

SPIRIT SOUL AND BODY (part 10)
An Analysis of the Spirit (2)
The Spiritual Man –Watchman Nee

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 or 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" (10). This verse sets forth the fact that the Holy 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 Holy 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 SPIRIT OF MAN

"For what person knows man's thought 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.11,12). Man's spirit as well as God's Spirit apprehends 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: 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. 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.

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 conscience. 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, we must heed what our inward monitor tells us regarding both inclination and overt action.

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 the conscience) was increased. 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.

In initiating His work of salvation the first step of the Holy Spirit is to awaken this comatose 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. 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. "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). As the 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’s 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).