

The Nature of that which Issues in the Resurrection of Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

Chapter 4 - The Need for Balance in Spirit, Soul and Body

We have been occupied with the inward nature of that which issues with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and we have been looking again into the nature of man as he is by reason of the fall; what it is that the cross of the Lord Jesus does with him, and what it is that comes out in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be the material of the church which He said: "*I will build*". The constitution of man is very largely the subject of consideration and while we have said very little about his **body** (there may be something yet to say on that) we have been mainly occupied with the other two aspects of his being: **soul and spirit**.

Just to take that up now with a view to saying a few further things, let us remind ourselves that the Scripture teaches us quite plainly that **the soul, or 'psuche' is the sum total of man's natural powers** - the life as born into the world, and all that it contains or can attain unto. That is man, of course, since the fall. But **the spirit, the 'pneuma' is not only that which lies behind the soul, just as the soul, or 'psuche' lies underneath the bodily organism**, the spirit is that part of man which is unable to expand of itself, or to attain to its proper end in consequence of the fall. The Scripture tells us that there is a spirit in man, **there is a 'pneuma', but that in consequence of the fall it is, for all divine purposes, as though it did not exist; what the Scripture calls 'death' has taken place, and that is that part of man by which he was joined to the Lord. The Lord being a Spirit, has fallen out of that relationship so that man is no longer a spiritual man, but a soulical man** [1 Cor. 2:14].

Further, the Word of God makes it perfectly clear that man does not know that he is in that state. If man could know his own spiritual powers, or even know how lamentably he has lost their use by the fall, he would not be as fallen as he is. The root of his trouble is that he knows not that he has got it, and the work of the spiritual Physician is primarily not that of removing something, but making the patient know that he has a function of which he is altogether unconscious, and that that function is not functioning. He has to disclose the function, the healthy enjoyment of which has never been known, and therefore it is hardly suspected. **It is that organ and function of the 'pneuma' which is basic to everything in relation to God.**

Now then, we trace the history of a child of God, and again we refer to that which is born again. We have taken pains, and gone to some length in seeking to point out that **it is not the soul that is born again, any more than it is the body, but it is the spirit**. "*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit*", and it is said not to be born of bloods, "*Born not of bloods*", and the soul is in the blood, so the Word says. And God is spoken of as "*the Father of our spirits*". It is by a divine act, an act of the Spirit of God in the power of resurrection, that the spirit which died (always using that word in the scriptural sense, which does not mean that it is non-existent, and which does not mean that it is non-active, for **the fallen man has a human spirit which may be active, but death in the scriptural sense is a falling out of correspondence with its essential source of life**) is born anew, or from above. That is where the history of a child of God begins.

Now, it is just here that some of our greatest mistakes are made in Christian work, perhaps particularly so in missionary work, but not exclusively so by any means. There is a beginning made by the assumption of a universal God-consciousness even among the heathen. That may, in measure, be true, but it is from that point, whether altogether true or

not, whether true only in measure, whether in some cases not at all true because there have been those traced who have not, so far as it is possible to recognise, any God-consciousness; but whether it be true or not, or only true in measure, it is from that point that the mistake is made. There is an assuming, usually, of that God-consciousness, and then procedure to build a teaching upon it, the truth of the Gospel if you like; that is, taking something for granted as being there, and thus seeking to develop it by the truth of the Gospel, by the Word of God, and bring it up, and educate or enlighten it. It is only, or mainly, a matter of degree, a matter of kind in difference between human philosophy and Christian teaching with its thought, but the whole of the philosophy of this world and all the Greek philosophers constructed their philosophy upon the assumed universal God-consciousness.

I will never forget exploring the fields of John Caird's history of the Greek philosophies. I tried to wade through those Greek philosophers, and the whole ground was constructed upon this statement (I think I can quote it almost verbatim although it is 25 years since I read it!): "*There is in every human creature a consciousness of standing in responsible relationship to some supreme object of reverence which that creature calls God*". Then Caird goes on to show the expression of that is manifold from the tree, or the image of stone, to the heavenly bodies; but there is consciousness which produces that in every human creature, and all philosophy has been constructed upon that.

*Well now, you can take your Christian doctrine and just do exactly the same thing: build it upon some assumed thing. And with your Christian doctrine you have no guarantee of getting beyond the point where pagan philosophy gets. And pagan philosophy was able to make some very good products in the elevation of human life: the ennobling of human ideas and in the changing of lives, but that is a different thing from regeneration. Elevation and regeneration are entirely different things. And it is because of a fundamental misapprehension - the developing of something assumed to be there and the educating and enlightening of it with the Gospel - the result is a *soul Christianity*: a Christianity of reason, feeling, volition, brought about by teaching, by persuading, in the light of certain presented evangelical truths, and a *spirit still unborn*. Instead of recognising that the **spirit in fallen man is dead, or dormant**, God-consciousness is spoken of as active in all men, and then the worker proceeds to uncover this something as buried beneath sensuality, rather than to recover what is lost and discover what is unknown. There is all the difference.*

The Lord Jesus is always true, of course, to basic principles. Let us look at the parable of the prodigal son - and by the way, it is always doubtful whether that parable ought to be used as an evangelistic sermon. It usually is, but you have to take it with the three other parables of Luke 15, and it was a Jewish question which was in view, a Jew and Gentile question which was raised by the Lord at that time. The elder and younger brother represent the two sides of the human race and the last thing the Lord said about the son was: "*for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found*". That is true to Biblical psychology. It is not simply the bringing back of something. It is the quickening of something from the dead. It is not just the lifting of man from a low state, it is making a new man. He "*was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found*", and that is the state of the pneuma in man. Dead... to be made alive. Lost... and if lost you cannot work upon something that is lost; it has to be found. And we cannot be too explicit as to the work of regeneration and what it effects in fallen man.

The special work of regeneration is to quicken the spirit. It will, in turn, control the animal, and refine the intellectual and moral life, but it does not begin there. And it is this fatal assumption that all men have got something upon which you can work, that has led to so

much confusion and so much disappointment. There is nothing to work upon only as there is a quickening into life, and there must be a something which produces that life, which has that life in it, and affects that life in the object before you can get the result of regeneration. *Now, the Word of God has that life.* The messenger must have that life. *The Spirit of God must be in the Word and that Word must become spirit and life in a dead spirit before there can be regeneration.* It is no use bringing Christian teaching to the natural man's intelligence and trying to persuade him to act in response to it unless the Word of God is brought in the power of the Spirit of God to bear upon something which is dead and which cannot react to that Word unless quickened. *There is all the difference between getting these false conversions which are purely soulical and which eventually collapse under spiritual strain and are at best in a false position, and getting a real regeneration of the spirit.*

Herein then, is the necessity for the preacher to be one filled with the Holy Spirit, and herein the necessity for the Word of God to be preached by normally Spirit-filled men and women. The Lord sometimes does use His Word apart from any human instrument, but *His chosen way is to have men filled with the Holy Spirit, to use a Holy Spirit filled word in order that what He says may be the power of resurrection in a spirit which can never respond to merely psychical urge or argument.* It is important for us to recognise that in the work of the Lord. Oh, how much **prayer**, therefore, is necessary back of all work of seeking to lead souls into life. Our very best products of mind, of intellect can never effect anything. It requires the living Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring a soul to new birth, and any easygoing way of what may be called evangelism may be marked by very unsatisfactory issues in the long run. These are days in which things like this need to be taken to heart.

You want to know on what ground a soul has been supposedly saved? You tell me a soul can be regenerated by an upheaving of some of its inner secrets of sinfulness, apart from the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit; *I say that is not regeneration.* That is psychoanalysis, and it can have wonderful effects of soulish elevation for a time - but only for a time. **We see then, briefly, what it is that is born again; and, therefore, in the second place, what is indwelt by God. It is the spirit of man that is indwelt by God, not firstly the soul or the body. I know you may say the Word says: "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" Yes, that is true in the same sense as the outer court of the tabernacle was the place of God, and the holy place was the place of God, but only in that sense. The essential, the primary place of God was the Holiest of all, the inner sanctuary, and God only filled the holy place and the court by reason of His being personally settled in the most holy place. And He only makes our souls and our bodies His dwelling place on the ground of His being personally resident within our spirits. God does not dwell in our bodies alone or in our souls alone, and He does not dwell fully in either soul or body, or both. He overflows to them from the spirit, and in that sense, a vessel within vessels, He dwells in man. He dwells in the spirit of a child of God.**

That leads us to see then, the third thing: **what is the educational organ and basis of the child of God, which is the renewed spirit. We shall be taught by the Spirit of the Lord in our spirits,** everything that the Lord has to teach us. Yesterday we illustrated this from personal experience, how that having truly committed ourselves to the Lord from time to time for ministry, we have inadvertently, unwontedly, in the course of ministry slipped into saying something which was not according to the Lord's mind, and we have known it instantly. For it seemed as though the very bottom dropped out of the whole message, and from that point we floundered on and when it was all over we have noted distinctly the point at which the very life of God went out of our message, and what it was. And as we have looked at it, it is as though the Holy Spirit said: "That sort of thing must be

kept out; I am not with that sort of thing and if you are going on with Me, it will be as you leave that sort of thing out." On that truth we have gained a great deal of education, and slowly, bit by bit, there has been sifted out of ministry things with which the Holy Spirit could not agree. He has done it progressively because our education was at stake.

I illustrate from my own experience. I have already mentioned that we had to decide once and for all that the war was taboo. The Lord allowed one to go on using literary citations and quotations, Browning and all the rest, wholesale, but slowly the Lord put His finger upon these things as they were used to try and accomplish spiritual ends, and made to know that He would rather not. That education was along this line, that when you did it, there was something which went flat. And you came to drop all that out and came altogether to use the Word of God, and to find that the Word of God was ample and it is not a bit necessary to go outside the Word of God for anything. *The Holy Spirit will use the Word of God.*

Now, this is a matter of education. Don't think I am saying that all those who do these things must be ruled out. They have got to be educated just the same and we are not saying we are far ahead of anyone else, but I am indicating, remember, **the organ and basis of spiritual education is the quickened and Holy Spirit indwelt spirit, so that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit on the things of God.** But it is a test, as well as a statement of fact, that if you can make your address nine-tenths stuff of man based upon one-tenth or one-tenth of a tenth of a background of the Word of God, your work is in the **soul and not in the spirit.** Well, you do not expect spiritual results from that.

As a company of the Lord's servants we need to recognise these things, although doubtless in your own history they are by no means new. **The thing is to recognise that the basis and organ of the Holy Spirit's education of the child of God is the renewed spirit, and as we walk in the Spirit by our spirit, we shall grow and come to a larger apprehension of the Lord's mind about things. "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace"**. He is again: "*The Father of our spirits*", and that word is used, as you know, in connection with the training of the child, and the Father who trains the spiritual child, trains that child through the child's spirit because He is the Father of the spirit.

Then, in the next place, **what is the instrument of co-operation with God? It is again the spirit. We co-operate with God in our renewed spirit,** basically. Paul says: "*whom I serve in my spirit*". To Timothy he closes his letter with: "*The Lord be with your spirit.*" Our co-operation then, is with Him in our spirit; of course, ever remembering: by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is intended to be co-operation with God, but there are three kinds of prayer, and the three kinds of prayer correspond to the three departments of our being. **There is lip prayer - that corresponds to the body.** There is what we may call '**notional**' prayer; **you have a notion of something... that is something more than lip prayer - that corresponds to the soul.** The soul has an inkling, as we say, a notion of things. It is something more than merely the words of the lips. God is - you have a notion that God is, and you have a notion of certain things about God. Our ideas are perhaps in a general way that God has a will, and what God wills as to reverence, worship, and so on. It corresponds to the soul.

Then there is **devotional prayer in which there is immediate communion with God. That corresponds to the spirit.** That also might well sift and test us in our prayer life. I do not suppose that any of us need be tested on the first point. I hope that not any of our prayer is simply words. God forbid that we should be just launching out to say the next thing that comes to us without having anything beyond half a sentence. I do not want to criticise, but so often we have felt that words have been started and there is no ghost of an idea of what the people are after, and they are simply letting one word follow another and

there is hardly a relationship between their words. Now, I am not speaking about those broken prayers where words cannot express, but I mean simply talking; it sometimes seems for the sake of talking, without any relation to their own inner life or to spiritual things.

Perhaps we need testing a little more on the second thing: on objective, external, abstract notions about the Lord, and prayer is mental out there. There is some sort of an inkling, but quite remote from ourselves.

What is needed is prayer in the spirit where everything becomes immediate in fellowship with God, and that always counts. Sometimes it is a matter of battling through to that; in our praying we pray. But we should never be satisfied with merely having uttered words or prayed in notions. We should always seek, before we cease praying, that we have touched the Lord in our spirit and we know there has been a vital contact with Him.

Preaching, of course, has to be on the same basis. There is a preaching of ideas, and a preaching even of doctrine which may be quite correct and according to Scripture; and yet it may be a mental grasp of scriptural truth. But real co-operation with God in preaching has to be through the **spirit** of the instrument, not just through the brain, through the mind, through the reason, or through the emotions, but through the **spirit**, and only as it is, is there a real link with God in a purpose. And all service must be on the same footing. We just mention it and pass on.

Of course we have then to say a word in the fifth place on what of the departure from this world and the intermediate state, because at the beginning of our meditation the other day we said this matter of **the difference between soul and spirit touches primarily upon four of the greatest things with which we have to do.**

Firstly, it touches the **nature of original sin.** *You can never understand the nature of original sin until you know the difference between soul and spirit. And then you can never understand the new birth until you understand the difference between soul and spirit. Thirdly, you cannot understand the nature of the intermediate state until you have the key, which is the difference between soul and spirit. In the fourth place we cannot understand the nature of the resurrection until we are able to make this discrimination.*

We must say a little word here touching the question of the intermediate state. When Stephen was martyred and was passing away to be with the Lord, he cried: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." We have a large doctrine on the immortality of the soul. Now, I am not going to enter upon that whole field, but I doubt whether we are right in using that word. If you make the soul something apart from the spirit, you are on doubtful ground when you talk about the immortality of the soul. We showed from the Word that what God created was a **spirit-soul**, man became a 'living soul', that is, a spirit soul. **And it is by reason of that union that the soul is maintained.** Get in between those two and the soul ceases to have an existence apart from the spirit if you divide them, put them asunder. The body, well, it will go back into the gases. The soul; well, what is it? Is it an entity? You know quite well that every bit of reason, feeling, willing, depends upon the circulation of the blood through the veins for the brain, and in the hour of death when the carbon begins to fall over the brain, all your thinking, feeling, everything else, goes. And if that is something by itself, well, it simply goes out. But God has joined these two together, and we do not go out in death, but we are maintained afterwards, **the soul is maintained by the spirit, and reserved, because there has got to be a coming back.** There has got to be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust. And it will not simply be that God says, and it is done, as in creation; an automatic or mechanical thing from the outside. No! Resurrection is different from creation. Creation is one thing, resurrection is another.

There has got to be something which can respond to the Word of God which is energising and constituting, and that spirit is there for that. It may be dead. "*The hour comes, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*". "*The hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth*". What is the organ of hearing the voice of the Son of God on the part of the dead? **The spirit**, always. Just as **in the regenerated child of God the spirit is the organ of hearing now quickened and made alive**, so in the unregenerate the spirit is there and will be made to hear the voice of the Son of God for that purpose. And that is where the consciousness lies there.

What happens when we leave this world? Do we go up to heaven? The Word of God does not give you anything to warrant that that is so. At death the spirit which is united with the soul descends into hades, the sheol of the Old Testament. To the thief on the cross the Lord Jesus said: "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." What is Paradise? It is not heaven. It is a reserve of hades, the garden of rest where the saints are waiting. That is not heaven. But there are other paradises. There are four paradises in the Scripture. Two of them are extinct. The first was that in which Satan, the covering cherub, had his place, probably his dominion, in the midst of the paradise of God. Then there was the paradise of Eden in which Adam was before the fall. Both of these are extinct. The paradise to which the Lord Jesus referred when He spoke to the thief is another, and there is the paradise of Revelation 21 which is in heaven. Did the thief go to that paradise with the Lord? The Lord Jesus said to Mary: "*Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father*". And in His argument as to the sign of Jonah, He said: "*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*". Where was He between His death and resurrection? In heaven? Now, where was paradise? In the heart of the earth. "*Today you shall be with Me in Paradise*." The Lord did not ascend between His death and resurrection, and He explains exactly where He was - in the heart of the earth.

David, we are told, did not ascend into heaven. In Luke 16 you have the rich man and Lazarus both in hades, but in their respective divisions with the great gulf between. There are reserves in hades and one is the reserve of the blessed and the other of the condemned. Samuel's spirit "came up". There have been only two who have left hades. The Lord Jesus Himself, and those who were raised from the dead after His resurrection and went and appeared unto many in Jerusalem. No disembodied spirit has ever yet entered heaven because to be unclothed with the body is the stigma of death. You recall 2 Corinthians; you know that believers have to be raised up and presented, and you study 1 Thessalonians 4:16 in that very connection. The confusion of course, has come about very largely by the misunderstanding of the Word of the Lord, and it is no use arguing on a point such as 2 Corinthians 12:4: "*I knew a man how that he was caught up into paradise...*" because that translation is quite incorrect. In the Greek it says he was 'caught away'. There is a great deal of difference between being caught up, and caught away, if you are going to base a theory on it. "*Absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*"; "*...having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better*". But that does not mean necessarily to be in heaven in the full sense. In Psalm 139 David says: "*...if I make my bed in hades (Sheol), behold, thou art there*". "*At home with the Lord*".

Coming back to our basic passage of this week: "*...and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail*" - "*The house of death shall not prevail against it*". Now full victory will be when this mortal shall have put on immortality and not before, and you cannot enter heaven in the full sense without the full victory. That demands a resurrection body. No one will be in heaven without their resurrection body. I hope that does not take any glitter out of things for you! It does not make any difference if we are with the Lord and at rest; that is all that matters.

Nowhere are we told that we go straight away with our heavenly body, our heavenly reward, to be in the fullness of bliss in heaven.

The Resurrection Body

The resurrection body by which we shall eventually come to heaven depends upon our spirit having become indwelt by resurrection life, to be clothed upon with our body. It is the spirit already raised which will be given a resurrection body. There will be resurrection for the evil, but the word of the Lord Jesus in John 5:29 makes clear the difference: "...*they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (or unto the life resurrection); and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (or unto judgment resurrection)*". There will be resurrection for both, and both will be resurrected because of the spirit soul, something upon which the resurrection Word can operate. But one is not coming out in life resurrection, one is coming out in death resurrection, and it all depends upon what has happened here, *whether we are born anew. That is, whether the spirit has become indwelt by eternal, indestructible, heavenly life.*

We must not confuse language and not confuse eternal life with immortality. They are two different things entirely.

May I conclude by pointing out one or two things which are important for recognition. Just a little word upon mixture. Having studied this fully, not by any means extensively, the nature of **soul and spirit and the organs and operations and fruits of both, it is important for us to remember that there can be terrible mixture of the two.** There can be something which is of the Spirit of God, and therefore through a quickened spirit and therefore truly spiritual, divinely spiritual. But it becomes terribly wrapped around with a great deal more that is of the soul, and whenever that is so, you get a terrible mixture and confusion.

There is such a thing as to begin in the spirit and go on in the soul. There is such a thing as having something which is of God, but so terribly encompassed by the swirlings of the psychical as to make the thing so confused and so mixed that you do not know what is of God and what is of man. And in the long run you are very often compelled to abandon something because it has become almost entirely captured by the psychical. You cannot divide between the two, and you become involved in something so mixed that the only thing to do is to come out and leave it. This is the way Satan seeks to mar something of God, something pure of God. And then a tremendous psychical flood is let loose because men in their soulish nature take up the fruit of something spiritual and make everything of the fruit instead of everything of the cause, making everything of the experience instead of everything which brought about the experience. And then they begin to make experiences the whole thing, to inflate it and get crowds to come along and have the experience. Then the whole thing becomes soulish in that sense, that multitudes of people come into the psychical thing without having the rock bottom spiritual cause of fruit. That is a false thing which has grown on a tree and has come in through man's own soulish being. And we want to be very careful about this, to recognise that this is so, that **it is possible for the soul to over-ride the spirit in any one of us. It can be that what God commenced to do in the spirit is so developed in the soul and so taken up in the soul that what is of God shrinks into practically insignificance, and there is all this thing of emotion, ecstasy, psychical elements, and God is not in it.** It is something which has to be maintained by abnormal methods. One of the problems as well as of the perils of the day, is that of mixture.

Now then, just a word about **the need for balance in spirit, soul and body.** There must be the balance maintained, the balance of the three. We will be tempted along each line to make each more prominent than the other. There is the temptation of the public side of

things, for instance. That may have to do with the soul and body. Sometimes it is the body. Though it is so difficult to get in between the soul and the body, impossible I think, yet certain physical constitutions of a very nervous order, restless people, want always to be on the go; and that sort of thing comes into the Lord's work: constant bodily activity. No quietness, background of steadiness and waiting upon the Lord, and **the body therefore becomes the main factor** and feature in a great deal of work for the Lord. Doing things, always busy - and that was the Lord's difficulty with **Martha** in the first place. It was just that the bodily activities, agitations, all well motivated, full of good intention, but at the expense of something else. We have to be very careful of that outer, public side of things which puts the bodily exercise in spiritual things into too great a prominence. I think very often the Lord has to call a halt there and make bodily exercises and activity in His work impossible for a little while in order to get the balance back again.

There is the verbal side. It can be purely bodily talk as we have said. **But the verbal side may also be the soul side, where our words are far more than our meditation, far more than our prayer life, far more than our secret history with God. And the day in which our ministry in word exceeds our fellowship with God in secret, there will creep in an unbalanced state in our ministry, and there will come in weakness;** we shall be unbalanced. We have to be careful. How our words carry us away, how we are carried on by floods and volumes of words. We shall lose our balance. The body and the soul can thus run away with us and **run ahead of the spirit**. If it is all body, then it will be all earthly; earthly, though for the Lord, and it will not last. If it is all soul it will be all superficial. It may do something for the moment in the way of stirring people up, getting things done, but it will be purely surface and it will not last.

There is an equal danger about it being all spirit. Men or women who are all spirit are rather cold, hard, judging, critical, without much heart. There is a need for keeping the balance. **The spirit in charge, the soul functioning under the spirit, governed by the Holy Spirit,** with all the love, and tenderness, and sympathy, and kindness, and the faithfulness which characterises the soul. And yet, even our sympathies must not run away with the deeper witness of the Spirit of God, not allowing natural love to render spiritual judgment unbalanced. Some people do that: their own natural feelings that they call love and kindness, make them very indiscreet and unwise people. It is so necessary to have our affections and sympathies governed by the spirit so that they will not run away and run out into thin air; there will be something always which abides.

So it is necessary that we should have balance. **Do not let anyone think that all that we have said about the supreme place of the spirit puts the soul out, or makes us despise the body. God forbid. There has to be a place for each, and the function of the spirit in the renewed child of God is to link the other two in itself and control them, soul and body.** That is the renewed child of God. And all must function, but primarily by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that working out intelligently by our renewed spirit. Because you have a strong feeling or emotion, that is no argument why you should put it into expression; that would be impulse, but our impulse and feelings have to come to the judgment of an enlightened spirit. **Our body and our bodily habits have to be governed by an enlightened spirit, but all sanctified and used by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Now ask the Lord to make clear to you all that may not have been clear.

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