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CHAPTER 6

We have died . . . new service of the Spirit" Romans 7: 6

THIS morning when speaking of the life side of the Cross, we were more occupied with the word 'life' than the word 'Spirit'. On the life, or resurrection side of the Cross, we have seen there is the joining of the spirit to the Spirit of Christ, for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit". In the early days of my Christian life I thought that everything that took place in my spirit was the action of the Holy Spirit, not understanding clearly all that the Bible says about the human spirit. Let us trace it out.

1. There is a human spirit. I Corinthians 2: 11 shows this clearly. "Who can know what belongs to man, but the spirit of man which is within him?" i.e., who can know what is going on within us, but the spirit which is within us? "Even so," says the Apostle, "none can know what belongs to God, but the Spirit of God alone." Even as others can only know our innermost thoughts as we choose to reveal them, so we can only know God as His Spirit reveals Him. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might understand those things which have been freely given us by God." We see by this passage that there is a 'spirit of man,' which knows the man, as the 'Spirit of God' knows the 'depths of God'. Also that God gives to men who will receive Him, His Spirit, so that by His Spirit they may be enabled to understand the things of God-things which they could not know apart from the teaching of His Spirit.

2. The spirit of man is a distinct entity or organism (I Corinthians 5: 4) "You convene an assembly, and when you, and my spirit with you, are gathered together. . . ." Here is Paul talking about his own spirit being present with the assembled believers in Corinth. Here we have the fact of there being a spirit of man as a distinct entity, or organism. Again in I Corinthians 14: 14, Paul says, "If I utter prayers in a tongue, my spirit indeed prays, but my understanding bears no fruit". So 'spirit' and mind, or understanding, are not the same thing! "My spirit prays" says the Apostle, apart entirely from the 'soul'--or understanding. This shows that there is prayer which takes place only in the spirit, without the 'understanding' of what the prayer is about (see Romans 8:26), and without expression by the voice, or 'feelings' of the body. So, the Apostle says, "I will pray indeed with my spirit, but I will pray with my understanding also; I will sing praises with my spirit, but I will sing with my understanding also". This prayer in the spirit is not of value to others gathered in a meeting, "For if thou, with thy spirit, offerest praise" only, "how shall the Amen be said" by others who are present? The 'understanding' prayer is needed in the assembly.

3. The varied characteristics of the spirit. Now look at the varied expressions which are used concerning the spirit. These characteristics may belong to the spirit of man itself, or be brought about in it by the action of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12: 11 speaks of a 'fervent' spirit. Something quite different to 'enthusiasm' or fervour in the soul. The 'fervent' spirit is the same in a revival meeting, and in the cold drudgery of daily life. It is this fervency that the world misses in the children of God. People have the counterfeit of it in the things of the world, stirred by the life of nature: surely the children of God should have it from the source of the Spirit of God, setting their spirits on fire. Then it would come out in every detail of life-in action and service, even in handshaking-which can be the warm, heartening, expression of a fervent spirit. We are needing sorely, in a selfish world, an intensity which comes from a true fervency of spirit.

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