

A SOUL~SPIRIT UNDERSTANDING

By: Norman Grubb

A special key is given us for our daily stabilizing by the writer to the Hebrews. He says that this life has rest, not strain, as its basis (Heb.4:1-11). It is the rest God has enjoyed since He rested on the seventh day after completing the creation, and that Israel was supposed to enter into in the land of Canaan. But then he says that the true rest is what we have in Christ, our Joshua. That rest is by no means a folding of the hands, but a fully active life, where it is a thrill to live because we have adequacy at our center, not inadequacy. Living life without what it takes to live it is strain. Living life with what it takes to live it is rest.

He describes this resting life by saying that "He that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Living by my own works was when I was the worker. The rest life will have even more works, for He is the worker; but that type of working is resting. The key to entering into His rest and continuing in it is by a revelation not so clearly stated anywhere else in the Bible. It is in knowing the difference between soul and spirit (4:12).

We already know that spirit is ourselves joined to Himself. Soul and body are the means by which we express ourselves and live our fully active lives. But as long as we are confused between what we are in our inner spirit-selves, with the ways by which we express ourselves through outer soul and body, we are in trouble.

He likens the difference between soul and spirit to the joints and marrow in our physical bodies. The marrow is the inner life of the bones (spirit). The joints are the way by which that inner life goes into action through hands and feet, etc. (or soul). And he says we have spirit and soul so mixed up that it takes a revelation for us to see the difference. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (4:12).

In simple terms, in our spirits we love, by our soul-emotions and body-actions we express our love. In spirit we are knowers. Through soul we express our knowledge by our reasoning faculty. (Peter exemplifies the relationship between those two when he says we give "a reason for the hope that is in us.") So soul and body are the only precious means by which we—our spirit and God's Spirit by us—can express ourselves. Spirit in the union is stillness, for the universal is always still. ("Be still and know that I am God.") This is the still small voice by which God spoke to Elijah. Spirit can be compared to the sea, which is a still source of power. The soul is like the waves which dash about as the expression of that power. The power is in the sea, not in the waves.

So our danger and problem, till we are awakened to it, is to mistake the surges of the waves (soul-emotions) for the unmoved and still center (spirit). We get into trouble when we mistake the variable emotions of the soul for our still spirit center. The waves are depressions, hurts, jealousies, fears, lust; or alternatively, feelings of deadness, uselessness list. The same with our soul in its reasoning activities. All kinds of disturbing or evil thoughts can

pour into us. These are the influence of the outer appearances of things on our mental attitudes, with all the doubts and questionings they may bring. The Scripture in Hebrews also compares soul and spirit to “the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Intentions are our spirit—the fixed purposes of the heart. Thoughts are our soul-varied opinions about the intentions.

That is also why John in his letter makes a differentiation between our hearts and God (3:19-21). He says, “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.” Here “heart” represents feelings, or soul, and we can get plenty of condemnation in our feeling. God who knows all and doesn’t condemn, speaks His assuring word through our spirits.

It is easy to be drawn strongly by some outward desire of the heart and to seem helpless against it. But in my spirit center, where God is, I know my real desire is His will and He keeps His firm hold on me. A friend recently wrote of a strong desire for a certain thing: “But in this I felt myself kept. This keeping made me angry at times, because I wanted to have my own way and I knew I could not. I knew that it could never be because it wasn’t what the real me wanted.” Spirit, and soul!

A person says to me, “What do I do when I say I am Christ as me, and yet there’s someone I hate? I laugh and reply, “You are kidding yourself. You can’t hate; you can’t hate. You can only feel you do on your soul-emotional level and mistake that for hate. Hate is only love reversed, and you are alive, which is He in you, and you love by the set purpose of the will; and you know that if the real need arose you would give yourself for the one you hate.” While

soul-love is emotion, spirit-love is will; and we are fixed in that kind of love. We may feel more like we are in hell, and yet we are in heaven.

So we see ourselves in our spirit center, where He and we are one in spirit, and all things are our in Him. Soul and body are our wonderful means of endless spirit expression. And having grasped, by the revelation of the word, and dividing asunder between soul and spirit, I do not fear my soul and body, or even more foolishly, wish I was without their disturbing reactions. No, I thankfully see myself as a whole person, God's whole person, and He having equipped me with these fascinating means of living out my full life as a whole self with Himself, in all of my life's activities. And because they are wholly His, I will put no limits on the liberated use of my soul and body. Equally, I totally enjoy the fact that He has me safely in hand, with the surges of the negatives temporarily flooding in, and spirit winning its battles over soul and body diversions so that I am "kept by the power of God" and "having all sufficiency in all things, abound unto every good work."

I hope we have it very clear that emotions of all kinds are soulish, whether high or low; very precious as our means of self-and God-expression, but equally the means by which so many disturbed feelings can be active in us; and we now know how to recognize them for what they are and not mistake them for spirit.