

## **THE SPIRITUAL BELIEVER AND THE SOUL**

### **THE DIVIDING OF THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL**

The reason we have made the effort to speak so much on the distinction between the spirit and the soul and their activities is to bring us to this point. What a God-seeking believer should fear the most is the activity of the soul beyond the limitation set up by God. The soul has been in control for a long time. Even when one is willing to consecrate himself to God, he still may hold the thought that it is his work now and that he has to complete what he is consecrating in order to please God. Many believers do not know how deeply the cross should work, working even to the extent that the believer should reject his ability to make his own living. Many believers do not see the reality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Neither do they know how great an authority He should have, to the extent that the mind, will, and feelings of the whole being should be under His subjection until there is no self-reliance at all. Unless it is so, the Holy Spirit cannot do the work He wants to do. The greatest temptation a believer who is diligently seeking God faces, is that of using his own ability to will and do God's work and not humbly waiting and relying on the Holy Spirit to move.

The calling of the cross of the Lord Jesus is for us to hate our soul-life so that we find the opportunity to lose it and not preserve it. The Lord's intention is that the self must and should be sacrificed and offered up completely so that the Holy Spirit may work. All opinion, work, and thinking ability in the soul-life must be willing to be put to death so that we can regain His true life by the life and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord spoke of the matter of our hating or loving our soul-life. The soul is self-loving. If we do not from our heart truly hate our natural life, we cannot have a real living in the Holy Spirit. If a believer has not seen this, he will not be fearful of his self and his own intelligence and will not completely rely on, wait upon, and look to the Holy Spirit. These are the primary requirements for the spiritual life.

The war between the soul and the spirit goes on secretly and without ceasing inside the believer. The soul, on behalf of the self, wants to be the head and act by itself. The spirit, on behalf of God, wants to gain all and be the master with full authority. In this situation, if the spirit has not gained the victory, the soul takes the lead in everything. If a believer thus allows himself to be the master and expects the Holy Spirit to be his help and bless his work, he will unavoidably lose the spiritual fruit. If we do not reject our self and lose our soul-life, but instead follow its idea, opinion, and suggestion, and if we do not constantly deny its right and unconditionally and unreservedly put it in the ashes, without longing for what we have lost, we cannot expect to have a spiritual life and work that pleases God. Unless we willingly deliver the power, the eagerness, the liveliness, the running, etc., of the soul-life to the cross and maintain a steady attitude of hating the soul-life, it will seize the chance to rise up. The reason we have so many failures in our spiritual life is that the aspect of the soul has not been dealt with thoroughly, while we still hope to overcome it by gaining more of the Holy Spirit and power. If the soul-life is not lost through death but is allowed to be mixed with the spirit, the believers will continue to fail just as before. If our life does not completely manifest the power of the Holy Spirit of God, before long we will have more failures due to the wisdom and opinions of man.

This natural soul-life of ours is an obstacle to our spirit-life. It will never be satisfied with God alone; it always wants to add something other than God. Thus, it never has a moment of peace. Before the believer's soul-life has been dealt with, it lives on excitement and feelings. These, after all, are very changeable, so the believer's living also is changed accordingly. This explains why the believer's living is like waves, always going up and down. When the believer allows his spiritual experiences to be mixed with his soul-life, his experience often becomes unstable so that he is not qualified to be a leading one. This soul-life which has not been lost is constantly luring man to leave the center of his spirit. Sometimes it is the effect of emotion that greatly hurts the freedom and consciousness of the spirit. Joy and grief cause the believer to lose his self-control and to feel that he has been unrestrained and has had a hard time constraining himself. Sometimes it is the extra activities of the mind that cause the quiet spiritual life to be affected and become disorderly. No doubt it is good to desire spiritual knowledge. However, if it goes outside the spiritual measure, what is gained is only letters and not the spirit. This is why many workers, although they are preaching the most wonderful truth, are filled with coldness and deadness. Many believers who seek after a spiritual life have a common experience, the kind of experience that makes them groan: their soul and their spirit are not in unison. This means that the mind, will, and emotion of the soul oftentimes rebel against the spirit by not obeying the command of the spirit. They often want to act alone apart from the spirit, contradicting the desire of the spirit. What is usually damaged by this kind of living is the spirit-life.

Therefore the teaching in Hebrews 4:12 is very important because it is precisely here that the Holy Spirit teaches us how to divide the soul from the spirit in our experience. The dividing of the soul from the spirit is not merely a doctrine; the believer must have and can have such an experience in life. What is the meaning of the dividing of the soul from the spirit? It is simply that, first, God by His Word and through His indwelling Spirit can differentiate experientially the function and expression of the soul from that of the spirit, teaching the believer to know what is the move of the spirit and what is the move of the soul. Second, the willingness of a believer to cooperate causes him experientially to have a pure spiritual life without being affected by the soul. In Hebrews 4, the Holy Spirit tells us of the function of the Lord Jesus as a High Priest toward the believers. Verse 12 says, "For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Verse 13 continues: "And there is no creature that is not manifest before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we are to give our account." Here the Bible speaks of how the Lord Jesus is carrying out His work as the High Priest for the spirit and soul of the believers. The Holy Spirit here likens the believer to a sacrifice on the altar. During the Old Testament times, when people offered up sacrifices, the sacrifice was tied on the altar, killed by the priest with a sharp knife, and opened in half with the knife so that the joints and marrow were pierced and opened. All the insides that were hidden, which could not be seen or known before, were opened up and laid bare without concealment. After it was opened up, the priest would then burn the sacrifice with fire as an offering to God. The Holy Spirit uses this picture to illustrate the work of the Lord Jesus in the Christians and the experience gained in the Lord by the Christians. As the sacrifice was opened with the knife by the priest so that the joints and marrow were all laid bare, clearly separated in half, thus it will also be for

the believers now. With the word of God, their soul is divided from their spirit by their High Priest, the Lord Jesus, so that the soul no longer affects the spirit and the spirit no longer is controlled by the soul. Thus, each has its own place, and one can distinguish what is from the soul and what is from the spirit without any confusion or mixture.

In creation, the first step of the word of God was to separate the light from the dark. Likewise, the word of God now works as a sharp sword inside of us through the Holy Spirit to distinguish the spirit from the soul, so that the dwelling place of the most noble God can be completely separated from base feelings, and we may know how much our soul should submit to the One who is above. This causes us to know how the spirit is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God and how the soul with all its power is to move not by itself, but according to the will of the Holy Spirit manifested through the human spirit.

In the past the priests used knives to cut open the sacrifices. Today's High Priest employs the word of God to divide the soul from the spirit of the believer. The knife of the priest of old was very sharp. It could cut open the sacrifice into two halves. It could even pierce and divide the joints and marrow, parts which are so solidly jointed together. Now the word of God used by the Lord Jesus is sharper than the two-edged sword. Thus, it can clearly divide the most intimate parts in man, the soul and the spirit.

The word of God is "living"—having the living power; "operative"—capable of doing work; and "sharper than any two-edged sword"—able to pierce into the spirit. The word of God can pierce deeper than the soul, even to the innermost part, the spirit. Thus, the believers are led into what is much deeper than the feeling, into the eternal spirit-life. If a believer wants to have a steady life in God, he needs to understand what is the meaning of piercing into the spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can teach the believers what the soul-life is and what the spirit-life is. When the believer can distinguish the two in experience and know their value, he leaves that superficial and shallow life of emotion behind and comes to gain the deep, solid, spiritual one. Only then can the believer have rest. The soul-life will never give rest to people. Nevertheless, this has to be realized from experience. Otherwise, the understanding in the mind only makes the believers more soulish.

We should pay special attention to the words "piercing" and "dividing." The word of God pierces (or penetrates) into the soul and the spirit so that they become divided. When the Lord Jesus was crucified, His hands, His feet, and His side were pierced. Are we willing to let the cross work in our soul and spirit? The soul of Mary was pierced (Luke 2:35). Although her "son" was given by God, she had to give Him up and give up all her right and demand for a son. She had to reject every natural love. She had to rid herself of all the attachments in the soul. This is the kind of work that the word of God should do in us.

The dividing of soul and spirit is not only the separating of soul and spirit, but the dividing of the soul itself. The dividing of the soul is very meaningful. If the word of life is to reach to our spirit, it has to divide the soul first, for the spirit is surrounded by the soul. The word of the cross pierces and divides the soul and opens the way for the life of God to get into the life of the spirit and free the spirit from the bondage of

the soul. The soul-life, having the imprint of the cross, will then keep its submissive position to the spirit. If the soul is not the "thoroughfare" for the spirit, it becomes fetters to the spirit. The soul and the spirit never agree on anything. If the spirit has not attained the supreme position, they will often war against each other. The spirit strives to gain freedom and authority, but the strong soul-life tries its best to suppress it. However, when the soul-life has been worked upon by the cross, the spirit is set free. If the believer does not see the harm done by the soul in not being one with the spirit or in not being willing to be rid of the pleasure of living by feeling, he cannot progress easily. As long as the encirclement of the soul is not removed, the life of the spirit cannot be free.

After we carefully read the teaching in this passage of the Bible, we know that the spirit is separated from the soul in a believer by means of two things: (1) the cross, and (2) the word of God. The sacrifice has to be laid upon the altar; then the priest can use the knife to divide the sacrifice into two halves. We know that the altar in the Old Testament is just the cross in the New Testament. Therefore, if the believers are not willing to come to the foundation of the cross and be put to death, they cannot expect their High Priest to divide their soul and spirit with the sharp sword of God, that is, the word of God. Laying on the altar comes first, then the dividing by the knife. Therefore, the believers have to come to the place of the cross. Only then can they expect the Lord Jesus to fulfill His duty as the High Priest, to divide the soul and spirit of the believers with His word. Therefore, the believers who desire to gain the experience of the dividing of soul and spirit should hear the voice of the Lord calling them to Golgotha to lay themselves on the altar without any reluctance and trust their High Priest to cut open and divide their soul and spirit with His sharp sword. The believers' place today, as those offering a well-accepted offering to God, is on the altar. Then it is the job of the Priest to use the knife to divide. Believers should fulfill the condition of their side and trust the rest of the experience to the hands of their faithful High Priest. In due time He will surely let them have a complete spiritual experience.

We have seen how the Lord is calling us to come to the cross and put our soul-life to death. If we do not put ourselves on the altar, our High Priest has no way to divide our soul and spirit with His sharp knife. We should be willing to let the cross work; then we can have our High Priest work for us. We should follow the example of our Lord Jesus. When He died, He poured out His soul-life unto death (Isa. 53:12), yet He gave His spirit to God (Luke 23:46). What He did then is what we should do now. The soul-life has to die. If we truly pour out our soul-life and also commit our spirit to God, we shall see before long that God will make known to us what is the power of resurrection. In the glory of resurrection there is the complete spiritual life.

## **THE WAY TO PRACTICE**

As we have said before, the High Priest is working because we have accepted the cross. Now we want to talk about how, in practice, the Lord Jesus divides our soul and spirit.

### **Knowing the Need to Have the Soul and Spirit Divided**

If there is no such knowledge, there will be no such demand. The believer must ask the Lord to show him the detestableness of a life of the spirit and soul mixed together and must know that in God there is a life that is both higher and deeper, completely of the spirit, and not affected by the soul. He should know that a spirit-soul mixed life is a life of loss.

### **Wanting to Be Divided**

The believer should not only know but also truly desire to have this mixed spirit-soul divided; there should be a desperate desire in the heart to have this dividing. This is because all problems are now with the will of man. If the believer is not willing and does not want the dividing of his spirit and soul, but rather prefers to enjoy what he himself sees as good, God will respect the character of man and will never force him.

### **Surrendering Wholly**

If a believer is willing to gain the experience of the dividing of spirit and soul, he should put himself wholly on the altar of the cross. He should be completely willing in his heart to accept the effect of all the work of the cross, willing to follow the Lord's death until his spirit and soul have been divided experientially. Before he has the experience of this dividing, he should continually put his will on the side of God, livingly and actively choosing the dividing. He should maintain the attitude that until the dividing work is done, he does not want the High Priest to stop working.

### **Standing on Romans 6:11**

Believers must be careful not to fall into sins and trespasses while seeking the experience of the dividing of spirit and soul. The basis of the dividing of the spirit and soul is that one has died to sin. Therefore, the believer should daily take the attitude of Romans 6:11, reckoning that he is truly dead to sin, and wholeheartedly keep this attitude in his will: "Do not let sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (v. 12). Only by this can he have the possibility of not letting the soul-life sin again through the mortal body.

### **Praying and Reading the Word**

The believer should search the Bible by prayer and meditation. He should let the word of God deeply pierce him so that his soul-life can have the cleansing of the word of God, for if the believer truly can walk according to the word of God, his soul-life surely will not be active. This is the meaning of the word in 1 Peter 1:22: "Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth."

### **Bearing the Cross Daily**

If the Lord is to divide our spirit and soul, He will, according to the need of circumstances, allow us to bear the cross. If the believer daily bears the cross, refuses the self, not being directed by the flesh for one moment, and has the Holy Spirit of God constantly reveal the activities of the soul in his daily living, this is a living of the spirit. If a believer faithfully submits himself, the Lord will secretly divide the soul and spirit of the believer so that he can have a pure and spiritual living.

### **Walking by the Spirit**

Walking by the Spirit is a condition that safeguards us and is also the condition in which to have our spirit and soul completely divided. Believers should in all things seek to walk by the spirit, distinguish what is from the spirit and what is from the soul, and decide absolutely to follow everything that is from the spirit and refuse that which is from the soul. One should learn to know all the work of his own spirit and follow it.

These are all conditions which believers should fulfill on their part. The Holy Spirit needs us to work with Him. If we do not do what is required of us, the Lord cannot do what is required of Him. If we have done our part according to what is required of us, our High Priest will divide our spirit and soul by the power of the cross and by the sharp sword of the Holy Spirit. He will cause everything that is of the emotion, the feeling, the mind, and the natural ability to be separated one by one from the spirit and not be mixed at all. To lay on the altar is what is required of us. However, dividing our spirit and soul with a sharp knife is what our High Priest should do. If we have truly given ourselves to the cross, our High Priest will surely fulfill His duty to divide our spirit and soul. This is His work; therefore, we need not worry. Once He sees that we have fulfilled the necessary requirements for Him to work, in due time He will surely divide our spirit and soul.

Indeed, every believer who sees the danger of having spirit and soul mixed can only seek deliverance. The way of deliverance is open yet difficult. The believer must be diligent in praying to clearly see his pitiful condition and know the dwelling place, the work, and the requirement of the Holy Spirit. The believer ought to see the mystery and reality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, respect this holy presence, and be careful not to have anything that grieves Him. The believer should know that what grieves the Holy Spirit the most, besides sin, and what damages the believers even more than sin is the believer's living and working according to his self-life. The original transgression of man was that he pursued good, wisdom, and knowledge according to his own idea. This kind of transgression is what believers repent of and commit again time after time. Believers ought to know that they have believed in the Lord and that the Holy Spirit has indwelt them already. The Spirit should thus have complete authority, while the soul should completely submit to Him. It is not that since you have prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to work and guide, everything is all right and will be accomplished. This is not the truth. Unless day by day you wholly put to death the soul-life and its ability, wisdom, and feeling, and are honestly willing to submit completely to Him, wait for His teaching, and trust in His working, you will not easily see that He is truly working.

The believer has to see that what divides his soul and spirit is the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Himself is the Word of God, and He will by Himself divide our soul and spirit. Are we willing to let His life and His accomplished work stand between our soul and spirit? Are we willing to seek His life to fill our spirit, in order to deal with the soul so that it cannot be active? The Bible is God's written word. The Lord Jesus divides soul and spirit with the teachings in the Bible. Are we willing to follow all the truth? Are we willing to obey the teachings in the Bible? Are we willing to submit to the Lord simply by the teachings in the Bible without our own opinion? Are we willing to be content with the authority of the Bible and to obey without help from men? If we are willing to come into a completely spiritual living, we absolutely have



to submit to the Lord and to all His teachings in the Bible. This is necessary, and this is the sharp sword in practice to divide our soul and spirit.

## **A SOUL UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We have mentioned that the spirit, soul, and body in a human being are like the holy temple, which is divided into the Holiest of all and the outer court, and that God lives in the Holiest of all. There is a veil separating the Holiest of all and the Holy Place. This veil seems to shut the glory and presence of God within the Holiest of all and shut out the Holy Place. This causes man to feel and see only the things outside the veil in the Holy Place and not understand or know the things in the Holiest of all. Other than by believing, one cannot see God's presence in his outer life.

However, the existence of this veil was only temporary. When the time came, the Lord Jesus' body—the reality of the veil (Heb. 10:20)—was crucified on the cross, so that the veil was split from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). Now the separation between the Holiest of all and the Holy Place has been removed. God's purpose is not to dwell forever only in the Holiest of all. He wants to also expand His presence into the Holy Place. However, He is waiting for the work of the cross to be completed. Only through the cross can the veil be rent and the glory of God shine out from the Holiest of all.

Therefore, when the believer allows the cross to complete its work, God also causes the believer's spirit and soul to have the experience of the Holiest of all and the Holy Place in His holy temple. If a believer submits constantly to the Holy Spirit without any argument, the fellowship between the Holiest of all and the Holy Place becomes better and more harmonious day after day. Before long, he will see a great change. It is the work of the cross that causes the real veil of the holy temple, both in heaven and on earth, to be split. In this way the cross exerts a real and solid effect on the life and experience of the believer, causing him to lose his soul-life and to not have independent acts but rather to completely wait for and rely on the spiritual life to originate, to generate, the power to live and work. It is then that there is an experience of "veil splitting" in the believer's entire spirit and soul.

This veil was "split in two from top to bottom." This is God's work and not man's doing. When the work of the cross has been completed, God according to His own will splits the veil. This is not by our laboring and not by our own strength to grab and ask in order to obtain. Whenever the work of the cross is completed, the veil will be split. Therefore, let us renew our consecration to God, not love ourselves, be willing to put our soul-life to death, and let the One in the Holiest of all be our Lord in everything. If the Lord sees that the cross has done a deep enough work in us, He will surely cause the Holiest of all and the Holy Place in us to become one, just as He, by the power of God, split the veil before so that His Holy Spirit could flow out from His glorious body.

This then will cause the glory of the hidden place of the Most High to fill us abundantly in our daily, sensate life. This will cause all our living and activities in the Holy Place to be sanctified by the glory from the Holiest of all; this will cause our soul to be like the spirit, indwelt and completely governed by the Holy Spirit of God. This will cause our mind, emotion, and will to be filled by the Holy Spirit. Finally,

this will cause what we previously kept in the spirit through faith, to be known now even in our soul. Moreover, it will never decrease or suffer loss. What a blessed life this is! Now "the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house" (2 Chron. 7:1-2). From now on, our own activities, although they be as good as those of the priests who served God, will lose their opportunity to act in the glory of God. Now the glory of God will be everything, and no more will we emphasize the work of the animal liveliness.

This is the other aspect of the dividing of the spirit and the soul. Concerning the aspect of the soul affecting and controlling the spirit, the work of the cross is to divide the soul from the spirit. But concerning the aspect of being filled with the Holy Spirit and letting the spirit have the authority, the work of the cross is to cause the soul to no longer be independent but be one with the spirit completely. Concerning the experience of our personal living, we should seek that the spirit and the soul become one. If we will thus let the cross and the Holy Spirit work deeply, we will then see that what the soul has lost is not even one ten thousandth of what it has gained. What has died now bears fruit; what was lost is now kept unto eternal life. If our soul-life is under the control of the spirit, we will see that our soul has an extremely great change. Formerly, because it was for ourselves and because it always wanted to act alone, our soul was, so to speak, lost before God and useless in His hands. Now our soul, although lost on the side of man, is gained on the side of God. From now on, we are those spoken of in Hebrews 10:39: "who have faith to the gaining of the soul." This is much deeper than the common saying, "the salvation of the soul." Here it specifically speaks of life. Now that the believer has learned not to act or behave by feeling or by what is seen through the eye, he can have faith to save his life to serve God and glorify God. What seemingly is lost is gained in reality. James 1 also mentions this saving: "Receive in meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (v. 21). When a branch is grafted to a tree, it receives the nature of that tree. Likewise, when the word of God is engrafted into our life, it transmits its nature to us. By this the tree is saved from being useless and is saved even to bear fruit. From the word of life we obtain the life of the word. The branch is not eliminated; rather, it has a new life as its principle of vitality. All of the soul is still here, yet now it is not the soul-life that makes the faculties of the soul living, but rather the life of the word of God. This is the true "salvation of the soul."

Our human nerves are very sensitive and easily stimulated by outside things. Outward conversations, attitudes, environments, and human relationships can easily touch us. Our mind has many thoughts, plans, and imaginations which are truly confused. Our will has many opinions and ideas and loves to do things according to its own whims. None of the faculties of our soul-life give us peace. Whether individually or collectively, the soul-life causes us to shift from time to time, change often, be disturbed, feel confused, and have no peace.

Now, however, because our soul is being governed by the spirit, we can be freed from such disturbance. The Lord Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:29). If we are willing to surrender to the Lord, willing to take His yoke, and willing to walk according to the His will, our soul will not be aroused. If we are willing to imitate the Lord and if we will learn of Him, seeing how the Lord was despised by



others and how the Lord followed not His own will but the will of God, then the turmoil in our soul will be calmed down. The reason sorrow and grief come is that we are not willing to be satisfied with the same kind of treatment that the Lord received and that we are not willing to submit to God's will and arrangement. If we put the soul-life to death and completely surrender to the Lord, our soul—the soul with sensitive nerves—will rest in the Lord and not misunderstand the Lord. The soul under the control of the Holy Spirit is a soul of rest.

Once we were busy planning; now we quietly trust in the Lord. Once we were often grieved and anxious; now we are like a weaned child resting in the bosom of the mother. Once we were full of our own ideas, having many desires and ambitions; now we only consider the will of God to be good and thus rest in God. Truly, it is "perfect submission, perfect delight." When we completely give ourselves to the Lord, all things are peaceful and tranquil. Ephesians 6:6 has a similar message: "But as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul." It is not as before, relying on the soul—that is, self-relying—to follow the will of God; rather, it is from the soul, to wholeheartedly, truly follow the will of God. Now, through the working of the cross, the soul-life that formerly rebelled against the will of God completely surrenders to the will of God. Previously, we were merely on the outside, and if we were not carrying out our own affairs according to our own will, then we were doing God's will according to our own will. Now however, we are one with God in everything.

A soul governed by the Holy Spirit is not concerned for itself. "Do not be anxious for your life [soul]" (Matt. 6:25). Now what we seek first is the kingdom of God and His righteousness, believing that God will take care of our daily needs. The soul-life has been dealt with through the cross by the Holy Spirit, so it can no longer be anxious for itself. Self-consciousness is the primary manifestation of the soul. Since the believer has truly been in God and has lost the self, he can fully trust in God. Self-love, self-planning, and self-care—all works of the soul—have now been removed in practice. Therefore, one no longer makes his own plans for these kinds of practical issues.

Because the cross has done its work, we no longer busily plan for ourselves. Previously, we worried, but now, since knowing God, we can peacefully seek His kingdom and His righteousness. If we care for what God cares about, God will care for what we care about. Previously, miracles were rare and strange to us; now we live in the God who performs miracles, knowing He will provide every need. This is not by exercising the mind but by resting in God's hand. Since the power of God serves as our backing, questions concerning our daily life such as eating and drinking become very insignificant.

"So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4:19). This is the teaching of the Bible. Sometimes people in the world only know God as the Creator and do not know Him as the Father. The believers, however, not only know Him as the Father but also know Him as the Lord of creation. To speak of Him as the Lord of creation is to make His power known, to make known how the whole universe is under His hand. Before, when we were suffering, we were afraid of man, but now we know that everything is in His hand and has His arrangement. Before, it was difficult to believe that none of the things in this world can move against His will. Now we know that

everything in the universe, whether of man, the natural, or supernatural, is in His careful and wise arrangement. Now we know that everything that comes upon us is permitted and predestinated by Him. A soul governed by the Holy Spirit is a peaceful, quiet, and committing soul.

Not only should we commit our soul to the Lord, but we should also love and long for the Lord. "My soul pursues after You" (Psa. 63:8). Now we no longer dare to have faith in ourselves, to be independent, or to serve the Lord according to the whims of the soul. Now, the One whom we follow is the Lord, and we very carefully, even with fear, follow hard after the Lord, not daring to leave Him for one moment. Someone translated this verse, "My soul is glued unto thee." Now we do not act alone but completely surrender to the Lord, not reluctantly but willingly with joy. Now what we hate is the life of our self, and the One whom we completely love and long for is the Lord.

This kind of person can only say, together with Mary, "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Luke 1:46). Such a one is no longer openly or secretly puffed up and self-exalting, but knows himself to be useless and is willing to humble himself and exalt the Lord. Now he no longer wants to steal the Lord's glory and give it to the self (soul), but he magnifies the Lord in his soul. If the Lord is not being magnified in the soul, then the Lord is not being magnified in any place.

Only this kind of person considers his life (soul) of no account as if precious (Acts 20:24), but lays down his life (soul) for the brothers (1 John 3:16). If the heart of loving oneself is not lost, then when the Lord calls us in reality to bear the cross for Him, we will shrink back. Because the soul-life is specifically rejected daily, one can, for the sake of the Lord, consider his life "of no account as if precious." For even under normal daily situations, one must live as a martyr, willing to give his life to the cross, so that when the time comes, he can carry out that martyrdom for the Lord. Because daily there is a life willing to be poured out for the brothers, not seeking one's own right or comfort but denying the self every day, one can "lay down [his] life on behalf of the brothers" in that special time and circumstance. The real loving of the Lord and loving of the brothers comes from not loving the self. A Christ who wanted to save Himself and pity Himself could not love us and die for us. If He "loved me," then He would give "Himself up for me." The heart of love comes from the rejecting of the soul-life. The shedding of blood is the source of blessing.

This kind of living is the living wherein the soul prospers (3 John 2). Prosperity comes not because one has gained anything but because one has lost everything. However, the soul-losing life is not a losing life because the soul is lost in God. The soul-life is restricting and selfish. The soul that is lost in the life of God lives in the unlimited life of God. This is liberty, and this is prosperity. The more loss we suffer, the more prosperous our gain will be. Our possessions are not measured by how much we receive but by how much we give. This is the real fruitful living!

However, forsaking the soul-life is not as quick as being delivered from sin. This is our life, and every day we must be willing not to live by it but choose the life of God instead. Thus, the cross in us has to be borne faithfully each time more than the time before. The time is still long. Therefore, we should look away unto the Lord Jesus who, despising the shame, endured the cross. "For compare Him...so that you may

not grow weary, fainting in your souls" (Heb. 12:2-3). The way His soul felt about the shame, despising it and enduring the cross, is the goal for those of us willing to tread the path of the cross. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psa. 103:1).