

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER'S SPIRIT

The knowledge most lacking among believers today concerns the existence of the human spirit and its function. Many believers do not know they have a spirit in addition to their mind, emotion, and will. Even after hearing that there is a spirit within man, they either think that their mind, emotion, or will is the spirit, or they are puzzled and do not know where their spirit is. This ignorance is a very serious matter. Because of this, believers do not know how to cooperate with God, control themselves, and fight against Satan, since all these three things require the work of the spirit.

The most important thing that a believer should know is that there is a spirit within him besides the thought, knowledge, and imagination of the mind; the feeling, love, and desire of the emotion; and the ideas, opinion, and determination of the will. The spirit is deeper than the mind, emotion, and will. A believer should know that he has a spirit; he also should know the feeling of the spirit, its working, its power, and the principle of its activity. Only in this way will a believer be able to know how to walk according to the spirit, not according to the fleshly soul or body.

An unregenerated person's spirit and soul are constituted together. Naturally, he only knows the feelings of the soul, which are strong and powerful, and does not know the existence of the spirit, which is dead and dormant. This ignorance started when he was a sinner and continues even after he becomes a believer. Although a believer has life in his spirit and the experience of overcoming "fleshly things," he sometimes walks according to the spirit and sometimes according to the soul. He does not know what the spirit demands, how the spirit initiates, or how to nourish the spirit. He does not know the feeling of the spirit and the meaning that these feelings represent. Naturally, he restricts the life of the spirit and lets the natural life of the soul continue to act as the principle of his living. This matter is very serious; it is beyond the common believer's imagination. There are some believers who faithfully seek higher and deeper spiritual experience. After they have the experience of overcoming sins, they no longer go forward because they do not know the work of the spirit. Instead, they pursue after "spiritual and biblical knowledge" in their mind; they seek after the Lord's presence in their feelings and a kind of burning feeling in their members; and they mostly behave and walk according to the power of their own will. This causes the believer to be deceived and over-emphasize his own (soulish) experience, thinking himself to be super-spiritual. This will cultivate his "self" life (soul) to a great extent. He subjectively thinks that his experience is spiritually solid, which will keep him from progressing in the spiritual path. Therefore, God's children should humble themselves before God, subject themselves to the Holy Spirit and biblical teachings, and gradually examine the function and work of the spirit in order that they may walk according to the spirit.

THE REGENERATION OF MAN (COMPARE WITH SECTION ONE, CHAPTER FOUR)

Why should a sinner be regenerated? Why should he be born from above and have a regeneration of the spirit? Because man is a fallen spirit. As a fallen spirit, man needs a regeneration of the spirit to receive a new spirit. Satan is a fallen spirit and man is also a fallen spirit, except that man has a body. Satan's fall was before man's

fall. By knowing Satan's fall, we may know our fall. Satan is a spirit who was created by God to have a direct fellowship with God Himself. However, he fell, became the leader of the authority of darkness, and was separated from God and all the virtues of God. Nevertheless, Satan did not lose his existence because of his fall; rather, he just lost his normal relationship with God. Similarly, man, like Satan, fell into darkness and was separated from God, yet man's spirit still exists. Now his spirit is separated from God and cannot fellowship or reign. Spiritually speaking, man's spirit is already dead. Just as the sinful archangel's spirit exists forever, sinful man's spirit also exists forever. However, man has a body, and his fall caused him to become a fleshly man (Gen. 6:3). No religion, ethics, culture, or law in this world can improve this fallen human spirit. Since man has now fallen into the position of flesh, nothing can enable him to become a spirit again. Therefore, regeneration—the regeneration of the spirit—is a must. Only God's Son, who shed His blood to cleanse us from our sin and give us a new life, can bring us back to God.

When a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus, he is regenerated. God gives the sinner His own uncreated life to enliven the sinner's spirit. The regeneration of a sinner is a matter in the spirit. All God's work begins within man, from center to circumference, unlike Satan who works from the outside to the inside. God's purpose is, firstly, to give life to man's darkened spirit, where man should receive God's life and fellowship with God, and to cause it to be regenerated. Then He works from there, spreading out to man's soul and body.

Regeneration causes man to receive a new spirit on one hand and, on the other hand, causes his old spirit to be resurrected. Concerning regeneration, Ezekiel 36:26 says, "And a new spirit will I put within you." John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The "spirit" mentioned in these two verses refers to God's own life, because this is not the spirit which we had originally but that which is given to us by God at the time of regeneration. This new life is "divine" (2 Pet. 1:4) and "cannot sin" (1 John 3:9). The spirit which man originally had, although it has been enlivened, may still be defiled (2 Cor. 7:1) and needs to be sanctified (1 Thes. 5:23).

When God's life (which also is called the "Spirit") enters into our human spirit, it enlivens our spirit which was in a state like a drunken stupor. Formerly our spirit was "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), but now it has been made alive. Therefore, "the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10). What we lost in Adam was the spirit which died; what we receive at regeneration is this dead spirit which has been enlivened. However, we not only obtain what we had lost in Adam, we also receive a new spirit with God's life which Adam never had.

As a result of seeing this, we understand the vanity of self-improvement, exhortations to do good, revival, repentance, etc. No matter what man does on his own, he cannot enliven his spirit, nor can he receive a "new spirit." Regardless of how he improves, that which is dead is dead. Regardless of how he repairs, that which is old is still old. Unless man receives a new life from above, no matter how diligently he studies religion and practices morality, he will not be able to make his spirit alive and new. Only the new Spirit of God can enliven man's old spirit. Those who want to make their spirit alive but do not receive God's new Spirit of life will be

dead forever. A man without regeneration has absolutely nothing to do with Christ (Rom. 8:9); therefore, every so-called believer should ask himself whether he has been regenerated. Only those who receive God's surpassing life are God's children. Being His children and yet not being born of Him is an absurdity.

God's life is most often called "eternal life" in the Bible. This word "life" is *zoe* in the original language, which means higher life or spiritual life. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus is regenerated and receives eternal life as soon as he believes. What is the function of the eternal life? "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). Therefore, eternal life is not only a later blessing for believers' enjoyment but also a spiritual ability. Without eternal life we do not know God, neither can we know the Lord Jesus. Knowing the Lord by intuition comes after man receives God's life. This tiny bit of God's life within man can eventually develop and grow into a spiritual man.

After man's regeneration, all of God's purpose is that many, through His Spirit, may remove everything that belongs to the old creation; all of God's work in man is also in the spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REGENERATION

At the time of man's regeneration, his spirit receives God's life and becomes enlivened. It is the Holy Spirit who actively accomplishes this work. It is the Holy Spirit who reproves man of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He prepares man's heart, causing him to willingly believe in the Lord Jesus as his Savior. The work of the cross is accomplished by the Lord Jesus. However, it is the Holy Spirit who applies this upon the sinner and within his heart. We must understand the relationship between the cross of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. While the cross has already accomplished everything, the Holy Spirit accomplishes within man what has been accomplished before. While the cross causes man to have the position, the Holy Spirit causes man to have the experience. While the cross achieves the "fact" for God, the Holy Spirit gives man the experience. While the work of the cross creates a position and achieves a salvation so that the sinner may have the possibility of being saved, the work of the Holy Spirit reveals to the sinner what the cross has created and accomplished so that he may receive and obtain it. The Holy Spirit does not work alone; rather, He works through the cross. Without the cross, the Holy Spirit has no ground to work. Without the Holy Spirit, the work of the cross is dead. Although it has already had been effective toward God, it has no effectiveness toward man.

Although salvation is entirely accomplished by the cross, it is the Holy Spirit who works directly to cause people to receive. Therefore, the Bible says that our regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). In verse 8, the Lord Jesus said again that regeneration is being "born of the Spirit." It is the Holy Spirit who applies the work of the cross to the believer and imparts God's life into the believer's spirit; thus, the believer is regenerated. The Holy Spirit is the executor of God's life. We "live by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). If man merely understands in his mentality and there is no Holy Spirit to regenerate him within his spirit, his understanding cannot help him. If what man believes in is of man's wisdom, not of God's power, he is merely stimulated in the soul and cannot

last long, because he is not regenerated. Only those who believe with the heart (Rom. 10:10) can be saved and receive regeneration.

In addition to enabling believers to receive life at the time of regeneration, the Holy Spirit has another step of work. From the point of regeneration, He dwells within the believers. How poor that man keeps forgetting about this and does not care for it! Ezekiel 36 puts together the matter of a believer's receiving the new spirit and receiving the Holy Spirit.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...And I will put my Spirit within you" (vv. 26-27).

"And a new spirit will I put within you." This means that a believer will receive a new spirit, have his own spirit renewed, and receive life. After speaking about receiving, it continues, saying, "And I will put my Spirit within you." This means that the Holy Spirit wants to dwell within our renewed spirit. A believer receives at the time of regeneration, not only a new spirit, but also the Holy Spirit (a person) dwelling within him. Unfortunately, just as a believer does not understand that the spirit which he has received is new, he also does not understand that when he receives a new spirit, he also receives the Holy Spirit who dwells within him. The Holy Spirit is not sought out and received by the believer due to revival a few years after his regeneration; rather, at the time of regeneration, the entire person of the Spirit begins to dwell in the believer, not just visit him. The apostle said, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). "Grieve," not "anger," is used since this concerns the love of the Holy Spirit. "Grieve," not "leave," is used since "He abides with you and shall be in you" (John 14:17) "unto the day of redemption." Every regenerated believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him permanently. However, the condition of the Holy Spirit within every believer varies; He may be either grieving or rejoicing.

We must understand the relationship between regeneration and the Holy Spirit's abiding within believers. Without a new spirit, the Holy Spirit has no place to abide. The holy dove had no dwelling place in the judged world. It could not abide until the new creation emerged (see Gen. 8). Regeneration is absolutely necessary because without it the Holy Spirit cannot possibly abide within believers. At regeneration, a believer receives a new spirit and, at the same time, receives the Holy Spirit to abide in him forever. Since the new spirit and God, who begot it, are eternally inseparable, the abiding of the Holy Spirit is also forever unchangeable.

It is rare for believers to realize that they have been regenerated and possess a new life. It is even rarer for them to realize that as soon as they believe in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit indwells them to be their guidance, power of life, and the Lord of everything. The reason many newborn believers are slow in progress and growth may be due to either the foolishness of their leaders or their own unbelief and unfaithfulness. Unless the Lord's servants abandon their preconceived opinion that "the truth of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is for spiritual believers," it is difficult for them to guide others to a spiritual position.

The work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating us is to reprove us of our sins and lead us to repentance that we may believe and know the Savior; thus, He gives us a new

nature. This is the fulfillment of God's promise that He will put a new spirit in us. But this promise does not end here. The second half of the promise is as good as the first half. The promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit comes right after the promise of receiving a new spirit. The Holy Spirit's work, which causes believers to know sin, believe in the Lord, and receive life, is only His initial preparatory work in order for Him to dwell within them. The Holy Spirit's indwelling of the believers to manifest the Father and the Son is a special glory in the dispensation of grace. God has already given His Spirit to His children. Now is the time for them to confess by faith and obey with faithfulness. The day of resurrection and the day of Pentecost are both over; the descension of the Holy Spirit has been accomplished. If a believer only knows the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and does not know the reality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he is just like a person in the Old Testament. Truly, many believers are living on the other side of the day of resurrection and Pentecost!

Even if a believer is so foolish that his experience never goes one step beyond the first half of God's promise, and he is not aware that the Holy Spirit of God is a person dwelling in him, it is an unchangeable fact that God has given him the Holy Spirit. He is regenerated and is a holy temple qualified to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If he would draw upon the second half of God's promise with faith, then the second half of God's promise will be fulfilled just as gloriously as the first half of God's promise. If a believer only pays attention to regeneration and is content with receiving a new spirit, he will not have the strong and joyful life that he is entitled to. If a believer does not know or understand the mystery and work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, it is difficult for him to receive all the blessings God has prepared for him in the Lord Jesus. If he is willing to receive God's promise with faith, considering that God has not only given him a new life in regeneration but also the Holy Spirit, as a person, dwelling in his spirit to be his Lord, then his life will make great strides in the path of God.

If a child of God is willing to believe and be faithful, he will have the experience of the Holy Spirit's indwelling on the same day his spirit is renewed. After a believer's regeneration, the Holy Spirit dwells in him to lead him into a spiritual state, to manifest Christ in his life, teach him, and sanctify him. But very often a believer does not even know the position of the Holy Spirit, despises His indwelling, and walks according to his own will. A believer should humble himself in this light, respect His holy presence, allow Him to work, tremble with fear before Him because of love and respect, not daring to act on his own, and consider what an exaltation it is that God indwells him. If we want to abide in Christ and have a holy life as Christ's, we should use our faith to receive God's provision. The Holy Spirit is already in our spirit. The problem is whether we will let Him work out of our spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Since we have seen that the Holy Spirit indwells the believers at the time of their regeneration, we should see in more detail where the Holy Spirit dwells so that we can understand His work within us.

We must remember that the real meaning of regeneration is not an outward change or the soul and the body being stimulated, but it is the spirit receiving life. Regeneration is a new event which takes place within the human spirit. It is the

enlivening of the deadened spirit. The reason the deadened spirit can be made alive is due to receiving a new life. But the most important point is that when we receive a new spirit, we also receive the Holy Spirit of God to dwell within us. The phrase "put within you" occurs twice in Ezekiel 36:26-27 and indicates that the place where the Holy Spirit dwells is the human spirit.

We have seen that our whole being is just like the holy temple. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). What the apostle means is that because believers are the temple of God, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is just like God dwelling in the holy temple in the old days. Although the entire temple signifies the presence of God and is the dwelling place of God, the actual place of God's dwelling is in the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place and outer court are only places for God to work and move according to His presence in the Holy of Holies. Our spirit is signified by the Holy of Holies. According to this illustration, the Holy Spirit indwelling our spirit is a very clear matter.

The nature of the dweller and the dwelling place are the same. After man's regeneration, only man's regenerated spirit is an adequate dwelling place of the Holy Spirit—not his mind, emotion, will, and body. He is the Builder and also the Dweller. He cannot dwell before He builds. He builds because He wants to dwell. He can only dwell in the place which He has built.

As we have mentioned, the holy ointment cannot be poured upon man's flesh. We have also mentioned that everything of man before his regeneration, regardless of which part, in its totality is called "flesh" in the Bible. Therefore, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in man's flesh. This also indicates clearly that the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in man's mind, emotion, will, or body. Not to mention that the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in any part of man's soul or body, He cannot dwell even in man's unregenerated spirit. Just as the holy ointment cannot be poured upon the flesh, in the same way, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in any part of the "flesh." The Spirit can only lust against the flesh (Gal. 5:17); He has no other relationship with the flesh. Therefore, unless something different from the flesh exists in man, there is no way for the Holy Spirit to dwell in man. Therefore, the regeneration of the spirit is very important because the Holy Spirit dwells in the new spirit, which is different from the flesh.

The Holy Spirit indwelling man's spirit is a very important thing. If a believer does not know that the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit is in the deepest part of his whole being, which is deeper than his mind, emotion, and will, he will surely seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his mind, emotion, and will. If we understand this, then we will know that we were deceived before and were wrong in looking outward, outside the spirit in the soul, or inside or outside the body for guidance. The Holy Spirit is indeed dwelling in the deepest part of our being. Therefore, His work can only be expected to be seen there; His guidance can only be found there. Our prayer is toward the "heavenly Father," but the heavenly Father is within us leading us. Our Comforter is within our spirit. Therefore, His guidance also issues from there. If we seek a sign from a dream, vision, voice, or feeling outside of our spirit, then we will be deceived.

Many believers often look inwardly, searching into their own thinking, feeling, and opinion to see whether they have peace, how much grace they have received, or what kind of progress they have made. This is not of faith, and it is very harmful. This causes the believer to turn his eyes away from Christ to himself. But there is another kind of inward looking which is different from the one just mentioned. The greatest deed of faith is to look to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the spirit. The believer's mind, emotion, and will cannot sense the things within him, yet even in darkness he must believe that God has given him a new spirit, within which dwells the Holy Spirit. Just as God who dwelt behind the dark veil was believed, feared, and yet not seen by man, the Holy Spirit indwelling man's spirit also cannot be sensed by his soul and body.

After seeing this, we know what is the real spiritual life. It is not many thoughts and visions in the mind; neither is it many enthusiastic, joyful, and happy feelings in the emotion; nor is it sudden shakings, penetrations, and contacts brought by outward forces upon the body. Rather, it is a life issuing from the Spirit which is in the deepest part of a man. A real spiritual life is deeper than the mind, the feelings, and the consciousness of the body. It is in the deepest part of a man. Truly walking according to the spirit is knowing the moving of the innermost spirit and following it. No matter how wonderful experiences in the mind, emotion, and will are, if they are just outward, not even deeper than feelings, then these experiences are not of the spirit. Only the effect produced by the work of the Holy Spirit in man's spirit can be counted as a spiritual experience. Anything else is just thought and feeling. A spiritual living needs faith.

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit"—not the heart or the soul—"that we are children of God." Man's spirit is the part where man works together with the Holy Spirit. How do we know that we have been saved through regeneration and are the children of God? We know because our spirit has been made alive and the Holy Spirit lives in our spirit. Our spirit is a regenerated and renewed spirit, and He who dwells in, yet is distinct from, our spirit is the Holy Spirit. He bears witness with our spirit within us.

APPENDIX

In the Chinese Union Version of the Bible, it is difficult for us to tell when the word spirit refers to the Holy Spirit and when it refers to the human spirit. According to the translators of the Bible, whenever the original text used only the word spirit and not the Holy Spirit, they thought it actually referred to the Holy Spirit, and they added the word Holy before the word Spirit to indicate that it referred to the Holy Spirit.

The Bible, word by word and sentence by sentence, is God's inspiration. Why does God not say Holy Spirit but rather spirit in many places? Is not what God does not say as meaningful as what God says? In many places God clearly says Holy Spirit. But why in some places does He only say Spirit? Yet, according to the Bible translators, it refers to the Holy Spirit. We all know that in many places where only the word Spirit is used, it refers to the Holy Spirit, such as the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, etc. But in many verses when the spirit is not mentioned as the Holy Spirit, what exactly does it refer to?

In 1913 a monthly journal which specialized in Bible studies put out six messages concerning the Holy Spirit by a person by the name of Fullest (?). They were all studies of the original text. When he mentioned the word Spirit, he explained the many ways that this word had been used in the Bible. Later on he pointed out the mistake of considering the word Spirit as the Holy Spirit without regard to the context. He said it is wonderful that knowledge seems not to be very useful concerning this big subject because there is no indication whether or not this word spirit should be capitalized when the Holy Spirit was writing the New Testament. Therefore, all the capitalized words Spirit in the English Bible are just the translator's interpretation. All the New Testament experts still hold differing opinions concerning when the word spirit should be capitalized and when it should be lower case.

The capitalized word Spirit indicates the Holy Spirit and spirit indicates that it is not the Holy Spirit but a spirit besides the Holy Spirit, such as the spirit of man, etc. After reading this, do we not understand? In the original text there is no indication that it refers to the Holy Spirit or human spirit whenever just the word Spirit is used. Of course, the answer to this question is not so simple. We still need to read the word preceding it and after it, and determine if there is an article in the original language, before we can determine whether it refers to the Holy Spirit.

However, for our present necessity we may say that the word holy which is before the word Spirit, in some cases in the New Testament, is really the translator's interpretation rather than his translation. Whenever we come across this kind of situation, although we dare not think that it only refers to the human spirit, at least we may say that it sometimes refers to the human spirit.

After seeing the above, we know that the Holy Spirit and the believer's regenerated spirit have a relation which is very difficult to separate. Since the Holy Spirit is working in man's spirit in order to control man's whole being, in some places in the Bible the Holy Spirit and the human spirit are mentioned as one. A person's spirit should dominate his whole being; yet not the spirit alone, but the spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit should dominate his being. The part of man which can work with the Holy Spirit is his spirit, and the part of man where the Holy Spirit can work is also his spirit.