

CHAPTER 4

SANCTIFICATION OF SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

“I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (I Thes. 5:23, 24).

Most of us in our reading of the Scriptures have difficulty—and it is a perfectly natural one—of recognizing body and soul only. Man is generally spoken of as a duality of body and soul. However, the Scriptures do not recognize man as a dual being, but a triune being, like God Himself.

Therefore, the apostle says: “I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In the common translation of our English Bible there is very little distinction made between soul and spirit. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to express in another language the common truths we teach. Paul coined seventeen distinct words in his letter to the Ephesians to express the fine distinctions of soul and spirit.

Paul declares in the book of Hebrews the possibility of divisibility of soul and spirit. He says:

“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, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

THE SPIRIT OF MAN

Beloved, the spirit of man is that great unknown realm in the lives of most men. My judgment is that the spirit lies dormant in most men until quickened by the living Spirit of God, and until fertilized by the real Spirit of Jesus Christ. But when touched by the Spirit of God, a quickening takes place. The spirit of man comes into activity and begins to operate within him. It not only discerns things in this life, but it reaches beyond this present life and becomes that means by which we touch God Himself, and by which we know and comprehend heavenly things.

In my judgment, the spirit of man is the most amazing instrument of God there is in all the world. We have this declaration in the book of Job concerning man's spirit:

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding"
(Job 32:8).

There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding. When a soul comes to God and surrenders his life to Him, we say he is converted. And by that we mean he is changed, born again of God so that the common things which were evident in His life as a fleshly being fell away and were gone, and the spiritual life appeared in him, and in the truest sense he began his walk as a child of God.

I believe a real conversion is also the awakening of the spirit of man to the consciousness of the Fatherhood of God through Jesus Christ. In order to be aware of that consciousness of union with God, it is necessary to remove everything that hides that consciousness and dims the knowledge of God.

Sin is that peculiar thing in the life of man which dims the consciousness of man so that he cannot

comprehend God. When sin is removed, the veil over the soul of man is gone and the spirit of man looks into the face of God and recognizes that God is his Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. The spirit of man ascending into union with God brings into our soul the consciousness that God is our all in all.

THE SOUL OF MAN

The soul of man is that intermediate quality between body and spirit. The soul, in other words, comprehends all the action of our mental powers, the natural mind. The soul of man is that which reaches out and takes possession of the knowledge that the spirit has attained and expresses that knowledge through the outer man. The soul of man is the governing power of the constitution of man.

I feel one of the things we need to learn is this: that the soul of man, not the spirit, has a marvelous power.

If I were to endeavor to define in terms people would understand, I would speak of the action of the soul of man as that which is commonly called the subconscious. In reading the writings of psychic authors, you will observe the actions and powers they define are not the powers of the spirit in union with God, but the action of the soul of man. The soul of man is the real ego. When the Word of God speaks of the salvation of the soul, it speaks in truly scientific language. For unless the soul, the mind of man, is redeemed from his own self into the Spirit of God, that man is in my judgment still an unredeemed man.

SANCTIFICATION OF SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

Sanctification is calculated to apply to the needs of all our nature; first of the spirit, second of the soul, third of the body. Over and over again I have repeated those blessed words of John Wesley as he

defined sanctification: "Sanctification is possessing the mind of Christ, and all the mind of Christ."

The ultimate of entire sanctification would comprehend all the mind of Christ. Christians are usually very weak in this department of their nature. Perhaps less effort has been made by Christians to develop their minds in God than in almost anything else. We pay particular attention to one thing only, the spirit, and we do not comprehend the fact that God purposed that the things God's Spirit brings to us shall be applied in a practical manner to the needs of our present life.

I was absolutely shocked one day beyond anything my spirit has ever received. A dear lady who professes not only to live a holy life, but to possess the real baptism of the Holy Ghost, and who discusses the subject a great deal, was guilty of saying one of the vilest things I ever heard concerning another person. I said in my own soul, "That individual has not even discerned the outer fringes of what sanctification by the Spirit of God means." I do not believe there is any evidence of sanctification in that life. Certainly a mind that could repeat such a thing gives evidence of only a very superficial knowledge of God.

It shows us that people are depending upon the fact that in their spirit they know God, that they have been saved from sin and are going to heaven when they die; but they are living like the devil and talking like the devil in this present life. It is an abomination. It shows a tremendous degree of ignorance. It shows that that individual does not comprehend the first principles of the breadth of salvation as Jesus taught it to the world—a holy mind, a sanctified spirit.

But here is the hope, here is the strength, herein is the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ—that the power of God unto salvation, applied to the mind of

man, sanctifies the soul of man and makes the mind of man like the mind of Christ. Who could imagine from the lips of Jesus an unholy suggestion that would jar the spirit of another? The mind could not conceive of such a thing.

SANCTIFICATION OF THE MIND

One Sunday afternoon I preached in a new theater, and I never preached under such trying conditions in all my life. There was an atmosphere there that one could recognize was the effect of the minds who inhabit that place. It seemed the whole place was impregnated with that spirit and it took a long time for my spirit to overcome it so I could speak out with freedom.

In our home, in our office, wherever we are, we leave the impress of our thoughts there. If our thoughts are pure and holy, like Christ, people will walk into that atmosphere and instantly discover it.

Not long ago a brother walked into our healing rooms, and he said to me afterwards: "When I came through the outside door I felt it." He knew God and recognized the power of God. The sanctified mind leaves the balm of the holy presence and a holy thought wherever it goes. The unsanctified mind leaves the sting and the stain of unholiness.

If there is any particular area where as a rule Christians are weak, it is in the consecration of their minds. Christians seem to feel as if they are not to exercise any control over the mind, so it seems to run at random, just like the mind of the world. Real Christianity is marked by the pureness, the holiness of the thoughts of man; and if the kind of Christianity you have does not produce in your mind real holiness, real purity, real sweetness, real truth, then it is a poor brand. Change it right away.

There is relief for the unsanctified mind. Submit your mind to the Lord Jesus Christ to be remolded by the Holy Spirit, so that it becomes the pure channel of a holy nature.

Surely, we who profess to know the living God, who profess to live in union with Him, ought to present to the world that attitude and holiness of mind which needs no recommendation. People know it; they feel it. They know it is the mind of Christ.

THE EFFECT OF THE MIND ON THE PERSON

Do you know that the sins of vileness in men's lives originate in the mind? A man's life will be of the character of his thoughts. If he thinks evil, he will be evil. If he thinks holy, he will be holy. His outward life will be as the inner impulse is.

Jesus said:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

The Jews were troubled because Jesus and the disciples were eating and drinking from dishes which had not been ceremonially cleansed. So Jesus was trying to teach the great lesson of the inner life. He said, “Out of the heart come evil things.” That which goes into the mouth cannot defile a man.

Our minds need to be stayed in Christ, kept by the power of God, infilled with the Holy Spirit of Christ, so that we reflect His beauty and show forth His love. We should manifest His sweetness and evidence His power.

Isn't it marvelous to realize that mankind can receive into his nature the power and Spirit of the

living Christ, which contains the purging power to drive forth from his being every particle of evil, every sensuous thing in his thought and nature, so that the man becomes what Jesus was?

The inflow of holy life into our bodies must produce holiness in the body just as it does in the soul. We cannot even think beautiful thoughts, we cannot think holy thoughts, without their leaving an impression in our nature, in our very flesh.

That same heavenly power in us dissolves disease and restores diseased tissues. Our flesh is purged by the divine power being transmitted from our spirit through our soul into our body.

When we contemplate the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and think of the radiant glory that came through His flesh, not just the illumination of His Spirit, but the holy glory emanating through His flesh until He became white and glistening, until His face shone as the light, we begin to understand the transfiguring power of heaven.

It is that radiant purity of God that my soul covets. It is that radiant power, evidenced in the pureness of my spirit, my mind, and my very flesh that I long for.

THE IMPURITY OF DISEASE

When something impure of the character of disease appears on your flesh and mine, and we feel we are being soiled by an unholy touch, in the name of Jesus our spirit reaches up and rebukes that devilish condition. By the Spirit of the living God we stand, believing that the Holy Spirit of God will flow through the spirit, flow through the soul, through the flesh and remedy and heal that difficulty.

An old Baptist brother came to see me about his wife. As I sat reasoning with him I said, "Brother, both sin and sickness are impure. One is the evidence of an impure mind; the other is the evidence of an impure body. And the salvation of Jesus was intended to make man pure in spirit, soul and body."

"... I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thes. 5:23,24).

There is a stream of life that God permits to flow from your nature and mine to all men everywhere. That blessed stream will be either sweet and pure as the stream that flows from the throne of God, or it will be soiled and fouled, according to the condition of our nature. And the value of the precious blood of Jesus Christ to you and me is that through it that lifestream that flows from us may be made holy—that same holy, living stream that causes the tree of life to bloom.

Of all the pictures the Word of God contains, the one described in Revelation 22:1 is the most beautiful.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

If your life has not been satisfactory, if you have not recognized the holy character that Christ expects from a real Christian, then this call of the Spirit comes to your soul. The Spirit and the Bride say come. Come up, come into the real life, the life hid with Christ in God.

“... I ... shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).