

SOUL and SPIRIT



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Ephesians, iv, 13 and 14.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ :

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ;

We see by these verses in Ephesians that the source of all growth and the source of all strength is the knowledge of the Son of God. But immediately we are warned that winds of doctrine are a danger to us, because of the sleight of men and the cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. In reading such verses as the 14th, we are prone to think that they refer only to the past, that at that time Satan was able to disguise his servants as ministers of righteousness, but that no such danger exists at present. Thus thousands of our dear brothers and sisters are rocked in a cradle of false security, and do not recognise that of our own selves men have arisen speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them (Acts xx, 30).

But the activity of the enemy has not ceased, and many thousands of real believers have been persuaded by unfaithful leaders to condone really terrible doctrines as to the person of the Christ. Men are making assertions as to the blessed Lord which contradict the plainest truths of Scripture, and which would make it utterly impossible for us to grow up in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, for their Christ is not the Christ of God's Word. They assert and then half-withdraw, and then assert again, that it is very doubtful to them if the Lord had a human soul and a human spirit, although the Scriptures speak repeatedly both of the Lord's Soul and of the Lord's Spirit. How could our dear Saviour, dying on the Cross, say, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit," if He had no spirit? He could not commend His essential Godhead, as a dying man, to the care of the Father! How could the blessed Lord say: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," if He had no soul? In Acts ii, 31, we read that David spoke in Psa. xvi of the Christ, "that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."

Again, how could the Lord have been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, or apart from sin, if He had no human soul or spirit? "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James i, 13), and we read in Matth. iv, 1, that the Lord was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Pride is a sin of the spirit, and it would have been pride of life for one to cast himself safely down from the pinnacle of the temple, before the admiring gaze of thousands of worshippers.

What temptation would it have been to the essential Godhead of the holy anointed Son of Man to behold all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, seeing

that it was by His word they all were called into being, and were even then upheld by the word of His power? In Eph. iv, 13, the goal before our eyes is that we shall all come "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But if, as these teachers say, the Lord had not a human soul and spirit, He was not truly a man, but only essential Deity, clothed with a human body: how then can "we grow up into Him in all things?" We cannot become God!

May the Lord preserve His little ones from neutrality as to these terribly perverse teachings!

T.W.B.

Spirit and Soul as applied to the Saviour and Lord:—

Mark ii. 8.—When Jesus perceived in His spirit.

Mark viii. 12.—And He sighed deeply in His spirit.

Luke x. 21.—Jesus rejoiced in spirit.

Luke xxiii. 46.—Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

John xi. 23.—He groaned in the spirit.

John xiii. 21.—He was troubled in spirit.

John xix. 30.—He delivered up His spirit (N. Tr.).

1 Cor. xv. 45.—A quickening spirit.

Matth. xxvi. 38.—My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

John xii. 27.—Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?

The following texts show that Scripture distinguishes between soul and spirit:—

Hebr. iv. 12.—The dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

1 Thess. iv. 23.—Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.