

The 'Man of Soul'

by Jessie Penn-Lewis

Jessie Penn-Lewis explores the distinction between living a soulish life and being spiritually led, emphasizing the dangers of relying on intellect and emotions in the Christian walk.

Scripture: Matthew 3:6, Matthew 11:25, Mark 1:5, Luke 10:21, Luke 22:6, Acts 19:18, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:11, James 5:16, Revelation 3:5

Topics: "Confessing Sins", "True Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher delves into the concept of 'exomologeo,' which means to fully agree with someone else, confess openly, or give praise. The preacher emphasizes the importance of confessing sins and acknowledging God openly before praising Him. Various Bible scholars and commentators provide insights into the significance of exomologeo in the New Testament, highlighting its association with confessing sins and praising God. The sermon explores how confession of sins precedes true praise and worship, emphasizing the need for genuine repentance and acknowledgment of God's sovereignty.

Transcript

" The 'natural' man [' man of soul '] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . because they are spiritually

discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14, lit)

CHRISTIANS who have arrived at the stage of knowledge of the Cross where they cease to walk " after the flesh ", think that they are now "spiritual" believers, entirely renewed and led by the Spirit of God; but then comes the most important lesson, says Dr. Andrew Murray-the lesson concerning the danger of the " inordinate activity of the soul, with its power of mind and will the "greatest danger" which the "Church, or individual, has to dread".(* Dr. Andrew Murray. Note in Appendix to The Spirit of Christ.)

The believer who has been quickened in spirit, is born of the Spirit and the Spirit of God dwells in his spirit. He has had the revelation of the Cross which has shown him the way of victory over the life after the flesh and he now walks in newness of life and victory over sin as manifested in the "works of the flesh". But at this stage the question must be asked: What about the "soul" the man himself in his personality and intellectual or emotional activities. Which power is animating the actions of the man himself apart from the "works of the flesh"? Is he animated and governed by (1) the spirit life which comes from above-from the Risen Lord as the Last Adam, the Life-giving Spirit, or (2) by the life which comes from the lower realm-the

fallen life of the first Adam ?

We have already pointed out the error of the prevailing idea, that when the believer has apprehended his death with Christ to SIN, and ceases to walk habitually "after the flesh", he becomes a "spiritual man", and is "entirely sanctified!" But to be delivered from the domination of the flesh, or carnal life, does not mean that he ceases to be "soul-ish" or ceases to walk after the life of nature; for the "death to sin", and crucifixion of the "flesh", is only one stage of the work of the Spirit of God to be done in the redeemed man. He may cease to be "sarkiko" or fleshly, and still be "physical" -or "soul-ish", i.e., living in the realm of the soul, instead of the spirit, or God-conscious sphere.

To understand this clearly, we must consider what are the evidences of the Christian being "soul-ish", when he ceases to be "carnal" or living "after the flesh".

The soul, we have seen, includes intellect, and emotions, as well as the central personality which makes it the seat of the self-consciousness. The believer may be entirely freed from the manifest "works of the flesh" as described in Galatians 5:19-21, whilst his intellect and emotions are still moved by the "psuche", or "animal-soul" life-i.e., they are not yet renewed and fully animated by the Holy Spirit working through the regenerated human spirit. The soulish Christian is therefore one whose intellect and emotions are still governed by the first Adam life and not by the Life-giving Spirit of Christ (see I Corinthians 15: 45) bringing the intellect and emotions under full control as the believer walks after the spirit, i.e., The Holy Spirit may dwell in his spirit, and enable him to "make to die the deeds of the body " whilst his intellect and emotions are still "soul-ish".

If we take, for instance, the question of the intellectual life, a passage in the Epistle of James very clearly shows the distinction between the heavenly, and the soulish or natural-wisdom. The Apostle writes that the wisdom which is not "from above" is (1) earthly(2) soulish (psychikos. The R.V. m. gives "natural" or "animal" i.e. pertaining to the soul; (3) demoniacal (R.V. m.)and produces jealousy and faction, division and partisanship. Whilst the wisdom which is from above, that is from the Spirit of God dwelling in the spirit of man, is characterised by purity, peaceableness, gentleness, mercy and good fruits and so partakes of the Divine character that it is without partiality (James 3:17) The pure heavenly wisdom is without any element of the soulish life-the place of self-consciousness, self-opinions, and self-views and therefore causes peace instead of strife and envy. The third statement of the soulish wisdom being "demoniacal" will be dealt with in another connection.

In the light of the passage in James, how clearly we can see the condition of the Church of God, and why it has split up into sections and "parties". Often, alas, the "works of the flesh" in jealousy and strife are the causes of "factions, divisions, parties " (Galatians 5: 19, 20)in the assemblies of God's professing people, but there is another cause of disunion in the professing Church where the soulish intellect is the separating factor. We see soulish "wisdom" so handling Divine truths, as to facilitate the work of demons in fostering division among the followers of Christ.

Pember remarks that the "intellect is not merely fallible, but the most dangerous of all gifts, unless it be guided by the Spirit of God " and yet among Christians it is relied upon for the grasping of Divine truth, and for the understanding of spiritual verities, whilst the Scripture declares that the "soulish" man-and this includes even the believer in so far as he is "soul-ish"-cannot receive " the things of the Spirit, because they can be only spiritually discerned.

Again, it is the soulish element in teachers and professors of holiness, which is often the cause of separation and disunion. There may be, it is true, love in the heart to those who "differ" but the "differences" divide nevertheless, because the demoniacal powers, able to work upon the soulish element in the believer, always emphasise or exaggerate the differences in "views of truth" instead of magnifying the points of union, and even drive eager believers to "fight" for their view of truth, under the name of "witnessing for God". Devoted believers, alas, think they are seeking the blessing of others, whilst unknowingly doing the same as the Pharisees in compassing "sea and land to make one proselyte . . ." (Matthew 23:15).

It is also the soulish element in Christians which insists upon the minute correspondence of others to its "views of truth" and "tithing mint and anise and cummin" in words whilst leaving "undone the weightier matters of the law" which in the gospel dispensation is the law of Christ and places love and the unity of the Spirit between believers as the condition of their growth into "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4: 3,13).

In brief, the soul-life, influenced by evil supernatural powers, is the main cause of divisions and separations among the professing and even the true children of God. "These be they who separate, men governed by soul ..." writes Jude (5:19). "Separate themselves" is the A.V. and "make separations" the R.V. text. "Arrogant setting up of themselves, as having greater sanctity and a wisdom and peculiar doctrine, distinct from others is implied," writes Fausset in his commentary. Fausset also translates the words, "sensual" of the A.V. and R.V. text in this passage, as literally "animal-souled".

"Separate themselves" as "having greater sanctity", is always a mark of the soulish life, for the Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you ... for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke 6:22, R.V.). The Apostle Paul also said in answer to a question about separation, "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he is called", and therein "abide with God". God Himself will "separate" those who walk in light, and those who abide in darkness, by His Presence as the Light, and often the one who elects to walk in the "darkness" will either cast out the one abiding in the light, or himself be brought into the light. Men can be "governed by soul", even when they have the Holy Spirit, and these soulish ones always "separate themselves", and "make separations", proving that in some degree they are "soulish", and not "spiritual".

The other department of the soul-life is the emotional, which proceeds from the senses of the body; and here again a Christian may be swayed by the soulish, and think it all "spiritual". Pember says that a "knowledge of Biblical psychology dissipates the idea that any holy spiritual influence can be set in motion by appeals to the senses". Yet the reaching of the spirit through the senses is the purpose of many Church services, and even mission meetings where the Gospel is proclaimed. Pember's words on this subject are illuminating. He says, "splendid buildings, gorgeous vestments, and picturesque rites for the eye, with sweet odours for the scent, and ravishing music for the ear, although they may bewitch one's consciousness with the most agreeable sensations, can penetrate only as far as the soul ... [yet] our spirit does not receive its impressions from the senses, but only from spirit..." *(Pember's Earth's Earliest Ages) He points out also that the order of our being from God's point of view, is spirit, soul, body, because "God's influence commences in the spirit, then lays hold of the emotions and the intellect, and lastly begins to curb the body". From the standpoint of Satan it is reversed. We have (1) earthly, (2) soulish, (3) demoniacal, (James 3:15) because Satan's influence enters by the clay made body; then seizes upon the soul; and, whenever possible, gains entrance to the spirit.

How solemn are the facts herein set forth. How clearly they show why the churches are filled with nominal worshippers of Christ, who show no marks of a true Christian life within them ! How sad it is that the very presence of these worshippers shows that within the spirit they have an unconscious cry after God, which in thousands of cases is never satisfied, for their soul-life alone is met, either in its intellectual department by intellectual soul-ish presentation of the letter of the truth; or their sense-life is gratified by soothing music and the calming influences of the hour of quiet, without their being led into real worship of God in spirit and in truth which alone is acceptable to Him.

Are all these influences to be depreciated? God forbid. But they will not save the "soul"! They may, and do, prepare the way by bringing the person within reach of the truth which is read from the Scriptures, if not preached in the pulpit, and all these outer things that make for righteousness have their value and place.

But-and this is the serious danger-influences that PENETRATE ONLY TO THE SOUL and do not reach the spirit in regenerating power are deceptive and give the person a "form of godliness without the power" and bring the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ down to the level of heathen philosophies and cults. Hence "religious" men who are merely "men of soul" place the Son of God on an equality with Mahomet and Confucius and discuss Christianity as "one of the religions" of the world, instead of men being compelled to see, as in the days of the early Church at Pentecost, the Omnipotent power of God bearing witness to the Name of His Son as the only Saviour for a lost world.

Again in mission work the appeal to the senses and emotions of the soul accounts for the large percentage of converts who do not stand and the evanescent influence of much evangelistic mission work; as well as in many instances the excessive exhaustion of the worker, and oft-times his eventual "breakdown". A correspondent writes: "Is it not the exercise of the soulish, or natural man--the glow, feeling, emotion and energy in speaking to others publicly or privately that cause nerve exhaustion? And is it not possible for the Spirit to quicken the truth without the strain or wear and tear of the body? To tell out God's truth with no 'excitement' and for God to breathe out His power in the words you speak, not through you so much as through your testimony, after it leaves your lips and enters into the minds of others? It does seem as if it could be done and with far less fatigue if my surmise be true."

A man may have naturally a "fiery" soul and by that fiery soul sway and move the soul-emotions of others, but their faith then stands in the influence or wisdom of the man they have listened to and not in the power of God. We can now see what Dr. Andrew Murray means when he says that the greatest danger which the Church or individual has to dread is the "inordinate activity of the soul with its power of mind and will ". The old Quakers used to call this "creaturely activity: and it is manifestly the energy of the creature being used in the service of God rather than the creature seeking in spirit to co-operate with the Holy Spirit given to him as the Gift of the Risen Son of God.

We find the intellectual man, with his spirit yet unquickened, dealing with the eternal destinies of immortal souls; and the strong-willed man exercising his will and dominant personality over the consciences and lives of others! Schemes, therefore, to reach men and bring them to God, by smoking concerts, musical attractions, lectures on popular subjects, etc., are but the outcome of various types of "soul" in men who desire to help others. Such men may be regenerated, but "governed by soul" and not knowing the Spirit of God dwelling in the spirit to energise them by His indwelling power and use them as messengers of God in the salvation of men.

But there is another section of the Christian Church and a much smaller company who, knowing the Spirit of God indwelling them, are "soulish" in a much lesser degree. These are they who have a mixture of "soul and spirit" in their religious experiences and are not satisfied unless they feel the presence of God continually with them in the realm of their self-consciousness. Consequently although the Holy Spirit dwells in them, they often fall into the realm of the soulish-life because they do not understand the spirit life and the actions of the human spirit in co-action with God.

The "soul" not only comprises the intellect and the emotions, but from the Scriptures it can be seen that the soul is the seat of the personality in its affections, power of joy or grief, etc. Thus it is written: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful ... " (Matthew 26: 38). "My soul doth magnify the Lord " (Luke 1: 46); "Now is my soul troubled . . . " (John 12: 27); "In patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21: 19); " Vexed his righteous soul"(2 Peter 2: 8); "Beguiling unstable souls" (2 Peter 2:14). It is therefore clear that the idiosyncrasies of the individual exist in the soul as well as in the physical disposition of the body. And this shape of the soul, if we may use the expression, in its capacity for joy, love, grief, patience, etc. may be filled with a spiritual joy from the Spirit-life of the Second Adam, poured out into the vessel of the soul; or filled with a soulish-or sensuous joy, moving into the vessel of the soul from the lower life of the First Adam. In the latter case the believer, although indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is "soulish " to the degree in which the animal-soul-life has play in the realm of these various capacities of the soul. He may cling to a soul-ish joy and live in the realm of his feelings; in the seat of his self-consciousness and not in the spirit, the place of the God consciousness; and thus be among those believers who are always seeking for spiritual "experiences " in the sense consciousness, instead of in the purity of the God-conscious realm alone-the regenerated human spirit.

At this point let us see how the spirits of evil work upon the soul-ish life in all its phases. The soul and the "powers of darkness" If in your hearts you have bitter feelings of envy and rivalry, do not speak boastingly and falsely in defiance of the truth. That is not the wisdom which comes down from above: it belongs to earth, to the un-spiritual nature (Greek, psychical) and to evil spirits" (James 3:14.15 Weymouth).

In the R.V., as we have seen, the text runs, "This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual (i.e., natural-the literal Greek is pertaining to the soul') devilish (margin of R.V. demoniacal)". This passage we have already referred to, but quote it again as showing conclusively the relationship of the forces of evil to the animal-soul-life. We have not here any reference to the "works of the flesh" but to man's intellectual department-i.e., the soul and the words of the text show that evil spirits work upon the soulish part of the man, as certainly as thy do upon his fleshly nature.

It is startling to see the truth put so bluntly and to know that all bitter feelings of envy and rivalry in connection with the gaining or possession of knowledge are instigated by evil spirits working upon the soul-ish life and have their origin-as Fausset writes-in hell.

This is very little understood by many true children of God. They may acknowledge satanic influence in the matter of gross sin and the manifestation of the "works of the flesh ", but not in the realm of what they consider the highest part of the civilisation of to-day. Back of this lies the unwillingness to recognise statements of the Word of God concerning the Fall and the utter sinking of the entire first creation into corruption and death, so that even the "imagination " of the "thoughts of his heart "-i.e., mental conceptions-was seen by God to be "evil continually "; and back of this total corruption again lies the poison of the serpent, who obtained entrance through the avenue of the desire for wisdom.

In the progress of the renewal of the redeemed man it is to the interest of the forces of evil that any element of the fallen life whether fleshly or soulish, should be kept active, for as the believer becomes "spiritual", he more and more is united in actual spirit-union with the Lord of Glory and hence more and more escapes the power of evil spirits and becomes equipped to recognize them and war against them. But it must first be recognised clearly that the "Fall" was the result of believing the lie of Satan, the fallen archangel and that when Satan succeeded, there entered the race of fallen man a poison which runs through every element of his being. This gives Satan power of access to every part of his tri-partite nature, i.e. (a) the fallen spirit, dead to God, is open to the hellish dark world of spirits ruled over by the Prince of Darkness; (b) the soul, including the intellect, imagination, thought, will and affections is governed by the life of the first Adam, which is fallen and corrupt, and (c) body and soul is therefore open in every department to the power of the Poisoner. Consequently, the Apostle John declares with blunt language that the "whole world lieth in the evil one"(1 John 5:19)

The fallen man not only has to be redeemed by the life-blood of the Son of God, but he has to be actually translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of God's Son and every department of his being, beginning with his spirit, ACTUALLY RENEWED stage by stage by deliverance from the power of sin and the animal-soul-life. If the first creation was "fearfully and wonderfully made", then in truth the re-creation of the creature utterly sunk into the animal-soul and the animal flesh, and lifted again into the realm of spirit to have spirit-dominion over soul and body, is a wondrous work, which only the Triune God could accomplish; the Father giving the Son, the Son giving His life and the Divine Spirit giving Himself with patience and love to work out the will of the Trinity.

That the Prince of Darkness resists every step of the man's deliverance out of his thralldom is easy to understand and it is necessary that we should know clearly the elements in the fallen creation which are open to his power. That he fully controls the unregenerate man is clearly shown in Ephesians 2: 2, where the Apostle says that the "children of wrath" doing "the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts" (i.e., soul-ish life), are wholly dominated by him. Then, when the spirit of the man has been quickened into life and he has been delivered from the power of sin, the soul-ish life and elements in the physical body are open to evil powers. For example (1) First in the soul-ish life, the soulish wisdom becomes "demoniacal" when evil spirits use it to accomplish their plans, e.g., the enemy can arouse a mental prejudice, or pre-conceived idea-unknown to the man and use it at a critical moment to frustrate the work of the Spirit of God. This working of the enemy through the mind of a believer, when the heart and spirit may be true to God, is a most serious fact in the Church of God to-day, for through the various "ideas" of good men, the Spirit of God is sometimes hindered even more than through the unbelief and hatred of the world. And again, in the realm of the emotional-soul-life, the adversary can so rouse the life of nature that the deep work of the Spirit of God is quenched or checked, and His voice unheard. (2) In the physical body, the adversary can work upon the nervous system and use the animal magnetism which is inherent in every human frame, as well as many other elements open to the powers of evil, in addition to "the works of the flesh" and what is generally called sin. These elements are in the very "make-up" of the human vessel and on the part of the believer there should be a keen seeking of light from God on his complex being, that he may understand himself, and know how to act and walk in humble dependence upon the Risen Lord for protection from the evil one—a protection which can only operate as the man looks to the blood of Jesus and in implicit obedience to the written Word, keeps himself open to all truth which will give him light upon any possible ground he may have given to the spirits of evil to attack, or gain admittance to mind or body.

For the powers of darkness are keenly clever in working alongside of, or simulating "natural" conditions, either in temperament or disturbance of the bodily functions, or frame and they watch for some physical or mental ailment to serve as the cover, or as an "excuse" for their workings. (For full elucidation of this aspect of truth, see War on the Saints, a text book on the work of deceiving spirits among the children of God.)* i.e., the attack may be in the natural and physical realm, but not from it as the source.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jessie-penn-lewis/the-man-of-soul/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net