the law written upon his heart. Thus is he made to know what is holiness, righteousness, purity and honesty, concerning which he had had only vague ideas before. Moreover, his intuition is strengthened greatly in its ability to know the mind of the Holy Spirit. Whenever a believer is therefore reproved by his conscience his immediate response should be: "Lord, I am willing to obey." He should let Christ once again be the Lord of his life; he should be teachable and should be taught by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit shall surely come and help if a person is honestly minding his conscience.

Conscience is like a window to the believer's spirit. Through it the rays of heaven shine into the spirit, flooding the whole being with light. Heavenly light shines in through the conscience to expose fault and to condemn failure whenever we wrongfully think or speak or act in a way not becoming saints. If by submitting to its voice and eliminating the sin it condemns we allow it to do its work, then the light from heaven will shine brighter next time; but should we not confess nor extirpate the sin, our conscience will be corrupted by it (Titus 1.15), because we have not walked according to the teaching of God's light. With sin accumulating, conscience as a window becomes increasingly clouded. Light can barely penetrate the spirit. And there finally comes a day when that believer can sin without compunction and with no grief at all, since the conscience has long been paralyzed and the intuition dulled by sin. The more spiritual a believer is the more keenly alert is his inner monitor. No Christian can be so spiritual as to have no further necessity to confess his sin. He must be fallen spiritually if his conscience is dull and insensitive. Excellent knowledge, hard labor, excited feeling and strong will cannot substitute for a sensitive conscience. He who does not heed it but seeks mental and sensational progress is retreating spiritually.

The sensitivity of the conscience can be increased as well as decreased. Should anyone give ground to his conscience to operate, his spirit's window will let in more light next time; but should he disregard it or answer it with reason or works other than what it demands, then his conscience will speak more and more softly each time it is rejected until ultimately it ceases to speak. Every time a believer does not listen to conscience he damages his spiritual walk. If this self-inflicted wounding of his spiritual life continues unabated, he shall sink into the state of being fleshly. He will lose all his former distaste for sin and former admiration of victory. Until we learn to face squarely the reproach which arises from conscience, we do not actually appreciate how meaningful to our walk in the spirit this heeding of the voice of conscience is.

A Good Conscience

I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day" (Acts 23.1). This is the secret of Paul's life. The conscience he refers to is not that of an unregenerated person but of a Holy Spirit-filled conscience. Bold in approaching God and perfect in his communion with Him, the Apostle's regenerated conscience gives him no reproach. He does everything according to it. Never does he do anything that his conscience objects to, nor does he ever permit one item to remain in his life which it condemns. He is therefore bold before God and man. We lose our confidence when our conscience is murky. The Apostle "always (took) pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men" (Acts 24.16), for "if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him" (I John 3.21-22).

Believers simply do not realize how very significant their conscience is. Many have the idea that as long as they walk after the spirit all is well. They do not know that an unclear conscience means loss of confidence in approaching God and that this loss in turn means disruption of one's communion with Him. In fact, a muddied conscience can hinder our intuitive communion with God more than anything else. If we fail to keep His commandments and to do what pleases Him our monitor within shall naturally reprove us, rendering us fearful before God and hence keeping us from receiving what we seek. We can serve God only with a clear conscience (2 Tim. 1.3). An opaque one shall surely cause us to shrink back intuitively from God.

"Our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world, and still more toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God" (2 Cor. 1.12). This passage speaks of the testimony of conscience. Only a conscience without offense will testify for a believer. It is good to have the testimony of others, but how much better to have the testimony of our own conscience. The Apostle asserts that this is what he is boasting of here. In our walk after the spirit we need to have this testimony continually. What other people say is subject to error because they cannot fully know how God has guided us. Perhaps they may misunderstand and misjudge us just as the Apostles were misunderstood and misjudged by the believers in their day. At times they also may overpraise and over-admire us. Many times men criticize us when we actually are following the Lord; on other occasions they praise us for what they see in us, though it is largely the result of a temporary emotional outburst or a cleverly conceived thought on our part. Hence outside praise or criticism is inconsequential; but the testimony of our quickened conscience is momentous. We should pay extreme attention to how it bears us witness. What is its estimate of us? Does it condemn us as hypocritical? Or

does it testify that we have walked among men in holiness and godly sincerity? Does conscience affirm that we already have walked according to all the light we have?

What is the testimony of Paul's conscience? It testifies that he has "behaved in the world ... not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God." Conscience in fact can testify to nothing else. What it contends for and insists upon in the believer is solely for that life to be lived by the grace of God and not by earthly wisdom. Earthly wisdom is totally nil in God's will and work. It equally amounts to nothing in a believer's spiritual life. Man's mind is altogether useless in his communion with God; even in his communication with the material world the mind occupies but a subordinate position. A child of God lives on earth exclusively by the grace of God, and grace implies something entirely done by Him, with men having no part in it (Rom. 11.6). Except as one lives exclusively by God—not permitting himself to take any initiative nor allowing his mind to have control over him—can conscience testify that he lives in the world in holiness and godly sincerity. In other words, it operates together with intuition. Conscience bears witness to everything done according to revelation in intuition, but it resists every action which is contrary to intuition, no matter how compatible it is with human wisdom. To sum up, conscience approves only the revelation of intuition. Intuition leads believers, while conscience constrains them to follow their intuition.

A good conscience which attests God's good pleasure in the believer (since there is nothing between him and God) is absolutely essential to a life walked after the spirit. That attestation ought to be the believer's goal: he should be satisfied with nothing less. This indicates what should be a normal Christian's life: as it was the testimony of the Apostle Paul, so must it be with us today. Enoch was a man of good conscience for he knew God was pleased with him. This attestation of God's satisfaction with us helps us to move forward. We must be very careful here, however, lest we exalt our "self" as though we have pleased God. All glory belongs to Him. We should take pains always to have a clear conscience; but should ours in fact be clear, we then must guard against the intrusion of the flesh.

If our conscience consistently attests God's satisfaction with us, we shall have boldness to look to the blood of the Lord Jesus for cleansing each time we unfortunately fail. To have a good conscience we must not depart for a moment from that blood which continually and forever cleanses us. Confessing our sin and trusting in the precious blood are unavoidable. Moreover, because our sinful nature is still within us, we will not be able to recognize many hidden works of the flesh until we have matured spiritually. What we formerly considered harmless may now become sinful to us. Without the cleansing of the precious blood we could never be at peace. But once it is sprinkled on our conscience it shall continue to do its work of cleansing.

The Apostle confides that what he seeks is to have a good conscience towards God and men. These two directions, Godward and manward, are deeply entwined. If we wish to maintain a good conscience towards men, it must first be clear with respect to God. An unclear conscience towards God automatically brings in an unclear one towards men. Consequently all who want to live spiritually must seek to **have a clear conscience towards God (I Peter 3.21)**. This does not in any way signify that it is unimportant to have a good conscience before men. On the contrary, there are many things which can be done towards God but not towards men. Only a clear conscience towards men effects a good testimony before them. Man's misunderstanding does not

affect the testimony: "keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (I Peter 3.16). Good conduct cannot appease an evil conscience; but neither will much reviling by man cast a shadow over a good conscience.

A good conscience also enables us to receive God's promises. Christians nowadays frequently complain that their little faith is the cause for failure to live a perfect spiritual life. Naturally there are many reasons for not possessing greater faith, but the gravest of these is probably an evil conscience. A good conscience is inseparable from a great faith. The moment it is offended, at that very moment faith is weakened. Let us observe how the Bible joins these two elements: "whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1.5). Again: "holding faith and a good conscience" (I Tim. 1.19). Conscience is the organ of our faith. God hates sin intensely, for the apex of God's glory is His infinite holiness. His holiness will not tolerate sin, not even for a moment. If a believer does not purge according to the dictate of conscience—everything contrary to God's mind, he shall lose his fellowship with God instantaneously. All the promises which God grants us in the Bible may be considered conditional. None are bestowed to gratify one's fleshly lust. No one shall experience the Holy Spirit, communion with God, and answered prayer if he does not deal away with his sin and flesh. How can we claim the promise of God with boldness if our voice within is accusing us? How can anyone, whose conscience does not bear him witness that he has lived on earth in holiness and godly sincerity, be a man of prayer who is able to ask God for unlimited rewards? What is the use of praying if our inward monitor reproves us when we lift up our hands to God? Sin must first be forsaken and cleansed before we can pray with faith.

We need to possess a conscience void of offense, not in the sense that it is better than before or that much evil has been done away but that it is without offense and confident before God. This ought to be the normal condition of our conscience. If we prostrate ourselves before it and allow it to reprove us: if we offer ourselves entirely to the Lord and are willing to perform all His purposes: then our confidence shall increase until it is possible for us to regard our conscience as void of offense. We dare to tell God that now we have nothing left which is concealed from Him. So far as we are concerned we know of nothing between us and Him. In walking by the spirit we should never permit the tiniest offense to stir up our conscience. Whatever it condemns must be confessed immediately, cleansed by the precious blood and forsaken, so that no trace be left behind. Each day we should seek to have a good conscience, because no matter how short a time conscience may be offended it renders great harm to the spirit. The Apostle Paul has set us a good example in always having a good conscience. Therein alone shall we maintain uninterrupted fellowship with God.

Conscience and Knowledge

In abiding by the spirit and listening to the voice of conscience we should remember one thing, and that is, conscience is limited by knowledge. It is the organ for, distinguishing good and evil, which means it gives us the knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge varies with different Christians. Some have more while others have less. The degree of knowledge may be determined by individual environment or perhaps by the instruction each has received. Thus we can neither live by the standard of others nor ask other people to live by the light we have. In a Christian's fellowship with God an unknown sin does not hinder communion. Whoever observes all the will

of God known to him and forsakes everything known to be condemned by God is qualified to enjoy perfect fellowship with Him. A young Christian frequently concludes that due to his lack of knowledge he is powerless to please God. *Spiritual* knowledge is indeed quite important, but we also know that the lack of such knowledge does not hinder one's fellowship with God. In the matter of fellowship God looks not at how much we apprehend of His will but rather at what our *attitude* towards His will is. If we honestly seek and wholeheartedly obey His desires, our fellowship remains unbroken, even though there should be many unknown sins in us. Should fellowship be determined by the holiness of God, who among all the most holy saints in the past and the present would be qualified to hold a moment's perfect communion with Him? Everyone would be banished daily from the Lord's face and from the glory of His might. That sin which is unknown to us is under the covering of the precious blood.

On the other hand, were we to permit to remain even the tiniest little sin which we know our conscience has condemned, we instantly would lose that perfect fellowship with God. just as a speck of dust disables us from seeing, so our known sin, no matter how infinitesimal, hides God's smiling face from us. The moment the conscience is offended immediately fellowship is affected. A sin unknown to the saint may persist long in his life without affecting his fellowship with God; but as soon as light (knowledge) breaks in, he forfeits a day's fellowship with Him for every day he allows that sin to remain. God fellowships with us according to the level of the knowledge of our conscience. We shall be very foolish if we assume that, since a certain matter has not hindered our fellowship with God for so many years, it cannot later be of any consequence.

This is because conscience can condemn only to the extent of its newest light; it cannot judge as sinful that of which it is not conscious. As the knowledge of a believer grows, his conscience too increases in its consciousness. The more his knowledge advances the more his conscience judges. One need not worry about what he does not know if he but completely follows what he already does know. "If we walk in the light" that is, if we are walking in the light which *we have already*" as he is in the light, we have fellowship with *one another*, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin (though many are still unknown to us)" (I John 1.7). God has unlimited light. Although our light is limited, we shall have fellowship with God and the blood of His Son shall cleanse us if we walk according to the light we have. Perhaps there are still sins today unremoved from our life, but we are not conscious of them; hence we can continue to have fellowship with God today. Let us keep in mind that, important as conscience is, it nevertheless is not our standard of holiness, because it is closely related to knowledge. *Christ Himself* is alone our single standard of holiness. But in the matter of fellowship with God, His one condition is whether or not we have maintained a conscience void of offense. Yet, having fully obeyed the dictates of conscience, we must not visualize ourselves as now "perfect." A good conscience merely assures us that so far as our knowledge goes we are perfect, that is, we have arrived at the *immediate* goal, but not the ultimate one.

Such being the case, our standard of conduct rises higher to the degree our knowledge of the Scriptures and spiritual experience increase. Only when our lives become holier as our light progresses can we preserve a conscience without offense. It shall invariably accuse us if we accompany this year's knowledge and experience with only last year's conduct. God did not cut off His fellowship with us last year because of our sins unknown to us then; but He certainly

shall sever it today if we do not forsake the sins unknown last year but now known this year. Conscience is a Godgiven *current* standard of holiness. Whoever violates that standard is assumed to have committed sin.

The Lord has many words for us, but in view of the immaturity of our spiritual understanding He has to wait. God deals with His children according to their respective conditions. Due to varying degrees of knowledge in the conscience some are not conscious of sins regarded as very great by **their fellow believers**. Hence, let us not judge one another. The Father alone knows how to handle His children. He does not expect to find the strength of "young men" in His "little children" nor the experience of "fathers" in the "young men." But He does wait for *each* of his children to *obey* Him according to -what he *already knows*. Were we to know for sure (which is not easy) that God has spoken to our brother on a particular matter and that our brother has failed to listen, then we can persuade him to obey. Yet we should never force our brother to follow what our conscience says to us. If the God of perfect holiness does not reject us because of our past unknown sins, how can we, on the basis of our current standard, judge our brother who only knows now what we knew last year?

In fact, in helping other people we should not coerce obedience from them in small details but only advise them to follow faithfully the dictate of their own conscience. If their volition yields to God they will obey Him when the Holy Spirit sheds light on the words clearly written in the Bible. As long as his volition is yielded, a believer will follow God's desire the moment his conscience receives light. The same is applicable to ourselves. We should not overextend ourselves to the point of exciting the strength of our soul to understand truths beyond our present capacity. If we are disposed to obey today's voice of God, we are considered acceptable. On the other hand, we should not restrain ourselves from searching any truth which the Holy Spirit may lead us intuitively to search. Such restraint would mean lowering our standard of holiness. In a word, there is no problem for that one who is willing to walk by the spirit.

A Weak Conscience

A few moments ago we remarked that the standard of our holy living is Christ, not conscience, though the latter nonetheless is of great significance. It testifies whether or not in our everyday life we have pleased God; it consequently serves as a criterion for the *current* degree of holiness. If we live by what conscience teaches we have arrived at the place we should be for the present moment. It is therefore a prime factor in our daily walk after the spirit. In whatever matter we disobey the dictate of our conscience we shall be reprimanded by it. As a result we shall lose peace and shall be cut off temporarily from having fellowship with God. There is no question that we must follow what conscience demands; but how perfect its demand is remains a question.

As we have seen, conscience is limited by knowledge. It can guide only by the knowledge it possesses. It condemns every disobedience to what it knows, but it cannot condemn what it itself does not know. Hence a vast distance obtains between the measure of conscience and the measure of God's holiness. just here we find at least two defects. First, a conscience with limited knowledge condemns only what it knows as wrong and leaves untouched in our life numerous matters which are not according to God's will. God and those more matured saints know how imperfect we are, and yet we continue to walk in our old fashion for lack of new light.

Is not this an enormous defect? This imperfection is nonetheless bearable because God does not judge what we do not know. Despite this flaw we can fellowship with Him and be accepted if we simply obey whatever our conscience dictates.

But the second defect, unlike the first, *does* interfere with our fellowship with God. Just as a limited knowledge fails to judge what ought to be judged so it may also judge what should not be judged. Does it mean that conscience is faulty in its guidance? No, the leading of conscience is correct and must be heeded by believers. But there are different degrees of knowledge among the saints. Many things which can be done with knowledge are condemned as sins by the conscience of those who lack knowledge. This manifests the disease of believers' immaturity. The fathers can do many things with perfect liberty for they have advanced knowledge, experience and position, but for the little children to do them would be entirely wrong because they simply do not possess such knowledge, experience and position. This does not imply that there are two different standards for the Christians conduct. It just shows, however, that the standard of good and evil is bound up with individual position. This **law applies to the secular, as well as to the spiritual, realm**. Many matters agree perfectly with God's will when done by matured believers, but these very items become sins if copied by immature ones.

The reason for this variance is the different degrees of knowledge in our consciences. When one believer does what his conscience deems good he is obeying the will of God; but the conscience of another person may judge the same thing as evil, and he will be sinning against God if he does it. The absolute will of God is always the same; but He reveals His mind to each person according to the limitation of their spiritual position. Those with knowledge have a stronger conscience and consequently enjoy more liberty; while those without knowledge harbor a weaker conscience and hence experience more bondage.

This is distinctly illustrated in the first letter to the Corinthians. There was much misunderstanding among the Christians at Corinth concerning the eating of food offered to idols. Some of them regarded idols as possessing no real existence since there is no God but One (I Cor. 8.4). So for them there could be no difference between the food offered to idols and food not so offered: both with propriety could be eaten. But others, having long been accustomed to idols, could not help viewing the food as though it were truly offered to an idol. They felt uneasy when eating it. Because their conscience was weak while eating the food, they were defiled (v.7). The Apostle treated this divergence of view as a matter of knowledge (v.7). The former had light and therefore did not sin when they ate, for their conscience did not bother them; the latter, however, not enjoying such knowledge, felt uneasy while eating and so were guilty. Thus we see the great importance of knowledge. The increase of it sometimes may increase the condemnation of conscience but it may equally decrease its condemnation.

It is advisable for us to beseech the Lord to grant us more knowledge in order that we may not be bound unreasonably, but this knowledge must be kept in humility lest we, like the Corinthians, fall into the flesh. In case our knowledge is inadequate and our conscience continues its censure, we must obey its voice at all cost. We should never philosophize that since this thing is not wrong according to God's highest standard, we can do it in spite of what our conscience says. Let us not forget that conscience is our current standard of God's leading. We need to submit to it, else we sin. God judges whatever conscience judges.

What we have discussed here concerns merely outward items such as food. In those items of a more spiritual character there can be no such difference of liberty and bondage, however much our knowledge grows. Only in these external physical matters does God deal with us according to our age. In the young believers He pays much attention to their food, clothing and other external issues, because He desires to put to death the evil deeds of the body. If the young genuinely have a heart to follow the Lord they shall find Him frequently calling them, through their spirits conscience, to subdue themselves in these matters. But those with deeper experience in the Lord seem to enjoy more liberty in their conscience with respect to these items because they already have learned how to obey Him.

Yet the more advanced ones are confronted by one of the most serious hazards here. Their conscience becomes so strong as to drift into cold numbness. Young Christians who follow the Lord wholeheartedly obey Him at many points, for their conscience is sensitive and easily moved by the Holy Spirit. Old believers, on the other hand, have so much knowledge that they tend to overdevelop their mind so as to numb the sensitivity of the conscience. They are tempted to do things according to the knowledge of their mind and seemingly render themselves immovable by the Holy Spirit. This is a fatal blow to spiritual life, It removes the freshness from a believer's walk and causes it to become old and dull. Regardless how much knowledge we possess, let us be careful not to follow it but the conscience of our spirit.

Should we disregard what is condemned intuitively by our conscience and take our knowledge as our standard of conduct, we have already settled into walking after the flesh. Is it not true that our conscience sometimes can be greatly disturbed when we set out to do what is absolutely legitimate according to the truth we know? That which conscience condemns is reckoned as not in accordance with God's will, even though by the knowledge of our mind it is good. This is because our knowledge is acquired through the searchings of our intellect and not by revelations in our intuition. Hence the leading of conscience and of knowledge can prove to be quite conflicting.

Paul indicates that one's spiritual life shall be impaired enormously if he disregards the reproach of conscience and follows the knowledge of his mind instead. 'For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died" (I Cor. 8.10-11). Seeing a believer with knowledge eating food offered to idols, the one without knowledge tends to think he too can so eat. But if the latter eats against the voice of his conscience he falls into sin. Let us never for a moment, then, walk by the knowledge we have. However much of it we have accumulated, we ought only to heed the intuition and conscience of the spirit. Perhaps one's knowledge may influence his conscience; even so, what he must follow directly is his conscience. God is looking more for our obedience to His will than for the "correctness" of our conduct. Our listening to the voice of conscience guarantees the genuine character of our consecration and obedience. Through our conscience God examines our motive--whether we desire to obey Him or we seek something else.

Another thing one must guard against is the blocking of his conscience. It often loses its normal operation through a kind of blockage. When we are surrounded by those whose conscience is deadly numb, ours may be numbed also through their argument, conversation, teaching,

persuasion or example. Beware of teachers with hardened consciences: beware of man-made consciences: reject all attempts of man to mold yours. Our consciences must be responsible directly to God in all regards. We ourselves must know His will and responsible for executing it. We will fail if we neglect our conscience to follow that of another.

Let us recapitulate. The conscience of the believer constitutes one of the indispensable faculties of his spirit. We ought to follow its guidance fully. Though it is influenced by knowledge, its voice nonetheless represents God's highest will for His children today. It is well for us to arrive at the highest for today. Other matters we need not worry about. Let us continuously maintain our conscience in a healthy condition. Do not permit any sin to hurt its feeling. If at any time we discover that it has become cold and hard as though nothing can move us, let us recognize by this that we have fallen *deeply* into the flesh. In such a case, all the Bible knowledge we have acquired is but stored in the mind of the flesh and is lacking in living power. We ought to follow the intuition of our spirit unceasingly, being filled with the Holy Spirit, in order that our conscience may increase daily in sensitivity and our repentance may be as instantaneous as our knowledge of anything wrong between us and God. Do not be concerned purely with the mind and neglect the intuitive conscience. The extent of spirituality is measured by the sensitivity to our conscience. Countless are those Christians who have disregarded their conscience in the past and are now unlively, merely holding some dead knowledge in their brain. May we be ever watchful lest we stumble into the same trap. Do not be afraid to be easily moved. Never fear to have the conscience exercised too much; only fear for it not to be moved enough. Conscience serves as a monitor for God. It informs us where something has gone wrong or needs to be repaired. We can avoid much destructive consequences later if we but listen to conscience earlier.

LESSON TEN

(Chapter 2—Part 6 of *The Spiritual Man*)

The Laws of the Spirit

A CHILD OF GOD Must learn to recognize the sense of consciousness of his inner being as the first condition for a life walked after the spirit. If he does not discern what is the sense of the spirit and additionally the sense of the soul, he invariably shall fail to do what the spirit requires of him. For instance, when we feel hungry we know we should eat; when we feel cold we know we should be clothed. Our senses express needs and requirements. We must therefore know what our physical senses mean before we can know how to satisfy them with material supplies. In the spiritual realm, too, one must come to understand the meanings of his spirit's various senses as well as their respective supply. Only after an individual comprehends his spirit with its movements can he walk by the spirit.

There are a few laws of the spirit with which every Christian ought to be acquainted. If he does not understand these laws or fails to see the significance of recognizing the sensations of the spirit, he will miss many of its movements. His failure to discern its senses undermines the proper place of the spirit in his daily walk. Hence once we have known the various functions of the inner man, such as intuition, communion and conscience, we need to identify their movements which can then enable us to walk by the spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, our spirit will be operating actively. But we shall incur loss if we disregard these operations. It is thus imperative that we observe the way the spirit habitually moves. A Christian should know more about the operation of his spirit than about the activity of his mind.

(1) Weights on the Spirit

The spirit needs to be kept in a state of perfect freedom. It should always be light, as though floating in the air; only so may life grow and work be done. A Christian ought to realize what the weights laid on his spirit are. Often he feels it is under oppression, as if a thousand pound load were pressing upon his heart. He can unearth no reason for this weight, which usually steals in upon one quite suddenly. It is employed by the enemy to harass the spiritual, to deprive him of joy and lightness, as well as to disable his spirit from working together with the Holy Spirit. If he does not recognize the source of this heaviness and the meaning of the oppression in the spirit, he cannot instantly deal with it and thereby restore his Spirit immediately to normalcy.

The believer may be puzzled by such a sensation, interpreting it to be something natural or something occasional. He consequently may disregard it and allow his spirit to come under suppression. How often he continues to work without paying due attention to the weight, and frequently giving the enemy ground to play his trick at will upon him. Many times when this one is supposed to be used by God, he instead is powerless to accomplish God's work because he carries this heavy weight with him. The consciousness of his spirit grows very dull beneath such

oppression. That explains why Satan and his evil hosts focus their assault on placing a heavy weight upon the believer's spirit. Alas for the child of God; for he often is unaware that the source of the weight is satanic; and even if he is aware, he may not resist.

With this load upon his spirit the Christian is bound to suffer defeat. If he encounters it in the morning and does not deal with it at once, he experiences defeat the whole day long. A free spirit is the basis for victory. In order to fight against the enemy and to live out God's life, we must possess a spirit altogether untrammelled by weight. When it is oppressed the Christian is deprived of his power of discernment and naturally misses God's true guidance. Whenever the spirit suffers oppression the mind cannot function properly. Everything comes to a halt or else everything goes awry.

It is of utmost consequence to deal with the heavy weight or oppression of the spirit *immediately*. Never adopt an attitude of indifference, for if you do you will suffer for it. The weight will grow heavier and heavier. And should it not be dealt away with, it will become a part of your life. Whereupon you will view all spiritual affairs as bitter and acrid, retarding your spiritual advance. In case you do not treat of the weight the first time it will come upon you more easily the next. The way to handle it is to stop the work at hand at once, set your will against this weight, and exercise your spirit to oppose it. Occasionally you may have to utter words audibly against it; at other times with the power of your spirit you should resist in prayer.

It is also indispensable to deal with the cause of such heaviness because the oppressive load shall remain as long as the cause goes unresolved. In addition to resisting the enemy's work there should be the uncovering of the cause behind that work. And if successful, you will thereby regain the place you previously had yielded to the enemy. If you have the power of discernment you will come to see it was because of your failure to cooperate with God at a particular time with regard to: a particular matter that the enemy gained ground to crush you with such a heavy weight. The lost ground must be regained. If we resist the enemy by discovering the cause of his working, he shall flee.

(2) Blockage of the Spirit

The spirit requires the soul and body as organs for expression. It is like a mistress who must have a steward and a servant working for her to accomplish her wish. It can also be likened to an electric current which requires wire to show forth light. Should the soul and body lose their normality under the attack of the enemy, the spirit shall be shut in and denied any means of outlet. The adversary is familiar with the requirements of the spirit; therefore he frequently acts against the believer's soul and body. When these parts cease to function properly the spirit is stripped of its means of expression and so forfeits its victorious position.

During such a period one's mind may be confused, his emotions disturbed, his will weary and impotent to actively govern the whole being, or his body overly tired and temporarily lazy. He must, resist these symptoms at once or else his spirit will be blocked in and he be unfit either to engage the enemy livingly in battle or to retain his ground of victory.

Shortly after his spirit is shut in, the believer loses his "aliveness." He seems to be bashful, seeks to hide himself, and seldom undertakes anything publicly. He likes to withdraw to the back, not wanting to be seen. Perhaps he fancies he has discovered something of himself, not realizing his spirit actually is being blocked. He appears to have no interest in reading the Bible and to have no word in prayer. His past work and experience, whenever recalled, appear to be meaningless, sometimes even laughable, to him. He feels no power in preaching-as though he were merely going through the motions. Should he allow this blockage of the spirit to be prolonged, he shall be attacked even more severely by the enemy. Were not God to intervene, due to his own prayer or that of others, the believer would be suffocated spiritually. For lack of knowledge, his reaction may simply be one of surprise and he may thus assume the alltoocommon attitude of giving up. Actually though, because no spiritual experience or sense occurs without a cause, we should search it out carefully and not permit any weight to persist in us.

Satan tries to imprison the spirit in a dark chamber so that the soul is without the guidance of the spirit. As soon as the blockage is lifted, however, the believer once again can breathe easily and be restored to his normal liveliness.

Whenever a child of God is in such a hemmed-in situation, it is vital that he exercise his will towards *audibly uttering* words against the foe, lifting up his voice to proclaim the victory of the cross and the defeat of the enemy. He must wholeheartedly oppose the work of the adversary in both his soul and body. Following such a proclamation he must employ his will actively to resist the blockage. Prayer is one means of opening the spirit. But given the abovedescribed situation, one needs to pray aloud. The best thing for the saint to do is to claim the victorious name of the Lord Jesus over every onslaught of the enemy. In addition to prayer he should exercise his spirit to run the blockade so as to reach the outside.

(3) Poisoning of the Spirit

Our spirit can be poisoned by the evil spirit. This poison is the flaming dart of the enemy, aimed directly at our spirit. Into it he shoots sorrow, grief, anguish, woe or heartbreak to cause us to have a "sorrowful spirit" (I Sam. 1.15 ASV) : and a "broken spirit who can bear?" (Prov. 18.14) It is exceedingly hazardous for anyone to accept without objection or question every sorrow which comes upon him and take for granted that these are naturally his own feelings. He has not yet examined the source nor put up any resistance. Let us remember to never accept any thought or feeling lightly. If we wish to walk after the spirit we must be watchful in all points, searching especially the source of every notion and sensation.

Sometimes Satan provokes us to harden our spirit, It can become stiff, unyielding, narrow and selfish. Such a spirit cannot work with God nor can it do His will. And so a believer will abandon his love towards men; he will shed every delicate, sympathetic, tenderhearted feeling towards others. Since he has lost the generosity of the Lord and has drawn a circle around himself, how can the Holy Spirit ever use him mightily?

Frequently the enemy entices Christians to harbor an unforgiving spirit-a very common symptom indeed among God's children. Perhaps the fall of spiritual Christians can be traced chiefly to this very cause. Such bitterness and fault-finding and enmity inflict a severe blow upon spiritual life.

If believers fail to see that such an attitude is distinctly from the enemy and *not from themselves*, they shall never be emancipated from the spirit of hatred.

At still other times Satan induces the spirit of God' people to become narrow and confined. He seduces these Christians into separating themselves from others by drawing lines of demarcation. If anyone is blind to the concept of the church as a body he will be devoted to his "small circle," proving that his spirit is already shrunken. The spiritual person, however, does not consider the things of God as his own but loves the whole church in his heart. If one's spirit is open, the river of life overflows; should his spirit shrink, he hinders God's work and lessens his own usefulness. A spirit that is not large enough to embrace all the children of God has been poisoned already.

Often Satan injects pride into the believer's spirit, evoking in him an attitude of self-importance and of self-conceit. He causes him to esteem himself a very outstanding person, one who is indispensable in God's work. Such a spirit constitutes one of the major reasons for the fall of believers: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16.18).

The evil spirit infects the believer's spirit with these and other venoms. If these poisons are not opposed instantly they soon become "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5.19). At first these are only poisons from Satan, but they can be transformed into, sins of the flesh if the Christian accepts them, even unconsciously, rather than resists them.

If the venom in the spirit is not dealt with it shall immediately become the sin of the spirit, a sin severer than any other. James and John thunderously asked: "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them? ... And he said, you do, not know what manner of spirit you are of" (Luke 9.54,55 marginal). It is most essential that we know of what kind of spirit we are. We often do not perceive that our spirit is prey to the instigation of the enemy. Everything is wrong if it is wrong. From the experience of these two disciples we observe that an erring spirit can manifest itself easily through spoken words. Even so, the words uttered may not reveal nearly as much as the tone assumed. Sometimes the words are correct but the tone is wrong. To assure victory we need to watch even the sound of our speech. Immediately the evil spirit touches our **spirit**, our voice loses its softness. A harsh, **hard, and shrill utterance** does not spring from the Holy Spirit; it simply exhibits the fact that the one who speaks has been poisoned already by Satan.

How do we usually speak? Are we able to refer to others without any tinge of condemnation? Our words may in fact be true but lurking behind those words of truth could be the spirit of criticism, condemnation, wrath, or jealousy. Whereas we should speak the truth in love. If our spirit is pure and gentle, then are we able to voice the truth. Now should the spirit of condemning be within us, we most assuredly have sinned. Sin is not only an action; it is also a condition. What is hidden behind things is what matters the most. How many times we sin while doing something for God or men, for darkly hidden away is an unfaithful, unwilling, or grudging spirit.

We must keep our spirit sweet and soft. It must be pure and clean. Do we consider an erring spirit as sin? Do we know -when the enemy has attacked our spirit-when our spirit is poisoned? Suppose we do know, are we humble enough to eliminate such sin? -The moment we notice our voice has turned harsh, we must stop instantly. With not the slightest hesitation we should turn to

ourselves and say, I am willing to speak with a pure spirit; I am willing to oppose the enemy." If we are reluctant to say to our brethren, I am wrong," then our spirit remains engulfed in its sin. God's children ought to learn how to guard their spirit from being goaded by the enemy. They should know also how to preserve it in sweetness and tenderness.

In ordinary times the Lord's people should early take the shield of faith which quenches all the flaming darts of the evil one. This implies that we should swiftly exercise living faith to look for God's protection and to withstand the enemy's attack. Faith is our shield, not our extractor: faith is a weapon for quenching the flaming darts, not for pulling them out afterwards. But should anyone be bit by a flaming dart, he at once must eliminate the cause of the dart. He should maintain an attitude of resistance, immediately denying whatever comes from Satan and praying for cleansing.

(4) Sinking of the Spirit

The spirit sinking or being submerged is largely due to a turning in on oneself. It may be induced by a possessiveness over all the experiences one has had or by an intrusion of the power of darkness or by a self-centeredness in prayer and worship. When anyone's spirit is tilted inward instead of outward the power of God is at once severed and the spirit will soon be surrounded by the soul.

Sometimes this submerging of the spirit in the soul is precipitated by the deceit of the evil foe who supplies the person with physical sensations and various wonderful joyful experiences. He does not perceive that they originate with the evil spirit: he instead construes them to be from God: and thus he unknowingly comes to dwell in a sensuous world where his spirit is drowned in the soul.

Believers may be additionally deceived-and their spirit accordingly descend into the soul-when they do not understand the position of Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells the child of God to manifest the enthroned Christ to him. The books of Acts, Ephesians, and Hebrews speak very plainly on the position of Christ *in the heaven* today. The spirit of the Christian is joined to the heavenly Christ. Because of his ignorance, however, the Christian looks within to find Him. He wishes to be united with the Christ Who is in him. Hence his spirit cannot ascend above the clouds, but rather is oppressed and tumbles into the soulical realm.

All these operations tempt the individual to live in his feelings rather than in his spirit. He needs to know that before he becomes spiritual and actually walks in the spirit the-enemy is not compelled at that time to resort to counterfeit; but after the person has experienced the pouring of the Holy Spirit's power into his spirit, he faces a new world never before encountered. And just here is there cause for alarm, for the enemy will work to induce him to cease abiding in the spirit. If he succeeds, the believer will incur great loss. The tactic of the adversary is to deceive him through the feelings of the soul and body into thinking these are spiritual experiences for him to enjoy.

Many who have entered into spiritual living shall meet defeats because of their ignorance of its laws. The enemy foment within them all sorts of physical sensations and supernatural

experiences. Should they lean on these supernatural phenomena or on other sensational occurrences which come from the outside, their life in the spirit will be obstructed. They will dwell in their outward soul or body while their innermost spirit is denied the power to cooperate with God. Naturally soul and body once again ascend, regain their forfeited authority, and submerge the spirit completely.

While the spirit is submerged its senses are rendered inoperative. When this occurs, many spiritual Christians feel they have lost their spirit. Soul and body occupy such a large place that the entire being can live by their sensations. Man's sensory organs replace the operation of the spirit. The movements of the spirit are buried beneath the powerful sensations of the soul and body. And eventually all spiritual life and work are completely terminated. If such a condition is permitted to last for very long the believer has fallen terribly indeed. He may perhaps be possessed by the evil spirit.

Everything therefore which is capable of impairing spiritual consciousness must be denied. We must shun wild laughter, bitter crying, and every other extreme outburst of physical emotion. The body should be kept in perfect calm. We must reject inordinate supernatural or natural sensations, for these propel the mind to follow the body and not the spirit. Never allow anything to hinder us from understanding the small still throb of the spirit.

Because the soul-when the spirit begins to sink-surrounds it and reduces it to servitude, the child of God must learn how to keep his spirit continuously outgoing, never permitting it to stagnate. For unless his spirit sallies forth to attack Satan, Satan unquestionably will attack his spirit and cause it to sink. Only as our spirit is flowing out is the Holy Spirit equally able to flow out His life. The moment anyone turns in on himself and sets his spirit to sinking, **the torrential** flow of the divine spirit immediately stops. He uses the believer's spirit as His channel for the flowing out of God's life.

A Christian needs to determine what has caused his spirit to slump and then must restore it to its original state. As soon as he discovers a leak in the power of his spirit, he must try to redeem the situation at once.

(5) Burdens of the Spirit

The burdens of the spirit differ from the weights on the spirit. The latter proceed from Satan with the intent of crushing the believer and making him suffer, but the former issue from God in His desire to manifest His will to the believer so that he may cooperate with Him. Any weight on the spirit has no other objective than to oppress; it therefore usually serves no purpose and produces no fruit. A burden of the spirit, on the other hand, is given by God to His child for the purpose of calling him to work, to pray, or to preach.

It is a burden with purpose, with reason, and for spiritual profit. We must learn how to distinguish the burden of the spirit from the weight on the spirit.

Satan never burdens Christians with anything; he only encircles their spirit and presses in with a heavy weight. Such a load binds one's spirit and throttles his mind from functioning. A person

with a burden or concern from God merely carries it; but the one who is oppressed by Satan finds his total being bound. With the arrival of the power of darkness, a believer instantaneously forfeits his freedom. A Godgiven burden is quite the reverse. However weighty it may be, God's concern is never so heavy as to throttle him from praying. The *freedom* of prayer will never be lost under any burden from God: yet the enemy's weight which forces itself upon one's spirit invariably denies one his freedom to pray. The burden imparted by God is lifted once we have prayed, but the heaviness from the enemy cannot be raised unless we fight and resist in prayer. The weight on the spirit steals in unawares, whereas the concern of the spirit results from God's Spirit working in our spirit. The load upon the spirit is most miserable and oppressive, while the burden of the spirit is very joyous (naturally the flesh does not deem it so), for it summons us to walk together with God (see Matt. 11.30). It turns bitter only when opposed and its demand is not met.

All real works begin with burdens or concerns in the spirit. (Of course, when the spirit lacks any concern we need to exercise our minds.) When God desires us to labor or speak or pray, He first implants a burden in our spirit. Now if we are acquainted with the laws of the spirit we will not continue on carelessly with the work in hand and allow the burden to accrue. Nor will we neglectfully disregard the burden until it is no longer sensed. We should lay everything aside immediately to ferret out *the meaning of this burden*. Once we have discerned its import, we can act accordingly. And when the work called for is done, the burden then leaves us.

In order to receive burdens from God our spirit has to be kept continuously free and untrampled. Only an untrammelled spirit can detect the movement of the Holy Spirit. Any spirit which is already full of concerns has lost the sharpness of its intuitive sense and hence cannot be a good vessel. Due to his failure to act according to the burden which he already has received from God, the believer often finds himself painfully burdened for many days. During this period God is unable to give him any new one. Consequently, it is highly necessary to search out the meaning of a burden through prayer, with the help of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of one's mind.

Frequently the burden or concern in the spirit is for prayer (Col. 4.12). As a matter of fact we are not able to pray beyond our burden. To continue to pray without it can produce no fruit because the prayer must be emanating from our mind. But the *prayer* burden in the spirit can only be lightened *through prayer*. Whenever God concerns us with something, such as prayer, preaching the Word, and so forth, the only way to lessen that concern or burden is to do what it calls for. The prayer burden in the spirit alone enables us to pray in the Holy Spirit with sighs too deep for words. When our spirit is concerned with prayer burdens nothing can discharge that burden except prayer. It is lifted soon after the work is performed.

Because of the large accumulation of prayer burdens we often find it difficult to pray at first, but the longer we pray the more our spirit responds with amens. We should try our best to pour out all the burdens in our spirit by prayer until all of them have left us. The more life is poured out through prayer, the happier we are. A common temptation, however, is to cease praying before the burden is lifted. When we begin to feel buoyant in our spirit we assume our prayer is answered, not realizing we are just beginning to engage in spiritual work. If at that moment we turn away to attend to other matters, then spiritual work will suffer great loss.

A believer should never regard spiritual labor as altogether joyous and jubilant, as though the presence of a burden is going to deprive him of what he considers to be spiritual experience. Quite pitiful is the one who is unaware of what real spiritual exertion in the burden of the spirit is truly like. He who is willing to suffer for God and men does not live for himself; but those who daily seek sensuous pleasures and become apprehensive about bearing burdens for God and the church are living only for themselves. Now in the light of what has just been said, we must not consider ourselves as fallen or as having erred whenever God imparts a burden to us. Satan is extremely pleased if we interpret it as such for he shall thereby escape our attacks. Let us not misunderstand ourselves. And let us not listen to Satan, for if we do we shall be accused and tormented further.

Genuine spiritual work is aggressive towards Satan and travails in birth for believers. These in no wise can be termed joyous undertakings. They require a more thorough death to self. That explains why no soulish Christian is able to engage in true spiritual effort. To enjoy sensuous pleasures daily is no evidence of spirituality. On the contrary, those who go on with God and disregard their own feelings are the -truly spiritual ones. When a believer in burden is contending with the enemy he often wishes to be alone, separated from all human intercourse so as to concentrate on spiritual warfare. Before the combat is over he can barely display a smiling face. A spiritual Christian should welcome any burden which the Lord brings his way.

We need to know the laws of the spirit and the way to cooperate with God as well. Otherwise, we may prolong the burden to our disadvantage or else lose the opportunity to labor together with God. Every time we receive a burden in our spirit we should find out immediately through prayer what that burden is. If it is a call to war, to war we go; if a call to preach the gospel, the gospel we preach; and if a call to pray, pray we will. Let us seek how to work together with God. Let the old burden be discharged and the new one come in.

(6) Ebbing of the Spirit

God's life and power in our spirit can recede like a tide. We recognize that anyone soulish usually deems his spiritual life to be at high tide when he *feels* the presence of God; but if he feels low and dry, he is at ebb tide. These are of course but feelings; they do not represent the reality of spiritual life.

Nevertheless, spiritual life does encounter a time of decline, though it is quite unlike any feeling of the soul. After one is filled with the Holy Spirit he can proceed quite well for a period, and then gradually, not suddenly, his spiritual life subsides. The difference between a sensuous decline and a spiritual decline lies here: the former is usually abrupt, whereas the latter is gradual. A believer may become conscious that the life and power of God which he once received is gradually ebbing. This may cause him to lose the joy' peace and power which his spirit ought to sustain. Day by day he grows weaker. At this time he seems to lose his taste for communion with God: his Bible reading becomes meaningless: rarely, if at all, is his heart touched by any message or special verse. Moreover, his prayer turns dry and dreary as if there is neither sense nor word; and his witnessing appears to be forced and reluctant, not overflowing as before. In other words, life is no longer as vibrant, strong, buoyant or joyous as before. Everything seems to have receded.

A tide has its ebb and flow. Can God's life and power in our spirit likewise be characterized by such phenomena? By no means! God's life knows no such ebb, because it is forever flowing. It does not rise and fall as the ocean tide, but is like a river ever flowing with living water (John 7.38). God's life in us is not at all like the tide which must ebb at a certain hour, because the source of our inner life is in God with Whom there is "no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1.17). Hence the life in our spirit should flow like a river-incessantly and unto overflowing.

Wherefore if anyone becomes aware that his life is receding he should understand that life does not subside, it simply ceases to flow. He should know as well that such ebbing is totally unnecessary. Never be so deceived by Satan as to consider it impossible for one who is still in the body to be filled permanently with the life of God. His life in us is like a river of living water. If it is not hindered it shall flow uninterruptedly. A Christian can experience a life forever flowing; an ebb tide is not only unnecessary but abnormal as well.

The question in hand is accordingly not how we may induce spiritual life to rise up after it has fallen; rather, it is how we may get it to flow. The fountain of life remains within the believer, though it is now blocked. Nothing is wrong with the inlet; it is the outlet which is obstructed. The water of life does not spring forth because the flow has no way through. Were the outlet cleared, the water of life would flow unceasingly. What a child of God therefore needs is not more life but more flow of life.

Immediately upon sensing a waning in his spiritual life a child of God automatically should realize an obstruction must exist somewhere. Satan will accuse you of having retrogressed spiritually; other people will judge you as having lost power; and you yourself will imagine you must have committed some grave sin. These may be true, but they do not form the whole truth. Actually, such a situation is mostly, though not entirely, created because of our not knowing how to cooperate with God in fulfilling His conditions for the certainty of a ceaseless flow. Foolishness is a prime factor. Hence a person should immediately pray and meditate over, and test and search out the cause for, such an ebbing. He should wait upon God, asking His Spirit to reveal the reason. In the meantime, he should try to unearth where he has failed to fulfill the condition for the steady flow of life.

Not only should you confess that you have drawn back (such confession is important) but also you should actively ferret out the explanation for the falling back. While the opinions of Satan, others and yourself are undependable, they are still worth considering, since sometimes they are real. Upon discovering the cause, you must deal with it without delay. Life will not flow until the cause of obstruction is duly treated.

Consequently, at each ebb tide in spiritual life one must instantly begin to isolate its cause through prayer, meditation and searching. Know the law of the flow of God's life; repulse every attack of the enemy. Then life once again shall flow, stronger than before, breaking through every stronghold of the enemy.

(7) Irresponsibility of the Spirit

Man's spirit can be compared to an electric bulb. When in contact with the Holy Spirit, it shines; but should it be disconnected, it plunges into darkness. "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord" (Prov. 20.27). God's aim is to fill the human spirit with light; yet the believer's spirit is sometimes darkened. Why is this? It is because it has lost contact with the Holy Spirit. To perceive whether or not one's spirit is connected with the Holy Spirit, one need only notice if it is shining.

We have said before that God's Spirit dwells in man's and that he cooperates with Him through his own spirit. If the spirit of man has been deprived of its normal condition it will seem to be disconnected from the Holy Spirit, losing all its light. It thus is very necessary for us to maintain our spirit in a healthy quiet state so as to insure its cooperation with the Holy Spirit. If it is disturbed by external forces it automatically is bereft of its power to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and is plunged into darkness.

Now these phenomena cause the spirit to fail in its responsibility of cooperating with the Holy Spirit. As long as it is irresponsible, victory remains impossible. Suppose a Person, rising in the morning, feels as though he has lost his spirit. The enemy will perhaps induce him to think it is due to physical weariness lingering from yesterday's overwork. If he takes the enemy's suggestion without question and allows his spirit to become irresponsible, he shall be stripped of all his strength to repel that day's temptations as well as to accomplish that day's work. He should search right away for the real cause, for the spirit ought to be active and Powerful enough to regulate the body and not be adversely affected by it. He should acknowledge that his spirit, having been assaulted by the enemy, has become irresponsible. He must seek immediate recovery or else he shall be defeated the moment he meets anyone. Never permit the early irresponsible state of the spirit to continue until midday, for this is a sure way to defeat .

Once realizing his spirit has been irresponsible, a believer should oppose without delay all the works of the enemy as well as the causes for the enemy's work. Should it be purely the attack of the adversary the spirit will regain its freedom after having resisted. But if there is justification for the attack, that is, if the person has given any ground to the enemy, then he must uncover the reason and deal with it. Usually the reason is related to the past history of the individual. He needs to pray over such various matters as his environment, family, relatives, friends, work, and so forth. When his spirit senses a release after a certain matter has been prayed over, then he has isolated the cause for the enemy's assault. Shortly after he has taken care of this matter, the believer's spirit will be freed and restored to its function.

Sometimes, however, the irresponsibility of the spirit is because the Christian has loosened the reins, allowing the spirit to stray off course. But we should note from the Word that "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (I Cor. 14.32) and "woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit" (Ezek. 13.3). How extremely important for a Christian to control his spirit by exercising his will so that his spirit may not go to extremes but be kept in that state of cooperation with God. Man's spirit can go wild; hence "a haughty spirit" is remarked upon in Proverbs (16.18). The spirit of man can take action independent of God's Spirit if a believer does not exercise mastery over it and make it subject to Him. We accordingly must be watchful lest

our spirit veer out of God's orbit, lose its quiet communion with God, and be disabled from laboring with Him.

Occasionally the irresponsibility of the spirit is due to its hardness. God requires a soft and tender spirit to express His mind. Should it grow harsh and unyielding, the operations of His Spirit will be hindered. Only a yielding spirit can fulfill the thought of the divine Spirit: "and every one whom his spirit made willing." (Ex. 35.21 ASV). A Christian ought to be able to yield to Him on the shortest notice. His spirit should be most sensitive so that it can detect the still small voice of God and respond right away. If it is hardened the child of God not only is powerless to follow His will but is also unfit to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in his spirit. Hence it is necessary to keep one's spirit in a tender and pliable state so as to enable that one always to follow the delicate throbbing therein. This is what the Apostle meant when he wrote: "do not quench the Spirit" (I Thess. 5.19). A Christian should heed every word, movement, and sense in his inner man carefully. By so doing, his spiritual consciousness will be sharpened and God will be able to make His will known to him.

If a person wishes to walk by his spirit he should recognize when it is irresponsible and unable to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and also determine why. He needs to guard his spirit carefully so as to insure it against all disturbances both from the enemy and from his self life and to assure it a peaceful communion with God.

(8) Conditions of the Spirit

Let us summarize. A believer should know every law of the spirit if he desires to live by it. If he is not vigilant and loses the cooperation of his spirit with God, then he unquestionably has fallen. To discern the particular condition of his inner man is one of the most central laws pertaining to the spirit. All which we have discussed in the chapter are included in this law.

A child of God ought to know what is and what is not the normal condition for his spirit. Since it should have authority over man's soul and body, occupying the highest position in him and possessing the greatest power, the Christian needs to know if such is the situation in him or not. He should also recognize whether his spirit, if it has lost its normalcy, did so through war or environment. The conditions of the spirit may be classified generally into, four types:

- (a) The spirit is oppressed and is therefore in decline.
- (b) The spirit is under compulsion and so is forced into inordinate activity.
- (c) The spirit is defiled (2 Cor. 7.1) since it has yielded ground to sin.
- (d) The spirit is quiet and firm because it occupies its rightful position.

A Christian should know at least these four different conditions and also understand how to deal with each one if necessary. Often a person's spirit sinks and is "pushed aside" through his own carelessness as to the enemy's assault. During that time he seems to have forfeited his heavenly position together with its brightness and victory and subsequently feels cold and withered. Due

to sadness in his spirit or to any one of a number of other reasons, his inner man is cast down and is denied the joy of floating above. When the spirit is oppressed in this fashion it drops below its normal level.

At other times it may be coerced into running wild. A person can be so stimulated by his soul that his spirit falls under compulsion and is thereby denied its tranquillity. Because of his pursuit of creaturely activities he may develop an "unruly spirit." Too much laughter as well as many other actions may produce an unmanageable spirit. Protracted war with the enemy can provoke the spirit to become overly active. The saint may find his spirit overstretched to the point where it is powerless to stop. Or the enemy may inject strange joy or other feelings into him to entice his inner man to move beyond the acceptable and right counsel of his mind or will. Whenever anyone is incompetent to guard his spirit, then is he open inevitably to defeat.

The spirit on other occasions neither sinks too low nor is elevated too high but is simply defiled. The defilement may be due to its attitude of hardness or unyieldedness; or to sins like pride, jealousy and others; or to the mixing in with the spirit of such soulical functions as natural affection, feeling, thought, and so on. The spirit needs to be purified from its every defilement (2 Cor. 7.1; 1 John 1.9).

If a Christian wishes to walk after the spirit he has to discern exactly what condition his own is in, whether it is quietly occupying its proper place, has fallen too low, is risen too high, or is simply defiled. He must learn, if required, how to uplift his oppressed spirit so that it measures up to the standard of the Holy Spirit, how to exercise his will to prevent his spirit from becoming overly active or to restore it to its normalcy if it is too active, and how to cleanse his defiled spirit that it may work together with God once again.

LESSON ELEVEN

(Chapter 4—Part 6 of *The Spiritual Man*)

The Normalcy of the Spirit

AN ERRING SPIRIT is often responsible for much of our incorrect conduct. If anyone desires to walk in a spiritual way he must keep himself continually in a proper state. just as the mind may become loose and haughty or retreat and grow shy, so may his spirit. Should it not be maintained in the, Holy Spirit, then it shall be defeated and his outward conduct shall equally suffer defeat. We ought to understand that numerous outer failures stem from the failure of the inner spirit. Were one's inner man strong and powerful it could control the soul and body and, under any circumstances, inhibit their license; but if it be weak, the soul and body shall oppress the spirit and cause that one to fall.

God is interested in our spirit. It is there that the new life dwells, there that His Spirit works, there that we fellowship with Him, there that we know His will, there that we receive the revelation of the Holy Spirit, there that we are trained, there that we mature, there that we resist the attacks of the enemy, there that we receive authority to overcome the devil and his army, and there that we secure the power for service. It is by the resurrection life in the spirit that our body eventually shall be changed into a resurrection one. As the condition of our spirit is so is the condition of our spiritual life. How essential for us to preserve our spirit in its normal state. What the Lord is especially concerned with in the Christian is not his outer man, the soul, but his inner man, the spirit. No matter how highly developed out outer man may be, if this inner component of ours is abnormal our whole walk shall go askew.

The Bible is not silent about the normalcy of a believer's spirit. Many matured ones have experienced what the Bible exhorts; they recognize that to retain their triumphant **position and** to cooperate with God they must preserve their spirit in the proper conditions laid down in the Word. **We shall shortly** see how it is to be controlled by the renewed will of the believer. This is a principle of great consequence, **for by the will** one is able to set his spirit in its proper place.

A Contrite Spirit

"Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart,

and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit" (Ps. 34.18 ASV)

"For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits

eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and

holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Is. 57.15).

God's people often erroneously think that they need a contrite spirit only at the time they repent and believe in the Lord or whenever they subsequently fall into sin. We should know, however, that God wishes us to keep our spirit in a state of contrition at all times. Although we do not daily sin we are nonetheless required by Him to be of humble spirit constantly, because our flesh still exists and may be stirred up at any moment. Such contrition precludes our losing watchfulness. We ought never sin; yet we always should have sorrow for sin. The presence of God is felt in such a spirit.

God takes no pleasure in our repenting over and over again as though this were sufficient; rather does He wish us to live in perpetual contrition. Only a spirit of this kind can equip us to detect and mourn immediately all disharmony with the Holy Spirit present in our conduct and deeds. It also helps us to acknowledge our faults when told of them. This penitent spirit is very necessary, for despite the fact a person has been joined to the Lord to be one spirit, he is not forever afterwards infallible. The spirit can err (Is. 29.24); even if it has not erred, the mind can be so confused as to paralyze it from executing the thought of the spirit. A contrite inner life helps one to confess instantly and to not hide those little points others have noticed in him as being unlike the Lord. God saves those who possess a contrite spirit; others He cannot save for it requires contrition to know His mind. People who cover their faults and excuse themselves do not have a repentant spirit; hence God cannot save them to the uttermost. How we need a spirit susceptible to the correction both of the Holy Spirit and of man, a spirit willing to concede to having lived below par. And then we shall daily experience the salvation of the Lord.

A Broken Spirit

"The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit" (Ps. 51.17).

A broken spirit is one which trembles before God. Some Christians do not sense any uneasiness in their inner man after they have sinned. A healthy spirit will be broken before God-as was David's upon once having sinned. It is not difficult to restore to God those who have a broken spirit.

An Afflicted Spirit

"But to this man will I look: to the afflicted and contrite in spirit, and who trembleth at my word" (Is. 66.2 Darby) -

The spirit with which God is delighted is an afflicted one because it reverences Him and trembles at His Word. Our spirit must be kept in continual reverential fear of the Lord. All self-reliance and self-conceit must be shattered; the Word of God must be accepted as the sole guide. The believer must possess within him a holy fear: he must have absolutely no confidence in himself: he must be as one whose spirit is so stricken that he dare not raise his head but humbly follows the command of God. A bold and haughty spirit always impedes the way of obedience. But when the cross is working deeply a believer comes to know himself. He realizes how undependable are his ideas, feelings and desires. Hence he dare not trust himself but trembles in all matters,

acknowledging that except he be sustained by the power of God he shall unquestionably fail. We must never be independent of God. The moment our spirit ceases to tremble before Him at that precise moment it declares its independence from Him. Except we sense our helplessness we shall never trust in God. A spirit which trembles before Him shields one from defeat and helps him to truly apprehend God.

A Lowly Spirit

"It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov. 16.19) "He who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor" (Prove 29.23). "And also with, him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble" (Is. 57.15).

Lowliness is not a looking down on one's self; rather is it a not looking at one's self at all. As soon as a believer's spirit becomes haughty he is liable to fall. Humility is not only Godward but is man-ward as well. A lowly spirit is demonstrated when one associates with the poor. It is this spirit alone which does not despise any who are created by God. God's presence and glory is manifested in the life of the spiritually humble.

A lowly person is a teachable person, easily entreated and open to explanation. Many of our spirits are too arrogant: they can teach others but can never themselves be taught. Many possess a stubborn spirit: they stick to their opinions even if they realize they are wrong. Many are too hard in spirit to listen to an explanation for a misunderstanding. Only the humble have the capacity to bear and forbear. God needs a lowly man to express His virtue. How can a proud man hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and then cooperate with God? No trace of pride should be found in our spirit: tenderness, **delicacy, flexibility-these shall be the norm**. A tiny bit of harshness in the inner man may hinder fellowship, with the Lord, for this certainly is most unlike Him. To walk with the Lord the spirit must be lowly, forever waiting on Him and offering no resistance to Him.

Poor in Spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5.3).

The poor in spirit views himself as possessing nothing..A believer's peril lies in his having too many things in his spirit. Only the poor in spirit can be humble. How often the experience, growth and progress of a Christian become such precious matters to him that he loses his lowliness. The most treacherous of all dangers for a saint is to meditate on what he appropriates and to pay attention to what he has experienced. Sometimes he engages in this unconsciously. What, then, is the meaning of being poor? Poor bespeaks having nothing. If one endlessly reflects upon the deep experience which he has passed through, it soon shall be debased to a commodity of his spirit and hence become a snare. An emptied spirit enables a person to lose himself in God whereas a wealthy spirit renders him self-centered. Full salvation delivers a believer *out* of himself and into God. Should a Christian retain something for himself his spirit immediately shall turn inward, unable to break out and be merged in God.

A Gentle Spirit

"In a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6.1).

Gentleness is a most necessary feature of the inner man. It is the opposite of harshness. God requires us to cultivate a gentle spirit. Amid the most prosperous work anyone with a gentle spirit can instantly stop on short notice from God, just as Philip did when sent from Samaria to the desert. A gentle spirit turns easily in God's hand however He wills. It knows not how to resist God nor how to follow its own will. God needs such a yielding spirit to accomplish His purpose. A gentle spirit is no less important in human relationships. It is the spirit of a lamb which characterizes the spirit of the cross. "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;

when he suffered, he did not threaten" (I Peter 2.23). This is a description of a gentle spirit. Such gentleness is willing to suffer loss; though it has the power of revenge and the protection of the law, it nevertheless has no wish to avenge itself with the arm of flesh. It is a spirit which in suffering harms no one. The one who can boast such a spirit as this lives righteously himself but never demands righteousness from others. He is full of love and mercy; wherefore he can melt the heart of those around him.

A Fervent Spirit

"In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Rom. 12.11 ASV).

For a time the flesh may be fervent when it is emotionally excited, but this fervency does not endure. Even when the flesh seems most diligent it actually may be quite lazy, since it is diligent solely in those things with which it agrees; hence the flesh is impelled by emotion. It cannot serve God in matters which do not appeal to it nor when emotion is cold and low. It is impossible for the flesh to labor with the Lord in cloud as well as in sunshine, step by step, slowly but steadily. "Fervent in spirit" is a permanent feature; he therefore who possesses this spirit is qualified to, serve the Lord endlessly. We should avoid all fervency of the flesh but allow the Holy Spirit to so fill our inner man that He may keep it perpetually fervent. Then our spirit will not turn cold when our emotion becomes chilled, nor will the work of the Lord collapse into a seemingly immovable state.

What the Apostle stresses here amounts to an order. This order must be taken up by our renewed will. We should exercise it to choose to be fervent. We should say to ourselves, "I want my spirit to be fervent and not to be cold." We should not be overwhelmed by our icy and indifferent feeling; instead we should permit our fervent spirit to control everything, even where our emotion is extremely unconcerned. The sign of a fervent spirit is serving the Lord *always*.

A Cool Spirit

"He who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding"

(Prov. 17.27).

Our spirit needs to be fervent yet also to be cool. Fervency is related to "diligence in serving the Lord" whereas coolness is related to knowledge.

If our spirit lacks coolness we often take inordinate action. The enemy purposes to drive us off track in order that our spirit may be deprived of its contact with the Holy Spirit. Frequently we observe saints who, in the hour of a feverish spirit, change their principled life into a sensational one. The spirit is closely knit with the mind. The moment the spirit loses its composure the mind is excited; when the mind becomes heated the conduct of the believer grows abnormal and goes out of control. Consequently it is always profitable to keep the inner man calm and collected. By disregarding the ardor of the emotion, the increase of desire, or the confusion of thought and by measuring every problem with a cool spirit instead, we shall maintain our feet on the pathway of the Lord. Any action taken when our spirit is excited is likely to be against the will of God.

The knowledge of God, self, Satan and all things brings calmness to our spirit; it effects a kind of spirit which soulish believers never experience. The Holy Spirit must fill our inner man while the outer man must be consigned entirely to death; then the spirit will enjoy an unspeakable calm. Neither the soul nor the body nor changing environment takes away that calm. It is like the ocean: although the waves rage on the surface, the bottom of the sea remains composed and undisturbed. Before a Christian experiences the dividing of soul and spirit he will be disturbed and shaken immediately by the slightest perturbation. This is due to lack of spiritual knowledge. Hence to keep the inner and outer man divided is the way to keep the spirit cool. A person with an imperturbable spirit experiences a kind of untouchableness." However chaotic may be the outside situation he does not lose the calm and peace inside. -Though a mountain should fall at his face he remains as composed as ever. Such composure is not achieved through self-improvement but is secured through the revelation of the Spirit Who discloses the reality of all things and through the control the believer exerts over his soul so that it no longer may influence his spirit.

The key, therefore, is the rule of the will. Our spirit must accept this rule. Fervency is what our will desires, but so is coolness. We should never permit our spirit to be in such a condition as to extend beyond the control of the will. We must will both to have a fervent

spirit towards the Lord's work and to maintain a cool spirit in executing that work.

A Joyful Spirit

"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1.47).

Towards himself a Christian should have a broken spirit (Ps. 51.17), but towards God it should be one of rejoicing always in Him. He rejoices not for its own sake nor because of any joyful experience, work, blessing or circumstance, but exclusively because God is his center. Indeed, no saint can genuinely rejoice out of any cause other than God Himself.

If our spirit is oppressed by worry, weight and sorrow it will commence to be irresponsible, next sink down, then lose its proper place, and finally become powerless to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. When pressed down by a heavy load the spirit loses its lightness, freedom and

brightness. It quickly topples from its ascendant position, And should the time of sorrow be prolonged, damage to spiritual life is incalculable. Nothing can save the situation except to rejoice in the Lord-rejoice in what God is and bow He is our Savior. The note of hallelujah must never be in short supply in the spirit of the believer.

A Spirit of Power

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim. 1.7).

Timidity is not humility. While humility is self-forgetfulness completely-a forgetting both its weakness and strength -timidity recalls all the weakness and hence is self-remembering. God does not. delight in our cowardice and withdrawal. He wants us, on the one hand, to tremble before Him because of our emptiness, yet on the other hand, to proceed courageously in His might. He requires us to bear Him witness fearlessly, to suffer pain and shame for Him valiantly, to accept loss of all things with courage, and to rely on the Lord's love, wisdom, power and faithfulness with confidence. Whenever we discover ourselves shrinking from witnessing for the Lord or withdrawing in other ways where boldness is demanded, we should realize that bur spirit has abandoned its normal state. We ought to preserve it in a condition of "dauntlessness."

We need to have a spirit of power, of love, and of selfcontrol. It should be strong, but not to the point of becoming unloving. It is also mandatory that it be quiet and controlled so that it may not be excited easily. We must have a spirit of power towards the enemy, a spirit of love towards men, and a spirit of self-control towards ourselves.

A Quiet Spirit

"Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in Gods sight is very precious" (I Peter 3.4).

Granted that this is a word directed towards the sisters, it nonetheless is spiritually applicable to the brothers as well.

"To aspire to live quietly" (I Thess. 4.11). This is the duty of every Christian. Modern Christians talk far too much. Sometimes their unuttered words surpass in number those that are spoken. Confused thought and endless speech set our spirits to wandering away from the control of our wills. A "wild spirit" often leads people to walk according to the flesh. How bard for believers to restrain themselves from sinning when their spirits become unruly. An errant spirit invariably ends up with an error in conduct.

Before one can display a quiet mouth he first must possess a quiet spirit, for out of the abundance of the spirit does the the mouth speak. We ought to carefully keep our spirit in stillness; even in time of intense confusion our inner being should nevertheless be able to sustain an independent quietude. A placid spirit is essential to anyone walking after the spirit: without it he shall quickly fall into sin. If our spirit is hushed we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit there, obey the will of

God, and understand what we cannot understand when confused. Such a quiet inner life constitutes the Christian's adornment which betokens something manifested outwardly.

A Newness of Spirit

"We should serve in newness of spirit" (Rom. 7.6 Darby).

This too is a serious facet of spiritual life and work. An old spirit cannot inspire people: the best it can do is pass on some thought to others: even so, it is weak and therefore powerless to stimulate earnest consideration. An aged spirit can only produce aged thought. Never can dynamic life flow out from an old spirit. Whatever issues from a decrepit spirit (words, teaching, manner, thought, life) are but old, stale and traditional. Perhaps many doctrines do in fact reach another believer's mind, but they gain no footing in his spirit; as a consequence, it is impossible to touch the spirits of others because there is no spirit behind one's teaching. It is conceivable that the one who harbors an old spirit has once experienced some of the truths, but they have now become mere remembrances of the past, purely pleasant memories. These truths have been transferred from the spirit to the mind. Or perhaps they have just been new ideas freshly conceived in his mind, and due to lack of confirmation in life they simply do not impart the touch of a fresh spirit to the audience.

Time and again we meet various Christians who habitually convey something new from the Lord. While we are with them we feel they have *just* left the Lord's presence, as though they would bring us right back to the Lord. This is what newness means; anything else is oldness. Such ones appear to enjoy renewed strength all the time, soaring like eagles and running like youths. Instead of imparting dried, corrupted, and worm-eaten manna of the mind to people, these give fish and bread freshly cooking on the fire of the spirit. Deep and wonderful thoughts never move people as a fresh spirit can.

We must maintain a fresh spirit continually. How can we face people if our inner man does not give the impression of having been newly with the Lord and newly blessed of the Lord? Anything--life, thought, experience--which has reduced itself to a remembrance of the past is old and aged. Moment by moment we must receive everything anew from the Lord. To imitate the experiences of another without ourselves having it in life is forbidden; but to copy from the relics of our own past experience is likewise ineffective. Thus we can grasp the import of what Christ enunciated as recorded in John: "... I live because of the Father" (6.57). Our inner man shall remain unceasingly fresh if we momentarily draw upon the life of the Father to be our life. A stale spirit generates no fruit in work, inspires no walk after the spirit and achieves no victory in warfare. An old spirit cannot face others because it has not faced God. To enjoy a spirit that is always fresh and new, one's inner being must be in constant touch with God.

A Holy Spirit

"To be holy in body and spirit" (1 Cor. 7.34). "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit" (2 Cor. 7.1).

For anyone to walk in a spiritual manner it will be necessary for him to keep his spirit holy at all times. An unholy spirit leads people into error. Inordinate thought **towards** men or things, assessing the evil of others, a lack of love, loquacity, sharp criticism, self-righteousness, refusing entreaty, jealousy, self-pride, and so forth—all these can defile the spirit. An unholy spirit cannot be fresh and new.

In our pursuit of spiritual life we must not overlook any sin, because sin inflicts more harm upon us than does anything else. Even though we already have learned how to be delivered from sin and how to walk by the spirit, we nevertheless must guard against unknowingly returning to the old sinful ways. For such a return renders a walk after the spirit utterly impossible. The child of God therefore needs to maintain an attitude of death towards sin lest it overcome him and poison his spirit. Without holiness no one can see the Lord (Heb. 12.14).

A Strong Spirit

"Become strong in spirit" (Luke 1.80).

Our spirit is capable of growth and should increase gradually in strength. This is indispensable to spiritual life. How often we sense our spirit is not strong enough to control our soul and body, especially the moment the soul is stimulated or the body is weak. Sometimes in helping others we, notice how heavily weighed down they are in their spirit, yet ours lacks the power to release them. Or when battling with the enemy we discover our spiritual strength is inadequate to wrestle long enough with the enemy until we win. Numberless are those occasions when we feel the spirit losing its grip; we have to force ourselves to proceed in life and in work. How we long for a more robust inner man!

As the spirit waxes stronger the power of intuition and discernment increases. We are fit to resist everything not of the spirit. Some who wish to walk after the spirit cannot because their inner man lacks the strength to control the soul and the body. We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to do anything for us; our regenerated spirit must instead cooperate with Him. We should learn how to *exercise* our spirit and use it to the limit of our understanding. Through exercise it will become progressively sturdier till it possesses the strength to eliminate all obstructions to the Holy Spirit; such hindrances as a stubborn will, a confused mind, or an undisciplined emotion.

"A man's spirit will endure sickness; but a broken spirit who can bear?" (Prov. 18.14) Clearly the spirit can be broken or wounded. A wounded spirit must be a very weak one. Were our spirit sturdy we would be able to endure the stimulation of the soul and *not shake*. Moses' spirit is usually portrayed as being a very strong one; yet because he failed to keep it continually firm, he found that the Israelites "Made his spirit bitter" (Ps. 106.33) and consequently he sinned. If our inner being remains vigorous we can triumph in Christ however much our body may suffer or our soul be afflicted.

The Holy Spirit alone can grant us the strength required by the inner man. The might of our spirit accordingly derives from the power of God's Spirit. Ours itself, though, needs additionally to be trained. After one has learned how to walk by his spirit, he will then know how to live by its life in place of soul life, how to use its power instead of his natural power in performing God's work,

and how to apply its strength rather than his soulical strength in warring against the enemy. Naturally, such experiences are progressive and must be entered into progressively. Yet the principle is clear: as a believer moves according to the spirit he will gain increased power of the Holy Spirit and his inner man will grow stronger. A Christian ought to maintain his spirit in strength at all times lest at the critical moment he is powerless to meet the need.

One Spirit

"Ye stand fast in one spirit" (Phil. 1.27 ASV).

We have observed previously how the life of a spiritual man flows with that of other Christians. Oneness of the spirit is a matter of great moment. If by His Spirit God dwells in the believer's spirit and He fully unites with him, how can his spirit not be one with other believers? A spiritual man is not only one with Christ in God but also one with God indwelling each of His children. Should a Christian permit thought or feeling to control his spirit, it will not be one with that of other saints. Only when mind and emotion are subject to the spirit's rule can he disregard or restrain differences in thought and feeling and so be one in the spirit with all children of God. It is necessary for him to guard unceasingly the oneness of spirit with *all* believers. We are not united with a small group-those who share the same interpretation and outlook as we-but with the body of Christ. Our spirit should harbor neither harshness nor bitterness nor bondage but be completely open and entirely free, thus creating no wall in our contact with all other brethren.

A Spirit Full of Grace

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Gal. 6.18). "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Philemon 25).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly precious to our spirit. There we find the Lord's grace to help us in time of need. This is a word of benediction: but this also represents the peak a believer's spirit can ever reach. We should always season our spirit with the grace of our lovely Lord.

A Spirit of Rapture

One other facet of the normal spirit needs to be discussed besides those features mentioned already. This one we would term the spirit of rapture. Christians ought to have a spirit which is perpetually in an out-of-this-world and ascending-into-heaven state. Such a spirit as this is deeper than one of ascension, for those who possess the former not only live on earth as though in heaven but also are truly led of the Lord to wait for His return and their own rapture. When a believer's spirit is united to the Lord's and they become one spirit, he commences to live in the world as a sojourner, experiencing the life of a heavenly citizen. Following that, the Holy Spirit will call him to take one further step and will give him the spirit of rapture. Formerly his impetus was "Go forward!" now it becomes "Ascend up!" Everything about him rises heavenward. The spirit of rapture is that spirit which has tasted the powers of the age to come (Heb. 6-5).

Not all who accept the truth of the Second Coming possess this spirit of rapture. Men may believe in the Lord's return, preach His Second Coming, and pray for His return and yet not have this spirit. Even mature ones do not necessarily possess it. The spirit of rapture is the gift of God. It is sometimes dispensed by God as He pleases and sometimes granted by Him in response to prayers of faith. When possessed of this spirit the believer's inner being seems always to be in a state of rapture. He believes not only in the return of the Lord but also in his being transported. Rapture is more than an article of faith; it is to him a fact. Just as Simeon, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, trusted that he would not taste death before he had seen the Lord's Christ (Luke 2: 26), so believers should have the assurance in their spirit that they will be transported to the Lord before they die. Such faith is the faith of an Enoch. Now we are not being stubbornly superstitious here; but if we live in the time of rapture, how can we be lacking in such faith? Such belief will help us to understand more of what God is doing in this age as well as obtain heavenly power for our work.

In other words, if the spirit of a Christian is in a state of rapture he will be more heavenly and will not think his way -to heaven must necessarily traverse the valley of death.

How frequently God's child, when engaged in spiritual labor, entertains many expectations and plans. He is full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom and power; he believes God will greatly use him; and he looks forward with anticipation that before long his labor shall produce much fruit. However,, in the very midst of prosperity the hand of the Lord suddenly sweeps down upon him, suggesting to him that he must conclude all his undertaking and be ready to take another course. This comes as a genuine surprise to man. He naturally asks why it must be so. Is not my power for working? Is not the profound knowledge I have for helping people? Need everything be closed in and cold? Nonetheless, under guidance of this kind the believer learns that the purpose of God for him is an alteration in his course. Previously everything was going forward; henceforth it is to ascend. It does not signify there is no more work; what it does mean is that that work can be concluded at any time. God continually has employed such circumstances as persecution, opposition, plunder, etc., to cause saints to comprehend that He wishes them to have the spirit of rapture rather than to make progress in the work on earth. The Lord desires to change the course of His children, many of whom do not realize there is this far better spirit of rapture.

This spirit has its definite effect on life. Before one secures it his experience is bound to be changing constantly; after he receives the witness and assurance of rapture in his spirit, however, his life and labor will be sustained on a level worthy of this kind of spirit, thus preparing him for the Lord's return. Such preparation includes more than outward correction: it is making the spirit, the soul, and the body of the believer wholly ready to meet the Lord.

Hence we should pray and petition the Holy Spirit to show us how to obtain this spirit of rapture and how to retain it. We should believe and then be willing to eliminate all obstacles to the realization of such a spirit. And once we have appropriated it we should habitually check our life and work against it. In case we lose this spirit we should determine at once how it was lost and how it can be restored. Such a spirit once obtained can be easily forfeited. This may be due chiefly to our ignorance (at this stage of life) of how to preserve such a heavenly position through special prayer and effort. We must therefore ask the Holy Spirit to teach us the way to

retain this spirit. Such prayer usually leads us to seek "the things that are above" (Col. 3.2), and this is one of the requisites for preservation.

Since he now stands at the door of heaven and can be transported at any moment, the Christian should choose to wear the heavenly white garment and perform heavenly work. Such a hope separates him from earthly matters while joining him to the heavenly.

The fact that God wishes a believer to look for rapture does not suggest that he should be concerned only with his rapture and forget the remainder of the work God has appointed him. What God actually designs to convey to him is that he should not permit God-given labor to hinder his rapture. In both his walk and work, heavenly attraction should always be greater than earthly gravitation. The child of God should learn to live for the Lord's service, but even more so for the Lord's receiving him. May our spirit be uplifted daily, looking for the return of the Lord. May the things of this world so lose their power over us that we do not in the slightest wish to be "worldly"; nay, we even delight in not remaining "in the world." May our spirit daily ascend, asking to be with the Lord earlier. May we so seek the things above that not even the best Work on earth can distract our hearts. May we henceforth pray in spirit and with understanding, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22.20)

LESSON TWELVE

Review