

## **A Container for God's Presence**

### **Christ is all, and in all**

Have we not all at some time felt inadequate and felt the need for love, faith and power, and have tried to get more of these?

Have we ever questioned our effectiveness towards those in need? Are we seeing radical transformations take place in those who we minister to, or are we just sharing a powerless "code of ethics", or a liturgy, or historic faith?

We really want to be better servants of the Lord and so, more often than not, our way to remedy this is by asking God to "improve" us. So we ask Him to fill us up with love, increase our faith, anoint us with power, make us more holy, and so on – so that we can be more effective, more useful.

It may come as a shock, but this is where we need to understand that self-improvement is both a sin and impossible.

While our sense of inadequacy is quite correct, our understanding of how God should answer our problem is completely wrong.

So let us look at God's word and get some answers:

#### **Love:**

1 John 4:8 ... *"The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."*

It doesn't say God *has* love, but God *is* love. If you have a shirt, the shirt is not you, it's just something you have and wear. If you have a packet of peanuts it is simply something you have and can share, but it's not you. The word is clear, it doesn't say God *has* love, but God *is* love.

So God doesn't have a bucket full of love that He can hand out. So it is not something I can ask Him to give me. You see, Love is exclusively a Person. God is love. There is no other pure, self-giving love in the universe other than God Himself. Love is exclusively a characteristic of one Person only - and that's not you or me.

So we have erred by thinking that we love could be imparted to us, channelled into us, and to make us more loving. God's word is clear and final, "God is love" – full stop.

Love is a Person; one Person only whose character is love — and that's not me, and that's not you. God is love and, therefore, love is God loving.

#### **Power:**

1 Cor. 1:23-24 ... *"but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

It says that Christ *is* the power of God. Not Christ *has* the power, but He *is* the power. He also *is* the wisdom of God.

So once again, we have erred when we have thought that power or wisdom was something which could be handed out to us, whereby we would be powerful or wise servants of Jesus Christ. The word is clear – power is a Person. And that person is not you or me but is exclusively Christ, Who is God. Wisdom is a Person – Christ.

And I am sure there may be some right now who want to put their hands up and say, “What about Acts 1:8.” Okay, let’s look at Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 ... *“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you (2 Aorist participle); and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

What happened on the day of Pentecost was the birthing of the church. The Holy Spirit is the agent Who was sent to birth in believers the “Seed” of the Father – Christ (1 Pet 1:23). Christ the Power of God was birthed in them. This is the fulfilment of Jesus promise in John 14:18. The “Power” – a Person – Christ was birthed in them and they became the “born again” who formed the church – the “ekklesia, the “called out ones” – the body of Christ.

The word “witnesses” is translated from the greek word *martus* from which we get our English word “martyr”. Most of the early disciples were martyred and Christ the Power of God was in them to carry them through.

So my advice is dispense of any idea that Acts 1:8 is speaking of the Holy Spirit as being a magic power dispensing machine like a “one armed bandit machine in a casino” to give us a bucket full of power as and when we fancy. Let me pull the “God lever” of prayer and get a dose of power so I can go out and do mighty miracles for Jesus! Forget that. Christ is the power of God. Seek Him. Let Him live in you and as you submit and obey He will do what only He can do through you. Be filled with the Holy Spirit so He can teach you Christ – let Him renew your mind so you have the mind of Christ and so that Christ in all His Love, Power and Kindness and purity can be seen and experienced through you.

### **Eternal Life:**

Every Christian, every believer in Jesus Christ, accepts the fact that he or she has eternal life. We point to John 3:26 which says, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”* So we take it for granted that we have a life which will go on forever in Heaven.

But once again we see from the Word that eternal life is not something I can ever have.

John 14:6 ... *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”*

Jesus did not say, “I **have** the life to give you” – but, “I **am** the life.”

So once again, eternal life is not a thing I can **have** – eternal life is a Person – One person only, and that Person is Jesus Christ. He **is** eternal life.

In fact, we can understand this a bit better if we look more closely at Romans 6:23, which says, “*The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Eternal life is *in* Him because He **is** eternal life!

Similarly **the way** is a Person, His name is Jesus.

**The truth** is a Person, His name is Jesus.

Jesus said (John 10) ...“I am the door”... “I am the Good Shepherd ... my sheep know my voice.”

In fact it would do us well to read through the scriptures and see all the things which Christ **is** in Himself.

**He is all:**

Colossians 3:11 ... “*a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but **Christ is all, and in all.***”

This refers to believers and is clear; it says of believers in Christ that “Christ **is** all and in all.” Christ **is** all, not Christ **has** all.

Well that does not leave much for anyone else!

So we see we were wrong when you or I may have thought I was somebody and something or could get something, because God had taken it all – **Christ is all.**

But cheer up, we do have a place, because “Christ **is** all and **in all.**”

Col 1:27 ... “Christ **in you**, the hope of glory”

The whole purpose and reason for the existence of the entire creation is to contain the Creator! We were not created **to be something**, but **to contain** Someone.

As humans we assume (and have been wrongly taught) we have a human nature (more on this subject later) and that the human self is self governing and important. But this is completely wrong. This is not the reason for our existence as persons, as selves. This is not why God formed us. Our distorted egos have brought us to this wrong assumption. In fact, our self is of no importance as there is only one Self in the universe who is really important.

Why? Because there's only one Self, one Person, in the entire universe who ever said, “**I Am.**” (Exodus 3:14).

God's word is clear; at the consummation of the ages it is God Who will be all in all. **God all in all!**

1 Cor 15:28 ... *"When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that **God may be all in all.**"*

So how do we fit in?

### **The Reason for Our Existence:**

There is only one Person, Christ, with whom we are brought into a living relationship, so that He can manifest Himself in His perfection of life and love in and through us.

All of creation exists because God Who is Spirit must have a body in which to manifest Himself. This is made evident through the Scriptures:

Isa 6:3 ... *"The whole earth is full of His glory."*

1 Cor 8:6 ... *"yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and **we exist for Him**; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and **we exist through Him.**"*

Col 1:16-17 ... *"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and **for Him**. He is before all things, and **in Him** all things hold together."*

Eph 4:10 ... *"He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that **He might fill all things.**"*

If He fills all things, all things are containers of Him.

All of the non-human parts of creation can contain manifestations of God; but only we who are made in the image and likeness of God can contain God as a Person. A person cannot manifest himself as a person through anything other than a person. You cannot fellowship with a dog, a tree, a fish, a stone, or a star. You certainly can enjoy and marvel at the beauty, intricacy and ingenuity of God's marvellous creation, but you can't fellowship with it. We can, however, fellowship with one another.

God can manifest His creative genius and His beauty through the flowers and trees. We can view tiny parts of flowers through a microscope, or stars through a telescope, and marvel—but we never can say, "That's God."

But isn't it wonderful that we can look at a born again human being and say, "I see Christ in you." That's the height of personality – to have someone say "I see Christ in you."

Being created in the image and likeness of God, we have been given a free will, the ability to make intelligent choices. The people God created have the freedom of choice to turn around and say, "Thank you very much for your kind offer, but I don't want You to live in me."

And that is exactly what happened.

Let's digress for a moment and go back to the beginning of creation when man was formed and see what happened.

Gen 2:7 ... *"Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living soul**."*

God breathed the breath *neshamah* (Heb from nasham to pant) of life *chayyim* (Heb pl. *lives* – *physical and soul life*), and man became a living soul *nephesh* (Heb soul, being, person).

*Nephesh* (soul, being, person) is different from the Hebrew word for spirit *ruach*.

Man was created as a tripartite being (spirit-soul-body 1 Thess 5:23), and as living soul or living being his/her spirit part was formed to specifically contain and be governed by a deity (spirit).

God is Creator of body and soul, but He is the **Father** of spirits.

God formed man with the intent and purpose that the spirit part of man would be occupied by, and one with, God who is Spirit. But man, created in the image and likeness of God (Who has a will), was given a free will (an integral part of the soul). So God gave Adam the ability to make choices.

Genesis 2 speaks of the "Tree of Life" – which is a type of Christ (Christ and everything pertaining to life and godliness); and the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" – which is a type of Satan (Satan and everything pertaining to evil, sin and destruction – the spirit of error). Man was given a choice, a free will, to choose who he would listen to and submit to. Man was created to contain and be governed by a deity – to live by the Eternal Life of Christ, or, if he chose so, by the death-life, spirit of error of Satan.

Neither man nor any other spirit (angelic) being was ever created to be an **independent** spirit being; A self-for-self entity. Everything was created to be in subjection to and submitted to God, the **Self-for-others One**. In fact there is only one true Self – that is God, because He is the only one who is called "I AM" (Ex 3:14).

You either have the nature of your Heavenly Father God, or the nature of your father the Devil – the god of this world (see John 8:44). You see, there is no such thing as a "human nature". Humans, if they are born again, have the nature of their Heavenly Father, and if they are not, then they remain with the sin nature of the Devil – the god of this world, the spirit of error.

Adam believed Satan over God and he partook of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and in that day he died – spiritual death took control of him. He did not die physically that day, but from that day the spirit of death began its work in him – physical decay, mental/emotional decay and spiritual decay. Sin, the spirit of error, entered and controlled man.

Our human selves or beings were never formed by God to be self-operating or self-relying entities – we were only formed to express and reproduce the products of our owner-occupier. There is no such

thing as a “human nature” – and this is where so many go wrong in their understanding and it ends in huge frustration and failure. That misconception came from its originator, the Devil. By Satan’s deceit we were made to think that we are independent selves with a self-operating nature of our own.

Satan, an angel formerly known as “shining one” (*helel* Heb.) is the **self-for-self spirit**. Look at Isaiah 14:12-15. Look at all the “I will” statements. That’s where **the self-for-self spirit** originated, and he has brought confusion and lies to us, the lie that we are a self-for-self independent entity. And those lies frustrate so many.

Now, back from our short digression to the Garden of Eden, we understand that due to the influence of the spirit of error we make self our god, not God. And because we think we are an independent self operating self we just naturally try to run our own lives. And that's our whole trouble.

Our trouble is not the devil (Christ dealt with him at the cross), not our neighbour, not circumstances nor any other thing. Our trouble is simply thinking, and trying to live like we are a self operating self-for-self. A distorted self, self out of gear, is our problem.

Once we know how to handle the human self and put it back where it belongs, we will have found the key to life.

So let’s move on to that now.

### **You Simply Receive:**

From eternity there has essentially been only one Person.

It may be hard to comprehend this, yet we see it throughout the Word of God – God was before all. He is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega. **He is love. He is life. He is all.**

He who is all, the Person who was from the beginning, created us with the single purpose and intent – to occupy us and be our **all**. So our relation to Him is simply that of containing Him in such a way that He may be recognised.

That is why the primary function of all creation, animate and inanimate, is receptivity. **Your basic function, and mine, is the same—simply to receive.**

We see this around us all the time. For example, just look at the trees and the flowers around you.

To have branches, leaves and flowers these trees or flowers around you have first to receive light, warmth, moisture and nutrients. If there were no receptivity in the trees and flowers and shrubs, all we would have around us would be desert. The life we see in these trees and flowers is simply because of the quiet reception of the sunlight, moisture and nutrients provided to them. What they receive they utilise. But **utilisation is secondary to reception.**

In Biblical language, we call this **faith**. Faith is simply resting in, abiding in, receiving, that which has been provided and allowing it to produce in us that which God intended.

### **How Two Can be One Yet Remain Two:**

It is impossible for finite language to completely portray the infinite. So fortunately God has provided us with some illustrations to help us understand our relationship to Him.

Often we are referred to as vessels. Just have a look at some scriptures:

2 Cor 4:7        ... *"We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."*

2 Tim 2:21        ... *"vessels, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work."*

Quite simply, a vessel is a hollow object made to contain something. God has made us to be vessels.

In making us vessels, God's intent is that we be filled. As He made us His vessels, it is He that sees to it that we are filled.

As the whole function of the vessel is to receive something, our function is receptivity.

There is one thing that must be made very clear; **the vessel never becomes the liquid, and the liquid never becomes the vessel**. This must be made clear lest we fall into the trap of thinking that we can become deified. That would be blasphemy. Self-deification is the lie lived by Satan, the pseudo-God, and those governed by him. **The divine can dwell in the human, but forever the human is the human and the divine the divine**. God has said, *"I will not give my glory to another."* (Isa 42:8).

The vital importance of the vessel illustration is that we are forever the container and He is that which we contain. That relationship never changes.

Fortunately, Jesus and Paul gave us other illustrations to aid our understanding of our relationship to God as receivers.

The illustration given to us in John 15 shows us how Jesus likened Himself to the Vine and ourselves to the branches. Where we may have thought of ourselves as vessels as **passive containers**, this illustration show **we have a vital, active relationship**.

Through the vine and branches illustration our eyes are opened to the mystery of union – **how two can be one and yet remain two**.

In the limited dimension in which we live, infinite truth is always in the form of paradox. We struggle with facts that are seemingly contradictory to common sense. In our dimension we can never fully comprehend truth through our senses. Our reason cannot teach it to us. We have to live with opposites which don't meet, with facts that are, to our understanding, not completely logical. It is good for us to recognise this, and to learn to accept both sides—both ways of knowing—in their proper proportions.

This illustration of the vine and the branches is one of those paradoxes. The living God, **the living Christ, and I actually become one person and function as one person. Separation is impossible**. It

has disappeared. **We function entirely and forever and naturally as one person. And yet we remain two!**

#### **The Mysterious Paradox in Which We Live:**

**Two in one; one in two.** We see the paradox in the vine and the branch illustration because, **though the vine and the branch make one, Jesus says that the branch must “abide in the vine.”** Though the vine is the life and the branch the channel, yet the branch does things. It utilizes the sap and produces leaf and flower and fruit.

But **its activity is secondary to its receptivity.** This is where we fail. **We make activity a substitute for receptivity.**

Paul gave us another illustration: that of **head and body.** Head and body make one organism, one life.

You can't divide head and body.

I Corinthians 12:12     ... *“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”*

This speaks of the body of Christ as being Christ.

Eph 1:22-23     ... *“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

Col 1:18     ... *“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”*

We are part of a vital organism which is an ascended, glorious, perfect Christ—the eternal Christ. We are part of Him, yet we remain, ourselves.

#### **Dependent Union:**

In the “Head-body” relationship we are all dependent. Just as the body is dependent on the head and the head governs the body, so we forever remain the dependent member in the union.

And the union is never safe until we know that.

**He is the Lord and we are the co-operators – we are the receivers.**

Without exception, we have all regarded life as something **we** must live; although we have been, and are, glad to have the help and grace of God to assist us (which is why we have cried out to God to give us more love, more power, more faith, and so on, as if these are things He can hand out to aid us in improving our self-efforts). Even though we are redeemed people, without realising our error, we have relied mainly on our self-activity.



Is it not true that we have all thought, “We're God's people, let's get on with His work.” And we race ahead trying to do that which He only can do.

Hence the reason for the long periods of training through which God's servants were (and are) taken in order to prepare them for service.

For example – Moses 40 years in the wilderness; Joseph 11 years as a slave or in prison; Jesus 30 years preparation for 3 years ministry; Paul 3 plus 14 years in obscurity. Just to mention a few.

Look at Moses. Few can equal his consecration. He threw away a throne as “*the son of Pharaoh's daughter,*” with all “*the treasures of Egypt*” and “*pleasures of sin for a season.*” And he did all this for the mysterious Christ who had not even come - for he “*esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches,*” according to Heb 11:24-26.

Yet there was one thing that Moses had not renounced. That was Moses.

“*Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,*” highly trained, highly educated, “*mighty in word and deed,*” it says he thought the enslaved Israelites would understand that he was their obvious deliverer, and he set out to deliver them. Angered by an Egyptian maltreating one of his people, he beat and killed him.

But Pharaoh sent the police after him— and what did Moses do? All he had left was a good pair of legs. So he ran.

A healthy body is useful—but you need more than two good legs to carry you through life for God! Moses had thought he could do the job; now he found he couldn't. He couldn't find God because, until he had come to an end of himself, God was a distant Person to him.

Unless you have come to the bottom of self you don't know basically in a crisis just how to find God. You can't find God when He's found you. He's just there. The Spirit must teach you. You just say, “That's fine, Lord, carry on.” Just talk to Him and He will talk to you. He will teach you.

But Moses, like every one of us, had to learn that you don't do God's work by self effort and self-wisdom.

### **Unquenchable Energy:**

Forty years later, Moses saw what he had not been ready to see before. He saw a queer object where he was tending sheep in the wilderness. It was a common bush on fire. But the curious thing, as he watched it, was that it didn't go out.

That is where God showed Moses what humanity is meant to be: a common bush aflame with God.

But a man must be common first. Moses, in his own opinion, had been a very uncommon royal bush, and God doesn't live in uncommon royal bushes. Then Moses saw this sight: God's presence, God's word out of a common bush - and as the divine fire consumes the bush, it refuels it. “***The bush was not consumed.***”

That's exactly what God does. **The divine life keeps flowing in, as you give it out.** That is receptivity: the key to true humanity. *Then* you move out into activity.

No one is active like a Christian, a Christ-person, because he is motivated by the divine resources, the divine power, the divine Person. We've got to learn by our hard knocks to clear out of the way and recognise Him who is our life and our all. Another functioning within us; Know Him; know His voice, His plans, His resources. Submit to Him. Then we come back into the situation as servant, not boss.

Once you have come to understand that your basic function is a constant recognition of Another, Christ in you, the whole of life is transformed.

It is not a matter of running to the altar every Sunday and re-committing your life to Him, or continually asking Him to come into your life, or asking for more of Him, because once you are born again you have received Him in His totality.

Eph 1:3        ... *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ.**"*

**Every** means there is no more. You have it all in you in Christ. You can't get more, so stop asking for it.

Rather, what we do need is to recognise Another, Christ, is the functioning One in us.

Another is the Person who inspires the prayers and imparts the faith and thinks the thoughts through our minds and expresses His compassion through our hearts and puts our bodies into action.

Once you've seen that, you see that He is the illimitable One.

You have shifted from self as your point of reference to Christ as your point of reference.

Then you relax and say, "This is what life is basically: Another living His life in me." That is your key to everything.

Every problem becomes an opportunity.

Every tough spot becomes a chance to enjoy the luxury of seeing Him deliver us out of it. And you welcome such spots.

### **Your Other Self:**

Humanity which is not indwelt by Deity is subhuman. Can you offer proof of that, you say? Yes, I can. I can give you proof from the only perfect human who has ever lived on earth.

Jesus Christ was a real human. (That's why I love to call Him Jesus, though He is the Lord Jesus Christ.) He was the Son of God, but if He called Himself the Son of God five times, He called Himself Son of man fifty-five times. Which means He was a representative man—one of us.

Notice what Jesus said each time He was challenged on the source of His power to work miracles or His authority to say what He did. Every time He answered, ***“The Son can do nothing of Himself.”***

In other words, **His basic self-consciousness as a human was awareness of His nothingness in Himself!**

His statements about the Father often puzzled the disciples. He would say, ***“I do what I see the Father do,” “as I hear, I judge,” “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.”*** They wondered whether He had some strange means of communication with His “Father in heaven.”

He revealed their true meaning in what I think is the most important conversation ever recorded. It was the first time in actual human words that **the union of man and God is revealed**. It came in that last conversation at the supper table before He went out to Gethsemane.

He kept saying He was going to the Father, but the Spirit had not come; therefore, a normal human could only understand outward relationships – one person here, another there, each person separate from the other.

So when He talked about the Father, the disciples thought He must be some Being way up in the blue. Feeling desperate that Jesus was going away to one whom they did not know, Philip made a commonsense request:

*“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”* (John 14:8)

In other words, "Open Heaven, and let us have one look at the One to whom You say You are going."

Remember Jesus' answer (John 14:8-9)? He said, ***“Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”***

Now you might stop with that statement and say, “Well, that's Deity. He meant that their names were interchangeable - Father, Son and Spirit, and they could call Him Father or Jesus.”

But He didn't mean that, for the next verse (v 10) says this: ***“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.”***

When Jesus said He did what He saw the Father doing it was not that He had some telescopic view into Heaven, but that as the Father **in** Him took Him into various situations and faced Him with various needs, He would know this was a call to action. As He saw the Father moving into action, He took action. **The action of faith**. Simply doing what He saw in the Father, or saying what He had said, without questioning or hesitating.

The same was true of the words He spoke. He was expressing the thoughts and words the Father thought and spoke in Him.

Do you see the human nothingness and the divine union? Yet that doesn't mean that we do nothing.

**No one was more active than Jesus Christ! But the activity was secondary to receptivity.**

An outstanding characteristic of the life of Jesus was His relaxed attitude. He was always saying, *"I have what the Father gives Me."* Yet what words He spoke and deeds He did!

You see, that relaxed attitude is a normal human attitude – because a vessel hasn't anything except the capacity to contain. So relax!

### **Two, But One:**

Someone may say, "Well, Jesus Christ was a unique person. Can we say we're just like Jesus Christ?"

Yes, you can.

At the end of John 14 Jesus says, "Arise, let us go hence." As they moved from the supper table toward Gethsemane, they passed through a vineyard and Jesus used this opportunity to the illustration of the Vine and branches to help them understand what He had said of Himself and the Father.

"See," He said, "I have been the branch of My Father. He has been My vine; His sap has been flowing through Me, and I have just been bearing the fruit."

"Now," He said, **"I am your vine and you are My branches. We are to have the same union which I have had with the Father, and apart from Me ye can do nothing."**

Many years later in writing to the Corinthians, Paul made a marvelous statement in I Corinthians 6:17 that reveals the nature of our union: ***"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."***

**That's the real self, and the basis for our union: one spirit, not two spirits.** The very same thing that Jesus said of Himself and the Father (**"I and my Father are one"**) Paul says of us.

A great many of our confusions in life begin because we haven't discerned between soul and spirit. The Bible analyzes the human personality into three parts (for everything is a trinity). I Thessalonians 5:23 says, *"May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete"*.

In simple terms, spirit is the place where the *"imperishable Seed"* of the Father of spirits, the *"living and abiding Word of God"*, Christ, is birthed and resides and is the life and all within us. This is the true self. This is the real "me" or "I" Pauls refers to in Gal 2:20, *"Christ lives in **me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved **me** and gave Himself up for **me**"*.

We are spirits, of whom God is the Father (Hebrews 12:9). He is the Creator of body and soul, but the Father of spirits.

Down in that centre—the spirit—is where you intuitively know and love. That's where you irrevocably live.

Paul, in I Corinthians 2:11, said, “*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?*” The “knower” inside us is our spirit.

For instance, we Christians *know* Jesus Christ. How do you *know* Jesus Christ? I can't tell you. Somehow you've come past the realm of just intellectually knowing *about* this Person called Jesus Christ, to where deep within you He is real to you and you just *know* that to be true. The “knower” deep within you just knows!

That's not providing a tangible or acceptable proof or reason. It's just something intuitive inside you, and that's your spirit. That's different from reason.

The spirit is where we are joined to one of two spirits – for the unregenerate person it is the false spirit of self-love, called the spirit of error, who is in us from birth, or for the believer, it is the true spirit of self-giving, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth, who replaces the false spirit in us by redemption and rebirth.

Soul on the other hand is a little more external than spirit. Soul is the seat of the emotions, reason and choice (mind, will, emotion centre). Soul (the renewed mind in particular) is where you comprehend and express your spirit (unless your soul is body/flesh focused – when it will express the things of the flesh).

Your mind (your knowledge) expresses itself in reasons. But reasons can vary. They can be influenced by all sorts of things. It depends whether the mind is set on the spirit or one the flesh.

Your soul expresses itself through the thoughts, affections, and the emotions. That's where you feel. But feelings can vary. We say, “I don't feel like this,” or “I feel spiritually cold, or dead or dry,” and they are all illusions of the soul.

Neither reason nor emotion is our real life, which is deep inside us, in our spirit where Christ is our life. He is the only life we have.

Consider our spirit and soul to be our “unseen” or “spiritual” parts, and the body to be our visible and tangible part. What the Bible refers to as “heart” is the spiritual part, the combination of soul and spirit. A “divided heart” is when our soul is flesh focused and not in tune with the spirit. This basically is a result of the un-renewed mind in action. A “united heart” is when soul is spirit focused. This is typical of a renewed mind in action.

We have to learn how to discern between soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12). We must learn to heed and be led by the voice from deep within our “knower”, our spirit, and refuse to be dominated by the reactions of the emotions or the reasons—our souls.

When we have learned to discern and to discipline the reactions of the soul, then through our reasons and our emotions we channel Christ from deep within, and are not moved by the contrary or opposing response and action of the world coming back at us.

You may well ask, “How can I do this?”

You can do this because *"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."* (1 Cor 6:17).

The Bible reveals that God, who is spirit, is an invisible Person. He always expresses Himself. He is expresses Himself and is made known through His son, Jesus Christ.

### **Visible and Invisible Life:**

So with us, our spirits are our invisible selves, and we have to have a form of expression. The form of expression is the soul life.

And it's in our soul life that we differ.

In the spirit we're undifferentiated. You and I are exactly the same, eternally one person in the Spirit. You and I are one unit. We are individually members of the one body of Christ.

But in our souls we differ: you may be very quick and I may be slower. One person is cautious, another person is more adventurous. One may be quiet and reserved while the other loud and boisterous. Variety is in our soul life—that is, in the emotions and the reason. So that's why we give varied expression of the inner spirit, where we are joined as one to the Lord. Christ in you is seen as you, as you have been made.

The business of emotions is most important, because dozens of Christians live with their feet dragging with a sense of condemnation and failure because they feel away from God, or they feel cold, or they feel guilty, or they feel weak, and so on.

They haven't discerned between the variable emotions of the soul and the unvarying reality of spirit—where **God's Spirit of love is eternally our other self in our spirit.**

How can I be cold when I've got that permanent fire within me – Christ the power of God; He who is Love, and Peace? So move back from your soul-affections and say, "No, He's here."

How can I feel dry when I have a permanent well of water inside me – Jesus Christ?

### **Not Emotion, but Reality:**

You move back from your affections, your emotions, to the real love-centre—because ***"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."***

The other verse that goes with that one, an all time favourite, penned by Pauli is:

Gal 2:20 (KJV) ... *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Paul says, *"I am crucified with Christ"*.

That's the old Paul out. The old "I" was the Satan nature, spirit of error, who was joined to Paul from birth. Now gone forever!

Then he says, “.....*nevertheless, I live.*”

That's the new Paul in Christ: a living, thinking, willing, feeling, battling human. A real person.

But listen: then he corrects himself and adds, “*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*”

He could very easily have said, “Nevertheless I live and Christ lives in me”—as if Christ lived near him or close by him.

But you see, he replaced the old self, the Satan nature, by Christ, the divine nature.

That's the point.

He said, “Nevertheless, I live—excuse me, the real I isn't I at all, it is Christ.”

In other words, your other self is Christ. It is not you, it's Christ. There are two selves joined in one; and the other self is Christ.

**“He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”** That is indivisible. **That's why it's ridiculous to look around or above and try to find Christ – or to try and be “like Christ”.** In fact we were never made to be “like Christ”. That is impossible – for the human to become divine.

For so long, being deceived, many have thought they are independent selves getting eternal life, getting power, getting love from God, even “denying self” by stoic practices to try and make themselves “better” Christians; to try to be “like Christ”. That is impossible. You cannot do anything to be like Christ. God never intended for you to try and be an imitator, and impersonator. That's an insult to Him. It's impossible. He only ever wanted you to receive and contain Him so He could be the life in you and have expression through you. He wants us to be participators, not imitators.

So many spend so much time studying the gospels to see how Christ conducted Himself as man on earth so they can try and imitate Him and His practices. Look what Pauls said:

2 Cor 5:16      ... “*Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.*”

It's coming to a personal relationship and intimate knowledge with the Christ within you, the resurrected Christ who is your life and all to whom we must give our attention.

So don't try and find Christ “out there somewhere”, and don't try and be “like Christ”.

You don't try to find yourself, do you? Wherever you go, you are there, aren't you? However you feel about it, you can't escape your self.

And your other self is Christ; you can't escape Him either! As a believer, wherever you go Christ is there. He is in you. He and you are now one.

By God's grace, Jesus Christ tied Himself to us and we are one. He is the only "life" you have. You're two but one.

You contain Him; He motivates you. And you live by His abiding life. He is the one who lives it. You are His means of expressing Himself.

Motivation by Jesus Christ; that's the eternal life which we who know Him have already begun!

Next we will need to examine, understand and establish how this change of relationship has taken place. How can it be when we are eternally separated from God by sin? How can we have such boldness, so that we can be free, joyful, familiar, and natural—not super duper reverent—but ordinary, normal people: what God intends us to be?

### **Your New Spirit:**

Christ is not religious, He's ordinary and secular.

**One of our biggest failings is that we've put Christ in a special building for a special occasion, with special forms of worship, special music, and special everything.**

Cut the special religious garbage out; put your hands in your pocket and go in your old blue jeans. Christ is a secular person.

Christ as you washes dishes. Christ as you works as a plumber, teacher, business manager, house wife, mother, carpenter, gardener, window cleaner, engineer or any trade or profession you're in.

He is a very common person. You and I are very common persons—I assure you that. That's why I believe in a common Christ—because He lives in common people!

Obviously, humanity has become separated from God. Before I can live in the kind of familiarity with God that He intends for me, I need to know the basis for that kind of a relationship. I need to know my title. Once I am sure of my foundations I can accept them and go ahead. Once I am sure of the road under my feet I can proceed to walk confidently.

### **Lost in Sin:**

What the Bible calls sin is simply independent self. The created person or self was made to contain and express the Creator Self who is selfless love – Christ.

Instead, in the person of Lucifer, probably the created being nearest to God Himself, a new and horrible form of life came into existence: a created self who refused to contain the selfless Self of God but chose to live for and by himself. Lucifer was the sin-spirit, the spirit of self-love, self-seeking, and all the sins known to man that proceed from that.

The history of the creation of man in the Garden of Eden tells us what happened to our forefather. He was created to contain God in a living union, which was symbolized for him in the offer of "the tree of life in the midst of the garden."



But as a human being with free choice, he could take another way—the way of self-love: symbolized for him in the other tree in the midst of the garden—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Deceived by the lying spirit of Satan, he received into himself the spirit of error rather than the Spirit of truth, and became a child of the Devil. Since then the whole human race is born with the spirit of self-centeredness in it. The Bible calls it “the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” (Eph 2:2).

That we are all born and live under that domination is obvious, for we are all by nature egoists and self-lovers. Every breath we breathe, therefore, is sin—because anything less than God’s perfection is sin, and God’s perfection is perfect love. But such total love to God and our brother is totally impossible without God who is love living in us.

### **Two Problems Solved:**

What, then, has He who is Love, and therefore must save, done to restore His lost humanity to Himself?

He has taken flesh Himself to start a new race. In the Person of His Son, Jesus, He came into history as a man called “the last Adam,” the Creator of the first Adam. Having lived a perfect life which the first Adam failed to live, He then identified Himself totally with the fallen human race by dying for us. In that death He was so identified with us all in God’s sight that the Bible (2 Cor 5:21) says, “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.*” Thus, He died. In doing so, the Bible reveals that He effected the two supreme deliverances that were the two absolute necessities.

First, He solved God’s problem (or rather, God solved His own problem) by taking upon Himself the curse of the broken law, and being made a curse for us. By the shedding of His blood, His outpoured life, He became God’s “mercy seat.”

By this, God could both be just and justify the ungodly, and pronounce all believers in Jesus justified from all unrighteousness – forgiven, cleansed, in His sight as if we had committed no sin; we were “made the righteousness of God in Him.” Broken law has consequences. That is the nature of law. God, farseeing that we should all be lawbreakers, foreordained His Son to be “*the propitiation for our sins.*” (1 John 4:10 – see also 1 John 2:2 and Rom3:25). He was “*the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world*” (Rev 13:8).

What God revealed to be the necessary atonement for sin, He Himself suffered. What He suffered He accepted. And His acceptance is our justification (as the Scripture, Rom 4:25, says, “...*He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification*”). What is good enough for God is good enough for us. Heb 9:14, “*how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*”

Secondly, Christ’s cross and resurrection solved our problem. For by this means He fully effected the destruction of the old union of humanity to Satan and replaced it by the new union to Himself.

Our problem is simply that in our unredeemed life our inner self, our spirit, was united to the self-loving spirit of Satan, the spirit of error.

As a consequence, our soul and body were tainted with sin and we followed the corrupted desire of soul and body. When our bodies stimulated impure appetites in us, we gratified them. When our souls stirred up pride or dislike of this or hate of that or love of that—we just followed them.

We were governed by a “mind set on the flesh”. And Rom 8:6 is clear, *“The mind set on the flesh is death.”*

### **Death Replaced With Life:**

But when Christ died, Rom 6:10 says that *“He died to sin once for all.”* That means that in His death, as our Representative, our last Adam, He became separated from the sin-spirit which had invaded the human spirit—just as anybody in death is separated from his spirit. And in His resurrection He was *“made alive in the Spirit.”* (1 Pet 3:18).

In other words, the Spirit of truth—Christ Himself—united Himself to that last Adam, and thus united Himself to all who will accept their place by faith as participators in His death and resurrection.

Here was the beginning of the new and final creation, when the usurping person was cut off from the possession he had deceitfully gained of the human spirit; when the true Owner, the living God, replaced him in all who receive Jesus Christ. Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life was birthed in us!

This is no Biblical theory. This is the most tremendous and **dynamic** event in human history!

Here is our title to eternal life – to permanent union with God!

Have we got it clear?

The consequence of broken law which we must inevitably suffer, stated very clearly again and again in the words of Jesus and the writings of the apostles, was borne by God Himself in the Person of His Son. If we ask, how can the blood of any man atone for the sin of all, the answer is that this was the blood of Deity made flesh.

The enslaved condition of humanity, through the indwelling spirit of self-centeredness, the spirit of error, with which every man is born, was ended at the cross!

Christ, as our representative, died to that enslavement—that sin-spirit; and again as our representative, was raised from the dead by *“the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead.”*

By this change of union from the occupier self-for-self spirit of self-centeredness to the occupier spirit of self-for-others Spirit of truth becomes an actual, down-to-earth fact in the personality and experience of every human being who, recognizing and admitting his need, receives Christ as Lord and Savior.

Your old spirit is replaced by your new Spirit!

You were formerly governed by soul and body corrupted by the indwelling spirit of error. Now, as a redeemed person, Christ—His Spirit with whom you are one—is master of soul and body.

Now you meet the demands of the bodily senses, the varying emotions of the soul stimulated by world, flesh or desire, with the affirmation and power of the indwelling Christ as Lord.

With Christ as Lord and our soul and spirit fully aligned, like a branch abiding in the Vine we receive His life and bear His fruit – evidencing it through our body (our hands, our feet, our voices, our attitudes) whereby we become the visible and audible manifestation of Jesus Christ.

This has been the Fathers ultimate intention from before the foundation of the earth that we as containers of Him, those in whom Christ has been birthed, those who are joined to Him as one spirit, we who are the body of Christ, will be able to say just as Jesus said, “he who has seen me has seen the Father.”

Rejoice and be the unique “you” God made you to be, released forever from the spirit of self-for-self and any attempt to be self governing, and live by the life and faith of Christ in you and allow His boundless, creative, loving energy to flow out of you.

### **Where To From Here?**

John 17:3 ... “*This is eternal life, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*”

Know Him – personally and intimately. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is all. **Know** Him, **receive** from Him and *then* let Him be seen in and through you. Then the river of life will flow out from your innermost being and touch others with His love, life and power.

2 Pet 1:2-4 ... “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the **true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*”

The degree to which you **know** Him (not just know *about* Him) will be evident in your expression of Him. You will only get to know Him by spending time in His presence. Talk to Him, listen to Him and received from Him – then He will be seen in you.

Jesus said He would come to you. Now, as a believer, He is **in** you, and you and He are **one**. So now ask the Holy Spirit to teach you Christ – so that you may **know Him, personally and intimately**.

John 14:16-20 ... “*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you**. After a little*

*while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; **because I live, you will live also.** In that day you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.***

John 16:13-15 ... *“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.** All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.”*

Also it would be valuable to read and meditate on Romans chapters 6, 7 and 8 as this would help seal the truths we have discussed – to understand God's intent and purpose for us His children, those who share His divine nature and are containers of Him.

May Christ truly be seen in you.

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**Acknowledgement:** Much of the contents of this paper are drawn from the writings of Norman Grubb or insights gleaned from his writing.