

The Holy Spirit 2

The Holy Spirit and Human Beings

What are little boys made of?
Slugs and snails and puppy dogs' tails;
That's what little boys are made of

What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and all things nice;
That's what little girls are made of.

I have two comments to make about that. First, I have a suspicion that it was written by a woman; and secondly my observations cause me to doubt its veracity.

This morning we come to the second of our studies on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Last time we were thinking of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ and today I want to speak about the place of the Holy Spirit in the make up of us humans.

Obviously we are more than our bodies, but theologians argue about whether we are bi-partite or tri-partite; that is, whether we are two parts or three. Are we just body and soul, with the soul comprising our spiritual and thought processes: or is our inner being itself divided into soul and spirit? Let me say at once that I believe we are three parts - body, soul and spirit. That is what scripture teaches.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit... (Hebrews 4:12)

I want to talk about the different functions of these aspects of our beings but let me make clear that I am doing that only in order to explain things more easily. In fact we are the sum of our parts and each of the three aspects affects and inter-relates with the other two. It is rather like putting light through a prism and separating it into the 7 colours of the spectrum. This process helps scientists assess the components of different stars and planets. But for everyday life the divisions in the spectrum have to be put back again to form light as we know it. So, although I am going to talk about our bodies and our souls and our spirits, in fact this is an artificial division and these three components together make up the whole being.

The **BODY** is that part of us which is world conscious (material). It involves the 5 senses. It is with my body that I touch and taste and smell and hear and see. It is that part of me with which I contact the world and through which the world can contact me. I am conveying my thoughts to you because I have a tongue in my body and I can speak words and you are able to receive them because you have ears and can recognise the sounds of the words.

The **SOUL** is that in us which is self-conscious (personal). It is the 'me' who dwells in my body; it is the person I am. If I have an accident and lose a leg or an arm, that reduces my body, but it does not reduce me. The person I am. Oh, it can have a psychological affect on me; I may become frustrated or bitter but I am not less of a person. The loss of part of my body has not meant that there is less of me, the person I am who lives within my body.

Now, there are three elements to my soul:-
My Mind - I think, I reason: it is my intellect.

My Emotion - I feel. You can hurt me or gladden me, by what you say or do. You do not need to affect my body at all to affect me.

My Will - I decide. It is my volition.

The SPIRIT is that in us which is God conscious. It is through our spirit that God can contact us and in and through which we worship him.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

It isn't so easy to identify the various components or areas of operation of the spirit; perhaps because the spirit is deep within us and it is less easy to recognise and assess just what our spirit is doing. Watchman Nee describes the areas as Conscience, Intuition and Communion. I am not entirely happy with these terms; particularly with regard to conscience. I believe that conscience is part of the soul, although it may spill over into the area of our spirit. I prefer to speak of Worship, Fellowship and Revelation. These seem more biblical terms; we have already seen that God desires us to worship him in spirit; every time we share the Grace we speak of the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit and in Mark 2:8 we read that Jesus perceived in his spirit - that is, it was *revealed* to him.

God's plan, his intention for man was that he, God, should reveal to man in his spirit what he required of him. Man would understand that (that is in his mind), delight to please God (delight being an emotion, feeling) and decide to obey (volition or will) and then use his body to complete what God had told him to do. It was in this way that God, who has no physical body, would get his will fulfilled on earth. Do you understand that the plan was that we should function from inside out? God reveals things in our spirit, we, our souls, agree and then that will is brought into effect in the material realm, the world. That is the

ideal, but we know that right from the very first human beings, we used our minds and our wills to disobey.

Incidentally, let me break off a moment to point out how Satan worked; he worked from outside in. He always seeks to do that. Let me explain that to you so that you will be on your guard. God works from inside out, Satan works from outside in.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. (Genesis 3:6-7)

Just look at that. Satan put the fruit before her eyes; she saw that it looked good - one of the five senses of the body. It was desirable, she desired it, it affected her feelings and she thought it would make her wise so she made a decision, an act of her will. That was all to do with the soul. Then their spirits were affected - they had a sense of sin.

Satan works in the same way today; he will take something you see or hear and tell you that you would enjoy it and that it won't do you any harm and try to get at your soul, the person you are, to desire it and to decide to act on it

But, to return to our main theme - how God plans for us to operate. He warned that if mankind disobeyed (summarised by eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil), we would die. Man did eat and found he did *not* die - so he thought; but in fact, his life-line failed. It is like a deep-sea diver whose air pipe becomes twisted and the air supply is cut off. Man's spirit withered. He was still body and soul but his spirit ceased to function properly. Ever since then, when we are born, each of us, our spirit is not functioning. It is latent, it needs to be awakened, brought to life. Everyone who is born into this world

functions on two cylinders, so to speak, instead of three. We operate only as body and soul. When mankind first sinned we lost the ability to transmit to our offspring a living or active spirit. This is not just theory it is a matter of personal experience for each one of us. Just think; the way you act is conditioned by what you have been taught and how you see others behave. You, your soul, your mind and your feelings, affect your decisions, your will.

Without our spirit operating in us, our body and soul has fused together and the Bible, or at least the New Testament has a technical word for it - 'flesh'. Be careful for it is a little confusing; occasionally the word is used just to mean a human body as when John says:-

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)

But usually the word flesh refers to our living life on two cylinders, the body and the soul, as-

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life". (John 6:63)

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:16-17)

Do you see how Jesus and Paul contrast the work of the flesh and the spirit? Let me just make sure you have grasped what I am saying. Our natural birth gives us an active body and an active soul, but a latent, inactive spirit. For our spirit to come alive we need to be born again of or by the Spirit. Do you see what Jesus was getting at when he said to Nicodemus:-

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:6-7)

When we are born again we can then operate on three 'cylinders' instead of just two.

Notice that the first reference to 'Spirit' there has a capital 'S' and the second a small 's'. We need to be born again of the Holy Spirit so that our spirit comes alive.

In the light of that do you see what Paul is speaking about to the Corinthians when he says:-

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Until a person is born again of the Spirit, his own spirit is not operating.

Don't think that a poet or a musician or an artist is necessarily spiritual. We may use that term loosely to describe their work, but it need have nothing to do with their spirit at all. Maybe the artist has a particular sense of heightened feelings, or the poet a particular gift of thought which differs from that of someone else, just as our bodies differ, with some of us being taller or faster or more nimble than others. But they can produce their artistic work by the operation of their soul and body (their 'flesh') alone.

I have nearly done but there is one more thing to say. Every true believer in Jesus Christ has been born again of the Spirit. As Paul says:-

...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

However, many believers do not realise that - this truth has never been explained to them. You can expect to 'hear' God, not necessarily in words, although some people do; but certainly you will find you get a strong conviction about something or, in some other way you will just 'know' that something is right or needed. The Holy Spirit will begin to guide you and to lead you into all the truth. Until you have been born of the Spirit and your spirit has come alive, the Holy Spirit has nowhere to come and live in you because, as we have seen, our body is world conscious, our soul is self conscious but it is our spirit which is God conscious.

It is rather like the story of Noah sending out the dove from the ark after the flood. The first time he did so, we read that it returned because it found nowhere to set its feet because the waters were still covering the earth. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit who cannot find anywhere on earth to settle until we have been cleansed from our sin and born again so that our spirit has come alive. Then the Holy Spirit has somewhere he can dwell - in our spirit.

Once the Holy Spirit has brought your spirit alive, that is once you have been born again, you then need to be filled with the Spirit. Do you remember we saw our first study on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was born of the Spirit; he was conceived by the Spirit, but he still needed to be *filled* with the Spirit at his baptism, and he did not work any miracle or begin his ministry until he had been baptised in the Spirit. So it is with us. We need to be born of the Spirit so that *our* spirit comes alive and then we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So let's sum it all up in the words of St. Paul to the Romans:-

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His... (Romans 8:5-9)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:14-16)