

The Dividing of Soul and Spirit

Regeneration and a change of source

The Christian life is more than a one-time experience of receiving Christ and knowing that we have eternal life and are going to heaven. All of this is true, but it is still short of the divine thought. God's full thought when we receive Christ is that a new source be established within us for our entire being. This new source is our regenerated human spirit (John 3:6). Having this change of source is the most central thing in our regeneration.

To have a source-change means we no longer live to ourselves, but to God. We no longer live by the self, but by His life. What naturally follows the initial birth of our spirit is a progressive transfer of our source in our daily life. For this transfer to happen, it is necessary to pass through experiences with the Lord in which the old source, the self, is exposed and dealt with, and the new source of our spirit gains the ascendancy.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, man is a tripartite being composed of spirit, soul, and body. Before regeneration, although our spirit existed within us as a potentiality, it was in a dead condition (Eph. 2:1). So the source of our living was not our spirit, but our soul — made up of our mind, emotion, and will. But in regeneration, the leading part of our being becomes our spirit, where we are joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). It is from this Christ-indwelt center that all the parts of our soul will find their proper place and

function. Formerly we were an independent self that did its own things, thought its own thoughts, made its own decisions. But once our center changes, all this is transformed. Christ comes in to make home and rearrange all our inward parts (Eph. 3:16-17).

The rearrangement of regeneration

From the moment we receive Christ and are born again, a deep and fundamental change takes place in us — the source of our life changes from soul to spirit. Before we were regenerated, the source of our living was our soul with its mind, emotion, and will. But after regeneration our source becomes our human spirit begotten by the divine Spirit.

Every regenerated person is a rearranged person. The new birth rearranges our inward parts to make Christ in our spirit the center and source of our being rather than the soul. The apostle Paul refers to this fact in Romans 8:10: "If Christ is in you . . . the spirit is *life* because of righteousness." Our regenerated spirit becomes the life-center of our whole being. So regeneration not only changes our eternal destiny, it rearranges us from our old soul-source to our new spirit-source where Christ is our life.

The New Testament uses the phrase "according to spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμα) three times in reference to a believer, showing that man's spirit is his new center. We are not only born *according to spirit* (Gal. 4:29),

IN THIS ISSUE:

- The Dividing of Soul and Spirit
— Pages 1-3, 6-8
- Christ, the New Wine
— Pages 4-5, 8
- Insert

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but we are to have our being *according to spirit* (Rom. 8:5), and we are to walk *according to spirit* (Rom. 8:4). Indeed, we are to continuously join ourself to the Lord to be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17, NASV).

The change of source from soul to spirit takes place instantaneously at the moment of the new birth. From that time on, the source and center of our living becomes Christ dwelling and operating in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). In experience, the practical effect of this change and rearrangement may differ from person to person, but it does usher all born-again believers into what the Scripture calls “the dividing of soul and spirit.”

Paul refers to the dividing of soul and spirit in Hebrews 4:12: “For 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.” This dividing of soul and spirit is accomplished by the living and active word of God and consists in identifying the source of our living — whether it is the soul or the spirit. The dividing of soul and spirit is mentioned together with the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thus it refers to a penetration of the word of God into our innermost recesses to expose the source from which we live — soul or spirit. This living and operating word is always rearranging us to live in our new source and center.

Experiencing the rearrangement

After we are born again, we begin to experience the reality of our regenerated spirit. Something begins to happen from within — the rearrangement begins to take place. There is a new consciousness of the Lord. We sense His presence moving in us day by day. His Life within our spirit begins to flow spontaneously. We find that we have new tastes and new desires. We even feel inwardly forbidden and stopped when we start to do some of the old things we did before we were saved. In fact, we sense inner frustration whenever we go against the living Christ in our spirit.

Although we may not initially understand what is happening to us, these mixed emotions are part of what every Christian experiences. In Galatians 5:17 Paul speaks of this as an inner warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. At times we are at a loss about how to explain our ambivalent feelings. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit in our spirit spontaneously functions and produces in

our consciousness the opposition of the Spirit toward the flesh. Likewise, the flesh with its sense of death opposes the Spirit.

The sense of death is experienced as a kind of deadness, dryness, emptiness, and uneasiness about attitudes and actions that proceed from the old source of the soul and flesh. The sense of life and peace is a sense of supply, fullness, and rest that proceeds from the new source of our spirit. Both the sense of death and the sense of life and peace proceed from the source we are living from — flesh or spirit. We can know our source by the symptoms that surface in us.

It is by learning to pay attention to the sense of death and the sense of life and peace in the middle of our daily life that our soul and spirit get divided. It is possible that we can be a believer with a regenerated spirit, and yet live and do things out of the source of our soul. If this is the case, our soul and spirit remain enmeshed. There is no dividing. We are a whole, undivided person with no sense of dependency upon the Lord. But if we exercise ourselves to heed the realm of the spirit, we will get divided and be able to identify what is of the soul and what is of the spirit.

The best example of this dividing of soul and spirit is the Lord’s own experience when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. His soul was troubled and sorrowful (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34), and He prayed more earnestly, repeatedly crying “Abba, Father” (Mark 14:36). It was by this prayer in His willing spirit that He was divided to say, “Not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39, 41). By prayer, the will in His soul was divided from the will in His spirit.

Prayer helps divide us so we can identify the source we are coming from. As we exercise our spirit in prayer and fellowship with the Lord, we are practically rearranged and transferred from soul to spirit. We are able to sense the Lord as our life and discern between what is of God and what is not of God (Heb. 5:14).

Being rearranged by life-consciousness

To understand the Lord’s life, we must understand its main characteristic in us. This characteristic is revealed in Colossians 3:4, which speaks of Christ being our *life*. For Christ to be our life means we have more than mere head knowledge about Him. It is more than outwardly subscribing to doctrines about Him. To be our life means He Himself with His life-conscious-

ness has taken up residence in our spirit. And the very consciousness that belongs to His life begins to be known in our consciousness.

To experience the Lord Jesus in a subjective and intimate way, it is important to realize the principle of life and its consciousness. Every kind of life has a life-consciousness. Animal life has its consciousness, human life has its consciousness, and the divine, eternal life equally has its consciousness. Every life has its own kind of consciousness and awareness.

The consciousness within a life is the main characteristic of that life. With a cat's life we can observe a cat-consciousness. Cat life brings with it a consciousness and an awareness that is unique to that life. For example, kittens have a vivid imagination. The kind of consciousness they have causes them to flit and dart around as though something were chasing them. This consciousness comes from their cat life. We observe this phenomenon in any kind of animal, whether it is a dog, a bird, or a fish: its particular kind of life gives it a corresponding consciousness that expresses itself in some type of animal behavior.

The principle is clear — with every kind of life there is a consciousness. Life-consciousness means there is an awareness of something, a recognition or perception of something. It means there is a knowing of something experientially.

The life-consciousness with physical life

When relating this principle of life-consciousness to human life, there are two main aspects to consider. First, in relation to the physical life in our bodies, we have the normal physical senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching or feeling. These specific senses have their source in the various organs of our physical life — our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and our entire body with its innate ability to touch or feel. For example, because our body can feel a cold temperature, that very feeling is a form of “speaking” to us. In other words, we do not need to read a sign telling us, “You’re cold.” Rather, we *feel* cold, and the feeling itself of being cold is the voice of physical life speaking to us to put on a jacket.

We may say then that physical life with its senses has its own unique consciousness. Each consciousness coming from physical life is the voice of physical life speaking to us. We have often heard such remarks as,

“My stomach is telling me I am hungry.” What is this, but the recognition that physical life with its consciousness does communicate to us.

The life-consciousness with soul-life

Second, when considering human life we must also observe our psychological life. Psychological life in the Bible is called soul-life, from the Greek word *psuche* (ψυχή). Everyone has soul-life. Because we have a soul, we have the consciousness of soul-life — we think with our intellect or mind, we feel with our emotion, and we choose with our will or volition. For example, we can *feel* embarrassed and become self-conscious. We can *think* thoughts that make us either depressed or happy. In other words, because we have soul-life we experience the consciousness that comes with that kind of life. Surely we can recognize that our psychological life has its consciousness, and that the consciousness *is* its voice communicating to us.

Consciousness and our conscience

Another part of our psychological life is our conscience. Our conscience has a deeper inner consciousness. We all have this in common because we possess psychological life. Who can deny that they have the voice of conscience? The Greek word for conscience is *suneidesis* (συνείδησις). This compound word is composed of the preposition “with” and a root word meaning “to know.” Thus by analyzing conscience etymologically, we have a clear definition of the word — to know with. Conscience means a “knowing with” or an “inner consciousness.” This knowing comes from psychological life.

The highest consciousness—God's life

In the same way, when the divine life enters into us, it comes into us with a definite consciousness. If animal life and human life have a consciousness, how much more does the divine life! In fact, because the life of God is the highest form of life, it has the highest consciousness. God's life is exceedingly rich in consciousness and feeling.

Because the divine life is the Person of Christ in us and not merely an impersonal substance, we begin to

(Continued on Page 6)

Christ, the New Wine

(Part One)

Mankind is in a great pursuit — the pursuit of contentment. Indeed, billions of dollars and countless hours are spent pursuing an elusive, inward state of happiness. We look for it here and we look for it there. We go running to try this and we go running to try that — always searching for the next thing that will inwardly satisfy us. What does this suggest? This suggests that apart from God, we are really rather miserable people. Inwardly speaking, we are not that content, not that happy, not that satisfied. We are not in an inward state where we can sit down and say, “I don’t need to go looking anymore.” Somehow, we do not find in the world anything that permanently and perfectly satisfies. So we are in a mode of continuous pursuit, attempting to find something to fill our inward void.

There are two factors that cause such a pursuit. First, we sense how empty we are. We might put on an outward facade to show that we have our act together and that we are quite content. But inwardly, we are empty. There is a gnawing void in our deepest parts that seems to never go away. And so we realize that something has to be added to our life. Left to ourselves, we’re not content. Something apart from us, something outside of us, has to be added to us. We need “additives” — things added in — which will hopefully mitigate the drabness, the dissatisfaction, we inwardly contend with.

This brings us to the second factor. The world offers countless additives to satisfy the void. But the strange thing is this — regardless of what we try, nothing ever seems to completely or permanently satisfy. So we go bouncing from one thing to the next. This is why on Saturday nights people flock to the bars, to the taverns, and to parties. They consume alcohol and take drugs. Why? It’s quite simple. They are taking in additives to remove the pain of inward emptiness and give themselves some temporary joy and contentment. But suppose we could peel away the outward facades and examine the actual inward condition of all the people in the bars. Do you believe we would find hearts of complete contentment and satisfaction? I don’t believe so. I believe we would find people taking alcohol or drugs to put themselves into another state. We would find people doing their best to make themselves happy, because left to themselves they are quite miserable. This is the condition of mankind today. It’s like saying, “Something’s got to be added into me to get me out of myself, to take me out of my condition, to help me forget what a doleful, pointless life I have — so that I can be happy for at least a few hours.”

God Created Man as a Vessel

But this is abnormal! Did you realize that God did not create man to be on a continuous search for something to

make his heart content? According to God’s perspective, man is really in an out-of-kilter state. The Bible reveals that God created man as a vessel. God did not create man to exist as a self-sufficient, self-contained entity. God created man specifically to be a container, a vessel, a bottle. To contain what? Or better stated, to contain *who*? The answer is, *Christ!* We have been made as containers for Christ, and for Christ alone. Consider it! God created us to contain Jesus Christ. No wonder we feel such a gnawing for inward fulfillment — we are vessels! It is the *nature* of a vessel to be filled up. We need an additive. It is instinctive to us. And we feel abnormal without one. But which additive we choose makes all the difference. Why? Because God made us in such a way that we cannot be truly content with just any additive. Not just any will work. Only one works. Only one additive can impart deep contentment, lasting satisfaction. That additive is Christ. And when we are filled with Christ, we are in our normal state. This is what we’re made for and when we find Him, our search is over.

I can personally testify that I’m a person who is no longer looking. I’m not running here and there seeking out the newest thing that will satisfy my heart. Twenty-five years ago, I found Him! And I haven’t looked again. Over the last twenty-five years I have not looked even one more time. I found what I needed to make my inward parts completely content. I have found Christ.

The Wine Runs Out

Since God created us, He knows best how we work. And in His mercy, sometimes God brings us to the point in our life where everything runs out. Every additive that we’ve used to fill ourselves runs out. They simply do not satisfy anymore.

The Lord once performed a miracle in Cana of Galilee that illustrates this very point. As in many of His miracles, there was a significant meaning behind the outward act. This is why His miracles are often called “signs” — they point to a deeper spiritual truth. And this was the case in Cana of Galilee. John 2:1-3 says, “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ ”

In this passage, Jesus was at a wedding feast, a great celebration of life, a kind of high point of human life. And in the middle of this wedding day, the wine ran out. What a disaster for the bride and groom! Here they are in a celebration of their human life, at its very peak, and the wine runs out. Is this not what God allows to happen in our life? Are there not times when all of the expectancies we had for life, all the dreams of happiness, suddenly come to an abrupt

halt? Whatever we had hoped to find true satisfaction in — be it a relationship, a career, a nice house, a wonderful family — suddenly dissipates. It runs out. It evaporates. And we are left with feelings like, “Is that all there is? Is that all there is to my life?” What we had hoped would give us lasting contentment just ran out. The relationship fell apart. The career didn’t pan out. The family ended up not being so wonderful. Did you know that God allows these environments to come our way? God Himself is behind the scenes causing the wine in our lives, whatever that may be, to run out.

Verse 6 continues, “Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.” We must understand that in the Bible the number six represents man. For instance, man was created on the sixth day. Then verse 7: “Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim.” Now we must ask, what does water represent in the Bible? In some contexts, water represents the Spirit. But in others, water represents death. For instance, Genesis 1:2 tells us that darkness covered the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. These were death waters of judgment. Then in Genesis 7, God judged the world in Noah’s day through the flood. Again, these were the waters of judgment and death.

So what do we have here? We have six waterpots full of water. The six waterpots represent man as a container, as a vessel. And the water that fills the vessels is death water. In other words, man apart from Christ is simply a container that has been filled with death. Without Him, we are vessels filled to the brim with death (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13).

Verses 8-11 continue, “And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then that which is inferior; but you have kept the good wine until now.’ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

Herein is the miracle, the “sign,” that Jesus did: He turned the water to wine. What does the wine represent? The wine represents Christ as the new life that fills us with joy and satisfaction. Let us apply this to ourselves. Before receiving Christ we were vessels full of death. We had tried just about everything there is to try, but these things left us dead, dry, and dissatisfied. We realized there was nothing left to try — our wine ran out. But one day we heard the good news of Jesus Christ. We opened our heart to the Lord and asked Him into our life. We prayed saying, “Lord, my life

has run out. I’ve tried everything and there is nothing out there that satisfies. I’ve been left dead. But today I open my heart to You. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.” When we pray such a prayer, we are really asking Jesus to do a miracle in us. And that is exactly what He does. He performs a miracle greater than what He did in Cana. He changes our death into life! Oh, the emptiness, the vanity, the inward desolation — it all gets changed to life in a moment when Jesus comes in! He is the new wine. It’s Him. And He replaces the old death waters with Himself as the new living wine. What a miracle!

The Intoxication of the Spirit

Perhaps we have never realized that Jesus is new wine. But it’s true. Of course, this implies that Jesus can intoxicate us. Have you ever been intoxicated with Jesus? Have you ever come under the influence of Jesus? Have you ever come under the power of Jesus? On the day of Pentecost 120 disciples were praying together, and the Bible tells us that the Spirit came upon them and they were all filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). They began to speak in other tongues of the wonderful works of God. It was as though something was bursting forth from them. And they began to draw a crowd because they were so beside themselves. They were so filled. They were praising God with no self-consciousness of what they were doing. Of course, this is what happens when you get intoxicated. You lose your self-consciousness and your inhibitions. These disciples were so outside of themselves that some of the people observing them said, “These men are full of new wine.” This was their observation. They’re full of new wine! That’s right! They were full of new wine, but not the wine those observers thought. This is why Peter had to stand up and preach the very first gospel message. He had to explain to them why they were so filled up and so beside themselves. The new, heavenly wine from the resurrected and ascended Christ had just filled them up. As a result of Peter’s message, three thousand received Christ that day.

But we must realize that the person preaching was not just Peter. This was not “raw Peter.” This was not “raw John” or “raw Andrew.” These men were not speaking out of their own natural power, cleverness, or abilities. No! They were under the influence, under the power, under the intoxication, of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit. The Spirit had been added to them. The real additive that God had intended to fill man with, from the day He created him, had just flooded their being.

Not only were they outside of themselves, but they were also full of joy. Whenever we come under the influence of the Spirit, there is a fullness of ineffable joy (1 John 1:4). There is joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). It is so

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 3)

experience the rich feelings of God. His love, His joy, His peace, and His compassions stir us from deep within. These feelings help us to realize the location of the life-consciousness within us. It is in our spirit! Our spirit is the source from which the rich life-consciousness of God flows into our being (cf. John 7:37-39; 10:10).

Being rearranged by compatibility

Knowing the Lord in our daily life is a matter of always remaining compatible with His life. As regenerated believers, we have another Life in us that has another feeling and another consciousness. As we experience His life, we discover different kinds of responses within us that are according to His life. These responses tell us how to remain compatible.

If we do not remain compatible with the Lord's life in any area of our living, we will sense an inward awkwardness and lack. For example, in Colossians 3:15 Paul says, "And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful." If I do not let the peace of Christ make the decision in my heart when I am tempted to engage in argumentative talk, I will not be compatible with the feeling or registration of the Lord's life in me at that moment. As a result of not remaining compatible, we feel the effects within ourselves. We may sense that we are at odds with the Lord because *we* do not feel quite normal in our demeanor or inward posture. By this we learn the dividing of soul and spirit.

On these occasions the Lord is not speaking to us with a loudspeaker out of the heavens. Rather, He manifests His voice by the feeling or registration of His life. The Lord instantly feels a certain way within us, producing either the sense of "life and peace," which shows us we are compatible with His life, or a sense of "death," which indicates that something in our talking, our attitude, or our behavior does not match the nature of His life within.

Romans 8:6 says, "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (ASV). In our experience the mind of the flesh is the consciousness of death, and the mind of the Spirit is the consciousness of life and peace. Of course, the richer and deeper our fellowship with the Lord is — the more we drink of Him as the Spirit day by day — the richer and deeper will be our sensitivity to the consciousness of His life. This means we will be increasingly compatible with His life.

In Ephesians 4:29-30 the apostle Paul refers to being compatible with the Lord's life. He mentions corrupt communication proceeding out of our mouth and links it to grieving the Holy Spirit. This grieving can definitely be felt by us. It is a consciousness the Holy Spirit produces in us.

Consider a person whose language was full of cursing before he was saved. After being saved, without anyone telling him, "Now you're a Christian and you should not curse," he himself no longer feels comfortable speaking in that old way. It doesn't fit anymore. Before, he lived out of the source of his soul — with his own independent mind, emotion, and will. But now he has received Christ. His spirit has been regenerated and he experiences a different kind of reaction to cursing. This reaction in reality is the very reaction and movement of Christ within him.

Being rearranged by the anointing

The New Testament calls this inner movement in a believer the anointing. First John 2:20 says, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things." The knowing in this verse is that intuitive knowing that comes when we are born again. Every genuine Christian has this anointing whether or not he understands it. If you are born again, you have the anointing within you. It is there. In verse 27 the apostle John assures us that we all have this anointing: "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." The anointing is the movement of Christ that abides in us.

Christ, the anointed One, is alive inside of you. Since the day you received Him, He has been moving in you. That moving is the anointing. The word "anointing" is a verbal noun, indicating action and movement. He is anointing you about what you say, where you go, what you do, what attitudes you hold. The anointing is working in us to practically rearrange our daily life from soul to spirit. Although Christ has been anointing us from the day we were regenerated, we have not always been accustomed to paying attention to Him. Many times we have passed off this inward anointing without much consideration. Consequently, although we are saved and possess a regenerated spirit, in

our practical daily life we continue to live from the source of our soul rather than from the source of our spirit. It is this kind of experience that makes us realize how much we need the word of God to divide soul and spirit and to discern us so that we become inwardly clear.

The Word of God identifying a soulish man

The Bible describes a person who lives habitually out of his soul as a “soulish man.” First Corinthians 2:14 says, “But a soulish (*psuchikos*, ψυχικός) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” A “soulish man” can surely refer to an unsaved person whose spirit is unregenerated, but the context of this passage makes it clear that Paul is referring to believers who basically live in the realm of their soul, making them soulish men.

The apostle Paul indicates that a soulish man does not have the capacity to receive the things of the Spirit of God or to perceive them. His whole being is so dulled by soulish living that he considers spiritual things as foolishness. For example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 Paul is seeking to impart revelation to the Corinthians concerning God’s eternal purpose and the deep things of God (vv. 6-10). But because they had not lived by Christ in their spirit in the practical affairs of daily life, they lacked the capacity to receive and appreciate the revelation.

Due to the close proximity of the soul and spirit in man’s inner being, it is necessary that we allow the word of God to divide them. Otherwise, we may persist in believing that our soulish perception and interpretation of things is spiritual, when the opposite is true. Thus the dividing of soul and spirit is imperative in order to learn to distinguish what is of our self and what is of the Lord.

For example, a soulish person may have a thought about someone, and he feels his thought is “justified.” But in God’s light, it is a slanderous thought. Yet instead of turning to Christ and touching the spirit, the soulish man vindicates his thought with various reasons and excuses. He lets his thought affect his emotions, and consequently bad feelings come in. Then he lives out those feelings by gossiping and speaking something negative about the person, without any sensitivity as to the source from which he is acting.

This is living out of the soul — keeping the soul as the source and the determining factor of our thinking, feeling, and deciding.

When a thought enters into our mind about another person, instead of entertaining that thought and allowing it to determine our feelings and actions, we simply need to turn to the Lord in our spirit and fellowship with Him. By this we allow the living and active word of God to divide and discern us. Then we will discover that we have an altogether new and different thought and attitude. We have a different feeling. We have different reactions. Our soul and spirit get divided by turning to the spirit and opening to the Lord’s living speaking.

The practical issue of this dividing is our being able to discern with the light of the Word the thoughts and intents of our heart. Before the dividing, we felt that we were “right” in our thought. But after the dividing of soul and spirit, we realize that the very same thought is not only slanderous but originates from the devil. James 3:14-15 makes this clear: ¹⁴ “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, soulish, demonic.” Thus to experience Christ in our daily life, our basic need is the dividing of soul and spirit.

Even after becoming a Christian, our soul and spirit are so mixed together in our experience that we do not know whether our living is from the soul or from the spirit. This dilemma is solved by continually allowing the living and operative word of God to pierce the thoughts and intents of our heart and to divide our soul and spirit. Indeed, the word of God has dividing and discerning ability. We ourselves do not have such a keen sense. Our discernment is minimal and often inaccurate, especially after we have lived out of our soul for so many years.

Our greatest need

A believer’s greatest need is to get into the Word of God regularly and go to the Lord day by day, especially in the mornings. Open up to the Lord and begin to pray over the verses. Reading the Bible must be more to us than a routine or academic pursuit. We need to actually contact God while we are in the Word. By getting into the Word in this way we find it is “living and active.” It begins to operate. It begins to speak. A word will

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 7)

stand out, a verse will stand out, or a phrase will stand out, and then you begin to pray with what touches you. That word entering into your heart clears you up inwardly: “The entrance of Your words gives light” (Psa. 119:130).

You begin to see that you have been in yourself — in your emotions, in your reactions, in your pride and hardness. You have been in your reasoning mind or in your hurt feelings about someone. You have chosen your own will. Light begins to dawn upon you and you become inwardly clear regarding where you have been. You get divided. You begin to see how you have sinned, how you have lived in your soulish life, how you have lived out of your impulses, or how your motivation for saying something was altogether impure. The word divides your soul and spirit, and the thoughts and intents of your heart are discerned.

With this dividing and discerning, you begin to repent and confess to the Lord your lack of living out from Him. And as you confess, your spirit rises to the surface of your being (cf. Eph. 5:18-19 with Col. 3:16) and everything becomes crystal clear. What originates from your soul is exposed to you, and what originates from your spirit is manifested. Yes, there is the realm of the soul and there is the realm of the spirit, and it is the living and active word of God that discovers for us which realm we are living in.

— Bill Freeman

(Continued from Page 5)

spontaneous and natural. Isn't this what man desires most in life? Joy, happiness, contentment — this is what people strive for. This is what they want. And there's only one — I repeat, *just one* — additive that can transmit pure joy, pure contentment, pure satisfaction, and that's Christ. I'll never forget the night I received Christ. I went to sleep that night so joyful, so content, so peaceful. I didn't know I could be this joyful. I didn't know I could be this peaceful. I was in complete awe at the contented condition of my insides. I slept that night as I'd never slept before. So happy! Then I awoke the next morning. It was still there. This new wine was still in me, and it continued to influence me in the following days and weeks and months and even up to the present time. My close friend (who had received Christ at about the same time) and I were just outside of ourselves. We would tell anybody about Christ. We would engage in conversation with anybody who wanted to hear about Jesus Christ. This was contrary to our reserved dispositions. Naturally speaking, we would never have thought of doing this. But we were filled with the new wine and were under its intoxication.

But Be Filled in Spirit

No wonder Paul says, “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). In other words, don't consume that physical wine. Consume the spiritual wine. In fact, consume a lot of it. As Paul says, get *filled* with it. Allow yourself to get intoxicated with the spiritual wine. Come under its complete influence. When you do, you will get transferred out of the realm of the old man, the world, the flesh, and sin. And the things that accompany that realm and drag us down — guilt, condemnation, religious self-effort, trying harder — all drop off. Things that we have tried so hard to overcome in our own energy just drop off. We are simply translated into another realm, which is the new creation realm, and which is what we are in Christ. This is the normal realm. This is the realm God intended man to live in.

Perhaps there are habits or problems that hang on us. In fact, they bind us and continually drag us down. Perhaps it's our fears, our pride, our jealousy, our bitterness, our temper. These things grip and torment us. Try as we may, we have never achieved lasting victory over them. There is only one solution — get intoxicated. Get filled with the Spirit. In the Spirit is all the victory we need. Listen to what Paul declares: “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). Liberty! Freedom! Victory! It's all in the Spirit. And it happens *where* the Spirit is. We simply need to be filled with Him — *really* filled with Him. When we are, we are automatically set free. We are translated out of the old realm into Him. And then you forget about whatever it was that was binding you and dragging you down. You're not even aware of it. You're not under its tug, you're not under its pull, you're not under its condemnation. This is the influence, the power, of the Spirit in our life. And this is why we need to drink Him and be filled with Him every day.

— Kirk Eland

the Christian

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