

SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY **(part 9)**
An Analysis of the Spirit (1)
(The Spiritual Man - Watchman Nee)

To understand more clearly what spiritual life is we must analyze the spirit explicitly and assimilate all its laws; 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. God's glad tidings to men are that the fallen can be regenerated and the fleshly can receive a new spirit. This new spirit serves as the basis for new life.

An analysis of the functions of the spirit is absolutely essential: its functions can be classified as intuition, communion, and conscience. While these can be distinguished, still, they are closely entwined. They are merely functions of the spirit. None of them is the spirit, for the spirit itself is substantial, personal invisible. 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 demand on man.

In previous studies, we compared man to the temple and man's spirit to the Holy of Holies. For better understanding of the subject, 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, 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" (Romans 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? 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.

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 soulful 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 many-sided character from the following verses:

1. The spirit indeed is willing Matt.26:41
2. Perceiving in his spirit Mark 2:8
3. He sighed deeply in his spirit Mark 8:12
4. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior Luke 1:47
5. The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth John 4:23
6. He was deeply moved in spirit and trouble John 11:33
7. When Jesus had thus spoken He was troubled in spirit John 13:21
8. His spirit provoked within him as he saw the city was full of idols Acts 17:16
9. I will sing with the spirit I Cor.2:11
10. We have the same spirit of faith II Cor. 4:13

From these few 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. The spirit like the soul has its thoughts and desires. But how we must learn to distinguish the spiritual from the soulful! 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 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. 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 and 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. 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.

To be continued.

(Excerpts from the book, The Spiritual Man)