

The Distinction between Soul and Spirit From Fausset's Commentary

~Other Speakers G-L: Jessie Penn Lewis:

Note on Hebrews 4:12. "EVEN TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT "-i.e., reaching through even to the separation of the animal soul (lower part of man's incorporeal nature, the seat of animal desires, which he has in common with the brutes; c.f. the same Greek, I Corinthians 2:14, 'the natural [animal-souled] man', Jude 19) from the spirit (the higher part of man, receptive of the Spirit of God, and allying him to heavenly beings). "AND OF THE JOINTS AND MARROW "-rather (reaching even to) " both the joints (so as to divide them) and marrow ".

Christ " knows what is in man " (John 2:25): so His Word reaches as far as to the most intimate and accurate knowledge of man's most hidden parts, feelings, and thoughts, dividing, i.e., distinguishing what is spiritual from what is carnal and animal in him, the spirit from the soul: so Proverbs 20:27

As the knife of the Levitical priest reached to dividing parts, closely united as the joints of the limbs, and penetrated to the innermost parts, as the marrows (the Greek is plural), so the word of God divides the closely joined parts of man's immaterial being, soul and spirit, and penetrates to the innermost parts of the spirit.

The clause (reaching even to) " both the joints and marrow " is subordinate to the clause " even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit ".... An image (appropriate in addressing Jews) from the literal dividing of joints, and penetrating to, so as to open out, the marrow, by the priest's knife, illustrating the previously mentioned spiritual " dividing of soul and spirit ", whereby each (soul as well as spirit) is laid bare and " naked " before God; this view accords with v.13.

Evidently " the dividing of the soul from the spirit " answers to the " joints " which the sword, when it reaches unto, divides asunder, as the " spirit " answers to the innermost " marrow ". " Moses forms the soul, Christ the spirit. The soul draws with it the body; the spirit draws with it both soul and body." . . . The Word's dividing and far-penetrating power has both a punitive and a healing effect.

" DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS "-Greek, " capable of judging the purposes ", " INTENTS "-rather, conceptions "[Crellius] ; " ideas " [Alford]. As the Greek for " thoughts " refers to the mind and feelings, so that for " intents ", or rather, " mental conceptions " refers to the intellect.

NOTE ON JUDE 19. " Sensual " (lit. "animal-souled ") as opposed to the " spiritual ", or " having the Spirit ".

It is translated " the natural man " in I Corinthians 2:14. In the three-fold division of man's being, body, soul and spirit, the due state in God's design is, that " the spirit ", which is the recipient of the Holy Spirit, uniting man to God, should be first, and should rule the soul, which stands intermediate between the body and spirit; but in the ... NATURAL man the spirit is sunk into subserviency to the animal-soul, which is earthly in its motives and aims. The " CARNAL " sink somewhat lower, for in these the flesh, the lowest element and corrupt side of man's bodily nature, reigns paramount.

" Not having the Spirit ": In the animal and natural man the " spirit ", his higher part, which ought to be the receiver of the Holy Spirit, is not so; and therefore, his spirit not being in its normal state, he is said not to have the spirit. (Cf. John 3: 5, 6.)

Note on I THESSALONIANS 5:23. " Spirit, soul and body. .. entire." It refers to man in his normal integrity, as originally designed.... All three, spirit, soul and body, each in its due place constitute man " entire " The " spirit " links man with the higher intelligences of heaven, and is that highest part of man which is receptive of the quickening Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 15:47). In the " unspiritual " the spirit is so sunk under the lower animal soul ... that such are termed " animal " (English Version sensual, having merely the body of organized matter, and the soul the immaterial animating essence), having not the Spirit.

Note on I CORINTHIANS 2:14 " Natural man ": lit. a man of animal soul. As contrasted with the spiritual man, he is governed by the animal soul, which overbears his spirit, which latter is without the Spirit of God (Jude 19). So the animal (A.V. natural) body, or body led by the lower animal nature (including both the mere human fallen reason and heart), is contrasted with the Spirit quickened body (see I Corinthians 15:44-46). The carnal man (the man led by the bodily appetites, and also by a self-exalting spirit, estranged from the divine life) is closely akin: so too the " earthly ". Devilish or demon-like, led by an evil spirit (James 3:15), is the awful character of such a one in its worst type... .

NOTE ON I CORINTHIANS 2:15. " He that is spiritual," lit. " the spiritual (man) ". In v.14 it is " A (not the as in A.V.) natural man". The spiritual is the man distinguished above his fellow men as he in whom the Spirit rules. In the unregenerate, the spirit which ought to be the organ of the Holy Spirit (and which is so in the regenerate),* is overridden by the animal soul, and is in abeyance, so that such a one is never called " spiritual ".

NOTE ON I CORINTHIANS 3:1. " And I ... " i.e., as the natural (animal) man cannot receive, so I also could not speak unto you the deep things of God, as I would to the spiritual; but I was compelled to speak to you as ...to "MEN OF FLESH. . . ."

The former (lit. fleshly) implies men wholly of flesh, or natural. Carnal or "fleshly ", implies not that they were wholly natural or unregenerate, but that they had much of a carnal tendency, e.g., their divisions. Paul had to speak to them as he would to men wholly natural ... not withstanding their conversion.

NOTE ON JAMES 3:15 " Sensual," lit. animal-like: the wisdom of the " natural " man ... DEVILISH in its origin ... and also in its character, which accords with its origin.

Some " Soulish " Counterfeits of " Spiritual " realities

Every genuine spiritual phenomenon has its soulical counterpart, e.g., the love of truth, or love viewed as a spiritual phenomenon, differs essentially from the soulical counterfeit. Love, as consisting in sentiment and the strong stirrings of affection, is a mere fleshly principle. It shuns suffering, it courts worldly enjoyment and consideration, it exhibits itself in the strength of the domestic and social attachments, and in its most refined form, takes a deep interest in alleviating the miseries and promoting the comforts of the family of man. All this may exist with deep rooted hatred to the truth.

Love as a Divine principle and spiritual phenomenon, is distinguished by properties exactly the opposite of all this. It is love to God and is the result of our knowing that God hath first loved us (I John 4:19).

While soulical love pretends to cherish attachment to the Creator through the medium of the creature, spiritual love goes out to the creature through the medium of the Creator. Soulical love would, for the promotion of the apparent good of the creature, sacrifice at any time the truth of the Creator, whereas spiritual love rejoices to know that through the truth of the Creator the real good of the creature is secured and promoted.

Spiritual love is emphatically love to the truth, and love to others for the truth's sake. Soulical love appearing to be spiritual, may be detected to be what it is by this test, that the truth of God is always in its estimation secondary, whereas the essential feature of spiritual love is its supreme and exclusive attachment to the truth of God.

The soulical nature of love professed often betrays itself in a great anxiety to reconcile the Word of God with well-established human facts, and cogent human reasonings founded thereon, and this even at the expense of the Divine veracity being compromised and encroached on. The language of love which is Divine and spiritual, is " Let God be true, though every man should prove to be a liar ".