

G R A C E S O U N D O F

... it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace ... Hebrews 13:9

Issue 135 March 2007

In This Issue		Studies in Galatians—Part Four	
		John G. Reisinger	
Studies in Galatians—Part Four	1	<p>We have emphasized that Paul’s main thrust in Galatians is to defend the legitimacy of both his apostleship and the gospel message of grace that he preached. In 1:1, he stresses the truth that he is an authentic apostle. In Galatians 1:11 and 12, Paul stresses that his message, like his apostleship, came directly from God and not from man. He repeats his claim that the gospel he preached does not have its source or authority in man, but is a direct and personal revelation by Christ himself to Paul. In Romans 1:16-17, Paul also speaks of the gospel as a “revelation from God,” but in Galatians, his point is that Christ revealed it to him individually. It is true that the gospel is a revelation from</p>	<p>God to all men, but it is also true that God effectually reveals it to individuals. In Paul’s case, it even goes past that. Jesus was Paul’s personal teacher and he revealed the doctrines of the gospel to Paul. The divine origin of the gospel becomes clear upon a moment’s reflection: what human (including Paul) would ever dream up a scheme of grace where a judge puts his son to death in order to set free and adopt into his family one of the worst of criminals? It is little wonder that some people think we are mad when we proclaim sovereign grace. Only a mad man would try to make us believe such a gospel!</p>
The Nature of Man—Part III	1		
Studies on the Resurrection of Lazarus—Part Five	3		
Our Sufficiency	5		
Letters	19		

Reisinger—Cont. on page 2

The Nature of Man—Part III

The Constitution of Man and Sanctification

David Painter

In this third part, we will examine the two prevailing views of man: as a trichotomy and as a dichotomy. In the process, we will look at salient Scripture passages and seek to apply them practically to our lives.

In Part I, we stated the following:

Whatever man is he is a unit. Each person is one complete person before God. Man is a soul that has a body and man as a soul is incomplete without a body. Whatever man is, he becomes incomplete at death. This incomplete state at death is to be rectified in the resurrection of both the just and the

unjust. (Rom.8:9-11, 23; 1 Cor.15:42, 48-49; Acts 24:15)

What is man? What makes up a person? What are the constituent elements of man? What characterizes human nature? What is the scriptural unity of man said to be?

Historically, most of the Christian church has held that man is a dichotomy (a realistic dualism), while many evangelical Christians today are trichotomists. The real issue for us is the teaching of Scripture and the significance to us as disciples of Christ.

The Error of Trichotomy and Implications of the Doctrine

Trichotomy

Robert L Reymond, in his book, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, writes,

The trichotomist must admit, along with the dichotomist and in agreement with Berkouwer, that there is a certain “imprecision” at times in the Bible’s use of relevant terminology. One has only to consider the several New Testament quotations of

Painter—Cont. on page 8

Reisinger—Cont. from page 1

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11, 12 NIV)

John Stott has stated the essence of the text very well.

Paul's claim, then, is this. His gospel, which was being called into question by the Judaizers and deserted by the Galatians, was neither an invention (as if his own brain had fabricated it), nor a tradition (as if the church had handed it down to him) but a revelation (for God had made it known to him). As John Brown puts it, "Jesus Christ took him under his own immediate tuition." This is why Paul dared to call the gospel "my gospel" (*cf.* Rom. 16:25). It was not "his" because he made it up but because it had been uniquely revealed to him. The magnitude of his claim is remarkable. He is affirming that his message is not his message but God's message, that his gospel is not his gospel but God's gospel, that his words are not his words but God's words.¹

From 1:13 through the end of chapter 2, Paul answers the false accusation of the Judaizers in three stages. First, in 1:13-24, he argues that he had learned and preached the gospel of sovereign grace long before he had ever met any of the Jerusalem apostles. His immediate action after his conversion was to proclaim Jesus as messiah in the synagogues in Damascus (Acts 9:19b-22). From Damascus, he went into Arabia for an unspecified amount of time, and then he returned to Damascus. Three years passed between his return to Damascus and his first meeting with any of the apostles in Jerusalem, and then he met only Peter and James. After that meeting, Paul spent fourteen years traveling and preaching the gospel before returning to Jerusalem to meet

the other apostles. Second, when he finally did meet the other apostles, they sat down in a conference and fellowshiped as equal apostles. The Jerusalem apostles fully accepted Paul and the gospel he was preaching (2:1-10). Third, he, Paul, had publicly rebuked Peter, one of the most famous of the Jerusalem apostles, for actions that denied the very doctrine of grace that Paul preached (Gal. 2:11-14).

The first stage of his argument offers three proofs that his gospel and apostleship came neither from men nor through any agency of man: both his authority and message came directly from the risen Christ and not from the other apostles. Paul uses his own personal experience to prove his point. In 1:13 and 14, he reminds the Galatians of how deeply he hated Christ and Christians and how he was wholeheartedly committed to destroying Christ's church. In verses 15 and 16, Paul reminds them of the circumstances of his conversion on the road to Damascus, and then in verses 17-24, the apostle describes his behavior immediately after his conversion. Let us notice how each element helps establish Paul's primary point in this section. How does, (1) what he was like before he was converted, (2) how he got converted, and (3) what he did immediately after his conversion prove he was called and taught personally by the risen Lord?

First, Paul's pre-conversion life:

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. (Gal 1:13, 14 NIV)

Paul described his life before his conversion as that of a zealot filled with hatred and bent on nothing less

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1 John Stott, *Only One Way: The Message of Galatians*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1968), 30.

When Jesus Loves You

Studies on the Resurrection of Lazarus—Part 5

Philip W. McMillan, M.D.

JOHN 11:5, 6

Jesus had just received the message from Mary and Martha that Lazarus was sick. It read: “Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.” Our hearts grow very anxious when we hear that one of our loved ones or perhaps a very dear friend is gravely ill. We have seen the boxes in the funeral chapels, or at the front of churches, in which the ashes of life’s fire are carried out to never again be seen in time. For a time we help to carry others to the bone yards and then we fail and someone carries us there. He calls and we answer His summons, See Job 14:15.

In verse 5 of our text we read this: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” What a wonderful thing it is when the love of Christ envelopes the whole house. Acts 16:34 tells us that the entire household of the Philippian jailer rejoiced and believed in God. I believe also that when Cornelius sent for Peter and the gospel was preached, that his whole household believed. How I wish mine did. In the little household of three in Bethany, the sisters and Lazarus all believed and Jesus loved them.

Does Christ love you? Have you believed in Him? Are you enveloped by His great love so you can pray for your household?

We can see that being loved of Christ does not mean that we are spared from all the miseries that sin brought into the world. As mere human beings, the sentence of death hangs over our flesh as surely as it ever did over Adam. God may translate an Enoch or an Elijah, but it is still “appointed unto man to die

once;” Hebrews 9:27. ‘No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to all men,’ 1 Corinthians 10:13. Job will have his boils and Hezekiah will be near death and Lazarus will be sick, for we are as the flower of the grass, here today and cast into the oven tomorrow, Matthew 6:30. Spurgeon said “the covenant of grace is not a charter of exemption from consumption or rheumatism or asthma.”

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body,” Romans 8:22, 23.

“We who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life,” 2 Corinthians 5:4.

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:24, 25.

Oh to have freedom from all effect of sin!

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death, and then is brought to pass the saying: Death is swallowed up in victory,” 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54.

Then and only then will we groan no more.

For the Christian, these pains are often the scourging and chastening of

God, but at other times they demonstrate the patience of the saints of God and are even used sometimes of the Spirit to awaken some soul. From my seat in the stadium, it seems that my beloved preacher friends have fought more beasts at Ephesus than any other group. Their sorrows seem to temper their rewards lest they be proud. They seem to often be under a peculiar discipline, and perhaps the greatest wonder is that such as we are, we are still alive.

In times of great trial and suffering we tend to think that God has forgotten us. We cry out to God and our prayers seem to come back to us as a hollow echo, as if the Occupant of the Holy Place has left. How faith can stagger when trouble comes!

But we forget that the Lord Jesus knows all about us. Yes, we must send to Him, but we need to remember, He says to us: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.” Jeremiah 31:3, and this: “Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you,” Isaiah 46:4.

Will we tremble in the valley of the shadow of death? Why fear evil when He is with us? “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose,” Romans 8:28. Perhaps when our tears are dried, the rest and peace of Canaan’s land is sweeter?

In verse six we read this startling statement about Christ who loved Lazarus: “So, when He heard that he

Reisinger—Cont. from page 2

than destroying Christ's church. His zeal caused him to advance in Judaism. However, the Judaism that rejects Christ as Messiah turns into a religion that hates Christ, his people, and the gospel they preach. Paul intensely persecuted God's people and tried to destroy them. Luke, in Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-16; and 26:9-18 records Paul's conversion and his attitude and actions before he became a Christian. He was a zealot. He was similar to other religious crusaders and terrorists throughout history. John Stott refers to Paul's zeal as fanatical on two fronts:

Here the apostle describes his pre-conversion state "in Judaism," that is, when I was a practicing Jew. What he had been like in those days was well known. "You have heard of my former life," he says, for he had told them. He mentions two aspects of his unregenerate days, his persecution of the church, which he now knew to be "the church of God," (verse 13), and his enthusiasm for the tradition of his fathers (verse 14). In both cases he was fanatical.²

These two things, love of tradition for its own sake, and hatred of any who seek to change it, no matter how justified, often go together. We believe in some traditions, but we dare not revere them for their own sake. Nor do we want to rationalize wrong behavior on the grounds of defending or protecting tradition. Luke records Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1, 2 and shows how Paul's attitude worked itself out in his actual behavior.

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest, and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2 NIV)

Later, in Acts 26, Luke records Paul's own testimony and description of what kind of a person he was before being converted.

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put any of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them." (Acts 26:9-11 NIV)

What is Paul's point? Why does he detail how committed he was in his wicked treatment of Christians? A zealot may seem irrational to others, but he or she is convinced that his or her attitude is reasonable and just. You cannot reason with a zealot, because he or she does not view your position as reasonable. The facts and logic you present mean nothing to a true zealot. A confrontation between you and a zealot is a clash of two opposing worldviews. Only a miracle can change a zealot. Paul is saying that his worldview produced such bigotry and hatred of Christ that nothing but a personal encounter with the risen Lord could have convinced him to become a Christian. No amount of arguments and proofs could have overcome this zealot's mind and heart.

The Greek word translated as *Judaism* occurs only twice in all of the Scriptures: in Galatians 1:13, 14. The KJV translates the word as *the Jew's religion*. Up until our Lord came, Judaism was God's only ordained true religion. When Christ came as the messiah promised all the way through the Old Testament Scriptures, he fulfilled the promises made to the Jewish fathers, and Judaism ceased to be God's religion. It became "the Jew's

religion." It was now only an empty shell, devoid of any spiritual reality. It was a spiritual corpse – a religion of death.

In verses 15 and 16, Paul briefly describes his conversion. Nothing less than a miraculous revelation that Christ indeed was raised from the dead could have convinced him. The risen living Savior literally appeared to him and talked to him. As I said earlier, zealots do not respond to even the most convincing evidence or iron-clad arguments. All you can do with a zealot is to knock him or her on the head. That is exactly what God did. He knocked Saul on the head – hard.

But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man . . . (Gal. 1:15, 16 NIV)

Paul's testimony presents a striking contrast to some testimonies we hear today. First, Paul attributes everything that happened that day on the Damascus road to God's grace and power. Paul was determined to do all he could to destroy the church. He eagerly sought authority to beat, bind, and drag off to prison every Christian he found in the synagogues. However, even though Paul was filled with hate, God's heart was filled with purposes of sovereign grace toward Paul. God had already ordained that the world's greatest Christ-hater would become the world's greatest Christ-lover. The persecutor would become an apostle.

Today, people sometimes testify, "I am glad when I was given the gospel that I took advantage of God's wonderful offer and gave God a chance. I have never been sorry for that decision I made." No, no, there is not a word in Paul's testimony about what he did. It was "when God" did in time that which he had decided in eternity

² Ibid., 31.

OUR SUFFICIENCY

Mike McInnis

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. 2 Corinthians 3:5

Paul penned these words while in the midst of a discussion about the veracity and relevancy of the ministry which had been given to him by God. Paul was not a gifted orator by his own admission (see II Cor. 10:10; 11:6; I Cor. 2:1-4) and did not rely upon his own skill and cunning in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ either among those that believed his message or those that did not. He begins this chapter by asking the question, *“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?”* (2 Cor. 3:1) In essence he is saying that he neither sought to please men in his ministry nor did he seek out the commendation of men to render it approved. How different that mindset is from the majority of those who call themselves preachers in our day. In contrast to the prevailing mindset of today, Paul said, *“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”* (2 Cor. 10:12)

The vast multitude of religious societies and organizations (denominations) exist as mutual admiration societies where a class of men (usually called the clergy) can display their learning, psychological skill, and oratorical gifts, while enjoying the approval (and usually the money) of men. The standard upon which their

approval is based is generally in how much formal education they have or which seminary they attend coupled with their ability to hold an audience in rapt attention or produce ever increasing numbers of new members. Confessions of faith are drafted by which the orthodoxy of each one can be established and a comfort zone is created which defines the limits one is not to transgress and the subjects one is not to discuss. Acceptable standards of practice and certain “orders” of worship are fashioned to further homogenize and regiment these groups so that one can feel comfortable among a people who all speak the company line and know what to expect from one another. Religion is a comfortable place for men to dwell. Paul relied on none of this nor did he seek to establish his ministry, in any way, based upon what men thought or considered proper. *“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”* (2 Cor 10:18)

It has been my observation over the years that organized religion usually begins with good intentions, as men seek to establish “safe havens” in this world of sin and sorrow where they can relax and perpetuate a model which they believe to be scriptural and able to be passed from one generation to the other. It is amazing that there is really very little specific instruction in the New Testament concerning how churches are to conduct themselves nor does it appear that such uniformity of action is ever made an issue of great importance from one location to another. However most of the multitude of groups which have arisen over time, each claiming to be “the” new testament church, all (in

one way or another) exist primarily to perpetuate their existence as an assembly by establishing an orthodoxy of practice and approved conduct in their midst. We are quite certain that the scripture does teach us how the church on earth is to operate but that teaching is more by way of establishing a principle than a dogma. Those who gather in the name of Christ in the earth are to do so according to the rule of being “new creatures” in Christ rather than because they conform to a certain orthodoxy. Paul describes those churches which he established in this way, *“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.”* (2 Cor 3:3)

In saying this Paul did not mean that whatever men feel like doing in the flesh is okay. Rather the contrary is true. Those who accuse us of being “antinomians” seem to have difficulty in comprehending the fact that the Spirit of God alone can teach men what the scripture means or cause them to walk in conformity with it. No amount of ‘proper’ instruction or rote learning of scripture can prepare the heart of a man to walk in spiritual obedience. Hence Paul says, God *“hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”* (2 Cor 3:6)

If something is sufficient then nothing else is required. If one has a sufficiency then they are content and need nothing else to be satisfied. The Greek word that is translated suffi-

Reisinger—Cont. from page 4

to do – bring Saul of Tarsus, the blaspheming zealot, to a saving knowledge of sovereign grace – to bring a rebel to bow to Christ as Lord.³

For Paul, there is no “when I got ready,” but “when it pleased God!” It was not “that day I decided,” but “that time in eternity that God set me apart by sovereign electing grace.” It was not, “I made a decision,” but, “God revealed his Son in me.” Salvation does not lie at the end of a “you do your part and God does his part” proposition. Biblical conversion is a sovereign, personal, powerful revelation of Jesus Christ as Lord to an individual’s mind, heart, and will. Notice the following: (1) Paul’s conversion did not take place “When I decided to accept,” but “when it pleased God.” (2) It was not when Paul decided to “open my heart and let Jesus come in,” but when (a) God “called me [effectually, or regenerated me] by his grace,” and (b) “revealed his Son in me.” A new heart does not result from a dead sinner’s willingness to be made alive, but is the direct result of a divine revelation of the Holy Spirit’s power. (3) Paul did not need a personal worker or counselor to convince him that he had been converted. He did not have to “confer with flesh and blood” to be assured that “Jesus had indeed come into his heart.” When the Lord of glory takes up his abode in a poor sinner’s heart, that sinner knows something amazing has happened. If a sinner must be badgered and argued into believing that Christ has indeed come into his or her heart, would we not be justified in asking if it was worthwhile to have such an experience?

There was nothing ambiguous about the value of Paul’s experience

³ I would urge everyone to read my booklet on the doctrine of election, *Chosen In Eternity*, available from New Covenant Media, 5317 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21703-6938.

that day! When God struck him down and said, “Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?” Saul replied, “Who are you Lord?” He knew it was some Lord, but not which one. Can you imagine Paul’s amazement when the voice said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”? These words must have shocked Paul deeply. Paul never forgot those words. There was a never a time in Paul’s life that he forgot that sovereign grace alone had saved him. He learned at conversion that Jesus is Lord. One of the reasons that Christianity is often shallow today is that there is little realization of the absolute lordship of Christ. As you listen to people who believe in free will give their testimony, you get the distinct impression that *these people did God a favor by allowing him to save them*. Not so the conversions in the Bible. Some years ago, one seminary professor claimed that preaching the lordship of Christ in evangelism was another gospel. He insisted that you receive Christ as savior in conversion and then later receive him as lord. To insist that Christ must be received as lord at conversion was, to him, another gospel!

We should mention two more points before moving on. Concerning the doctrine of sovereign election, some people say we should, (1) teach it to mature Christians only, and (2) never mention it at all when speaking to lost people. Paul’s conversion, and his testimony about it, proves how biblically unfounded that statement is. The very first truth that Paul learned as a newborn babe in Christ was *election*. Ananias’ words to Paul, and Paul’s experience, contradict both these objections.

“Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.’ (Acts 22:14 NIV)

Notice that Paul was chosen to know God’s will and to hear God’s words.

It was not that he heard, understood, and decided to believe, but that he was *chosen to believe*. This is Paul’s consistent testimony about God’s grace. Not only does he always attribute his conversion to God’s sovereign election, he also attributes every other conversion to the same source. Notice in the following text from Acts that he refers back to that Damascus road experience and then boldly states that all who are appointed (or chosen) to be saved believed the gospel.

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. (Acts 13:47-48 NIV)

The second thing to note is that when Paul recounts his conversion experience, he is neither lecturing at a seminary nor talking to mature Christians. *He is giving his testimony to lost sinners who were contradicting the gospel of grace he preached in Antioch*. Paul is neither ashamed nor afraid to preach sovereign electing grace to lost people. I am not suggesting that we stress election every time we preach. I am saying that there are some people who have to be hit on the head with sovereignty! When I was in university, years ago, an arrogant classmate mocked my faith and said, “Give me one good reason why you believe the Bible is the Word of God.” I replied, “Because God in his sovereign mercy and power opened my heart and gave me faith to believe it. Apparently, he has not done the same thing for you. I pity you and will pray that God will show mercy to you and give you the same ability to believe.” I smiled and walked away.

Paul closes this account of his conversion with this statement, “*I did not*

McMillan—Cont. from page 3

was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.”

When I was in medical practice and got an emergency call, I dropped what I was doing and went immediately. Yet when Jesus heard that Lazarus was gravely ill, He remained where He was for two full days. Why? What does this teach us about our Lord and our prayers?

1] His times are not our times. We try our best to look at life and our humanity in the light of eternity, but the only events that have ever affected us have occurred here in our little space capsule called time. We have no reference point to make us understand eternity.

Time is a created thing and so when Jesus tarried two days, that had a relation to Himself and to Lazarus as men, but none to the ‘Eternal One.’ All the works that Jesus did on earth “were finished from the foundation of the world,” Hebrews 4:3. Though His feet walked upon our earth, yet “He calls those things which do not exist as though they did,” Romans 4:17-28.

Oh withering creature, His times are not your times.

2] His purposes are not our purposes. Try as we will to pray in faith, our prayers are shot through with selfish motives. I am not condemning them, but Mary and Martha had no idea that Lazarus must die for the glory of God. When they sent to Jesus, the whole desire of their heart was for Him to come at once so their brother wouldn’t die. Both sisters said: “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

We do our best I hope, but how can we know the purpose of the One who walks upon the wings of the storm and speaks and the winds and the waves obey His voice?

In our prayers for deliverance in earth’s time we should always re-

member that “not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living,” Romans 14:7-9.

In life and in death, when we send in Jesus’ name, the glory of God and the fulfilling of His purpose should be preeminent in our minds. Self must not obscure God’s purpose in us.

3] God is not our servant, we are His. Much of what I see and hear on the media today presents God as a lackey, lounging outside of his “master’s” door just waiting to be sent on some selfish errand.

God is in the business of glorifying Himself and exalting His Beloved Son. While God is good to all His creatures, His business in this world is not pandering to man’s wishes. He is interested in the supply of needs, but not in granting wishes.

When we send a request to heaven, we send it in the name of Jesus and so we send to God in Him. But we need to think soberly as to what it means to request of God in the name of Jesus. That name describes the One who is the radiance of God’s glory, the exact representation of God’s person,’ Hebrews 1:3. God bestowed upon the God-Man ‘a name above every name,’ it describes the Presence before which all will bow and confess those who are in heaven, on earth and under the earth. Tongues will declare His lordship to the glory of his Father.’ Philipians 2:9-11.

No prayer should be uttered which is out of harmony with the family likeness of that great name. If we held our requests up to the light of that glory, we would see many a “spoiled egg” among them. The self-centered who send to Jesus never can bow before that name. God help us. We are

God’s servants!

4] Prayer does not change God’s decrees and purpose. In James 1:17 the apostle establishes a very important point which does concern our requests to God: “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.”

There is a popular saying: “Prayer changes things.” E.M. Bounds said that prayer changes what heaven will do. That would be saying that there was a good gift to be given, but prayer caused God to send down from heaven a different gift.

The acts of man, including prayer and evil deeds, cannot change God. Psalm 119:89 alone proves that beyond all doubt: “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” It is a solid Scriptural principle that the word of God is the same as a decree of God and the word settled means unshifting, stable, motionless.

But Malachi makes a direct statement to support our contention that prayer does not change God or His decrees. “For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed,” Chapter 3:6.

In Isaiah 65:24 we read: “It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.” If the answer precedes the call and the hearing is before the speech is finished, it is so plain that the decree of God is a fixed decree, and yet the prayer or call is a part of that decree. We send to Jesus because it was the will of God that we send. Prayer changes us, by giving us trust, hope and confidence in the God we call out to.

God will send good and perfect gifts to us in answer to our prayers, because He works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure in our

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Deuteronomy 6:5, for example to see this. Where Luke 10:27 reads that we should love God with all our heart (καρδία, *kardia*) and soul (ψυχή, *psyche*) and strength (ισχύς, *ischys*) and mind (διανοία, *dianoia*), Matthew 22:37 reads that we should love God with all our heart and soul and mind, omitting strength, while Mark reports in 12:30 that we should love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength (reversing the order of the two Lukan words), and in 12:33 that we should love God with all our heart and understanding (συνεσείας, *syneseos*) and strength, using another word for ‘mind’ and omitting “soul” altogether. In all, five different words are employed without even mentioning the body. Surely no one would insist, on the basis of these series of words connected by “and,” that each of these words refers to an immaterial, ontologically distinct entity, and that therefore Luke was a quintchotomist, Matthew a quadchotomist, and Mark was a sexchotomist. With Berkouwer, we must all admit that these parallel admonitions are simply saying that we are to love God with our entire or total being. Similarly I would urge that the three passages that trichotomists regularly advance in support of trichotomy do not really draw an ontological distinction between “soul” and “spirit” ...¹

The two primary passages trichotomists use to defend their position are 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12. We will look at these two verses to see if they are sufficient to establish this doctrine.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely (wholly) [ἡλοτελεισ, holoteleis], and may your whole [ἡολοκληρον, holokleron] spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at (or in) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word “ἡολοκληρον, ον”

1 Robert L. Raymond, *A New Systematic Theology of The Christian Faith*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1998), 420.

[*holokleron on*] means *sound, whole, complete* (from the Greek New Testament Dictionary). The United Bible Society’s Greek Dictionary defines “ἡολοτελής, ἔ” as *wholly, in every part*. The first ἡολοτελεῖς, *wholly or completely* is a masculine, plural adjective in the accusative case (the noun it modifies is the direct object of the verb, and it, too is masculine and plural). The second pronoun of this verse is “your” as in “your whole” and it is the subject of the phrase and means *a complete you, a whole person*. These two words (your whole) in this second clause emphasizes that the subject is both an individual Christian, all Christians, in their *entirety of person*. Is this not what Jesus meant when He said, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*” (Luke 10:27)?

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. NASB (The NKJV is substantially the same.)

Historically, trichotomists and dichotomists have handled this Hebrews passage differently. Dr. Reymond summarizes this way:

Here the trichotomist insists, since soul can be “divided” from the spirit, is evidence that they are two distinct ontological entities. But this is to ignore the fact that “soul” and “spirit” are both genitives governed by the participle “dividing.” The verse is saying that the Word of God “divides” the soul, *even* the spirit. But it does not say that the Word of God divides *between* soul and spirit (that would require some such word as μετὰ, or

metaxu) or divides the soul *from* the spirit. The verse no more intends this than it intends, when it goes on to say that the Word is the judge of *thoughts* and of *intents* of heart (again, two genitives governed by the noun “judge”), that thoughts and intents are ontologically distinct things. Clearly, intents are simply one kind of thought. What the verse is actually saying is that the Word of God is able to penetrate into the deepest recesses of a man’s spirit and judge his very thoughts, even the secret intentions of his heart.

While these verses offer no support to the trichotomist view, this erroneous view of man’s constituent make-up has been the base for the espousal of other erroneous views both in Christology (Apollinarianism) and in the area of sanctification (the view that it is the Christian’s spirit which is regenerated, his soul remaining unregenerate, and that it is this condition which accounts for the struggle within him to live either righteously or unrighteously).²

Translators do not help the situation with Hebrews 4:12 by sometimes adding additional prepositions before each noun (*of* spirit, *of* soul, *of* joint, *of* marrow) as does the ESV. The repetition of the prepositions is strictly a translator’s choice; the grammar of the Greek text does not require it. The preferred grammar is a single preposition per phrase, governing both nouns (*of* soul and spirit, *of* both joints and marrow). This allows the prepositional phrases to be read as intended, as a single unit.

John Murray points out that the author of Hebrews mentions obvious body parts “in order to show that no aspect of our being is impervious to the penetrating scrutiny of the Word of God.”³ We understand this to be the Word of God as applied by God the Holy Spirit. The fact that something

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2 Ibid., 421ff.

3 John Murray, *Collected Writings, Systematic Theology*, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 2:30.

McMillin—Cont. from page 7
praying.

5] Though death lays cold hands on us in time, His grip will not slip in eternity. This is vividly demonstrated in Christ's two day delay in answering the plea of Mary and Martha.

'It is appointed to us once to die and after that the judgment,' Hebrews 9:27, but though death holds the body with an iron grasp until the 'clocks all stop never to go again,' see Revelation 10:6, his hold will not lose its strength then. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied. "But now Christ has risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who sleep," 1 Corinthians 15:19, 2.

When the Book of Life is opened and the names are called, a great company will come forth, more than the stars in the skies for number, more than the sands on the seashore. "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25, 26.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed," 1 Corinthians 15:51,52.

Jesus remained where He was for two days, for we needed to know that we 'need not be in bondage to the fear of death', Hebrews 2:15.

For the child of God, both the sting of death and the power of it were vanquished by our Lord.

Physicians rush to the bedside to prevent death if they can. Jesus waits two days to go, for He has the keys of Hades and of death upon His waist. See Revelation 1:18. Praise God for His grace. Ω

McInnis—Cont. from page 5

cient in the verse before us is the same word John the Baptist used to describe his unworthiness to unloose the sandals of the LORD and the same word used by the centurion when he said he was unworthy for Christ to enter his home (see Mat 3:11, Luke 7:6). Apart from the sufficiency (or worthiness) which is supplied by Christ alone we have none.

He is our SUFFICIENCY in the court of heaven. "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*" (Rom 5:9-10)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in the court of our accusers. "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*" (Rom 8:33-34)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in the court of man's opinion. "*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*" (Rom 8:36-37)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in any ministry to which we are called. "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*" (2Cor 4:7)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in faith. "*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.*" (Gal 2:20)

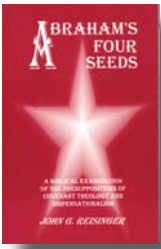
He is our SUFFICIENCY in sanctification. "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" (1Co 1:30)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in assurance. "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2Tim 1:12)

He is our SUFFICIENCY in life and death. "*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*" (Rom 14:7-8) Ω

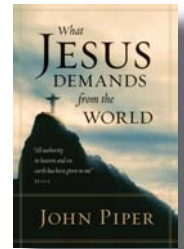
*We are never nearer Christ than when we
find ourselves lost in a holy amazement
at his unspeakable love.*

John Owen

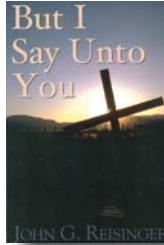


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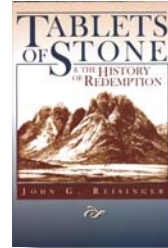


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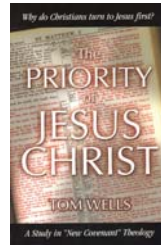
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is *one* (a single, indivisible entity) is what makes it something that only God can divide by means of His written and declared word.

The context of Hebrews 4:12 affirms the fact that God knows what is humanly unknowable. The immediate context of 4:12 is verses 11-13, with 4:1-13 being a broader and 3:1-5:9 being the fullest context of the subject.⁴ Jesus is the first and last real mediator between God and man, the final complete speaking of God to man in His kingly and high priestly function for those who embrace Him in mind, heart, and action. It is Jesus Christ who gives rest and has secured a relationship with the all-knowing Judge and God of His people that no one else, and nothing else, has ever or could ever give. Jesus is a unique kingly high priest because he is the God-Man as spoken of in chapter two of Hebrews.

Wonder of all wonders, God came in the flesh. Because Jesus is God come in the flesh, He understands the difficulties of living in this sin-cursed world. He knows we are subject to giving in to the sinful doubts and fears that characterized those who did not have, or do not have, a confident saving faith in Him. Having explained this, the author of Hebrews, in 4:12-13, sets God before us as the all-knowing and intimate discernor of everything concerning people, particularly His people. He knows who the hypocrites are; He knows the most searching and deep thoughts of all people and of each of His covenant children. God alone, the God-Man, even our Lord Jesus Christ, discerns and knows of us what is indiscernible and unknowable by mere human beings, often even ourselves.

We can relate to human experience and we can be compassionate,

⁴ Chapter 3 through 4:13 is one paragraph in the Greek.

we can sympathize, we can empathize to some extent, but we cannot really know the heart of others. Because Christ is God come in the flesh, because He experienced all those temptations and difficulties common to man, yea, and more than any other man ever could or did, He is a high priest and mediator like no other could be. He understands those He represents and intercedes for them better than they could do themselves.

The broader context of chapters 3 and 4, as well as the narrower of 4:12-13, demonstrate that an authentic confession of Christ, of faith in Him, of being in the covenant He secured, is quite different in the New Covenant than in the Old. While the Old Covenant provides examples of God seeing beyond mere physical aspects, it could only point to the New Covenant in Christ where God assures that each member is authentic by an internal reality. Entrance into the Kingdom is by the application of the blessings of the New Covenant; it is by union with Christ, which is first observed by those who are acted upon in regeneration and have therefore repented and believed. No one can pretend to be a recipient and participant: God knows all hypocrites (Heb.4:12-13). The Holy Scriptures as the word of God maintain the living uniqueness that characterized them when originally given. It is not the mere words of men, but of the living God who uses what He has inscripturated to penetrate the innermost being of man. There is no possibility of fooling the all-knowing God: *all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

Christ does for His people that which honors and glorifies the Father; the Holy Spirit honors and glorifies Christ in His people. This concept is essential to a right understanding not only of sanctification, but also of the whole of redemptive salvation. Let me just mention a few of the many places

in the New Testament that teach this concept. First, we can see it in Jesus' statement to the Father in John 17:6 – He says: *“I have manifested Your name to the people that You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept (and do keep) Your word.”*⁵ (With this, see particularly verse 26 of the same chapter, also the 15th chapter of John, and Ephesians 2:4-5.)

Again, speaking of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, Jesus says: *“He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.”*⁶ The Holy Spirit acts as the agent of Christ to apply all the blessings He secured for His people in the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit is given in the measure desired by the Son and thus our good works are really those of the Son – *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. In Him you also are being built together as a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”* (Eph.2:10, 22). Thus, God receives the glory when we do “good” works. Our new life in Christ is essentially bound up in the love of God by the Spirit of God. A concentrated life of faith is one characterized by a holy and godly life that is possible only because of the continued work of the Holy Spirit in and upon us. It is a life focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.⁷

The Holy Spirit is to our souls what breath is to our bodies. In 1 John 4:9, 10, 13 we read, *“In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, in order that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have*

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⁵ An adapted translation.

⁶ An adapted translation.

⁷ This is really what perseverance is.

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loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” Those who live for Christ do so by the continued work of the Spirit who is also the seal and guarantee of our salvation (Eph.1:13-14). In this way, we are partakers of the divine nature and the Triune God is glorified (See 2 Cor. 5:14, 17). The Holy Spirit must maintain the regenerating work He began in us; He does this in His continued application of the blessings of the New Covenant in Christ. This is the love of God that will not let us go; it is the everlasting love we find from the beginning to the end of redemption.

The preserving reality of the Holy Spirit in each believer and in each believer’s life keeps him or her in the state of grace. The moral image of God is restored in regeneration and the work begun by the Holy Spirit is carried on and maintained by Him (See Titus 3:4-7; 1 Thess. 5:19-24; Eph. 4:21-24). This preserving work prevents us from falling as Adam and Eve did. This is what Peter meant when he said: “[B]y which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (2 Peter 1:4). What “divine nature” means then, is that our nature is changed by God in the new birth (regeneration) and it continues to be changed throughout our earthly life. The context of the phrase is that of faith, godly living, of struggle and conflict, knowledge of doctrine, and the ongoing work of the Spirit of God in us. It is really “me” who is changed by God and it is “me” then living a changed life by the ongoing gracious work of God. The desires “I” now have are different than “I” had before and are now in conflict with the desires that once dominated

my life and are common to the rest of the world.

The truth taught in 2 Peter 1:4 has two aspects to it. One is the entrance and the other is the escape. We enter by what Jesus said was the new birth and Peter here calls the divine nature which is spelled out in verses 3 and 11. We escape by what verses 4-10 posit, which is progressive sanctification. The reality of the initial change in us is the change in what we love, desire, choose, and then how we conduct ourselves. Apart from this reality, we can have no assurance that we are saved at all.⁸

The term “*divine nature*” in 2 Peter 1:4 is one of many theological metaphors of salvation. Salvation models such as new birth, justification, sanctification, reconciliation, resurrection, and glorification are theological models of salvation. All the salvation terms we find in Scripture are inter-related. All have meaning themselves, but must be understood in the larger context of salvation in Christ.⁹

Dichotomy

In the first part, I said that whatever man is, he is a unit. Each person is one complete person before God.

⁸ Charles Hodge in his commentary on 1st & 2nd Corinthians concludes from 2 Corinthians 7:1, “If God’s agency in sanctification does not arouse and direct ours; if it does not create the desire for holiness, and strenuous efforts to attain it, we may be sure that we are not its subjects.” From, A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians, (The Banner of Truth Trust), 550.

⁹ Metaphorical terms are abundant and regeneration is spoken of as the new birth, being begotten of God, and having the seed of God in us (John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). Another way of expressing the same truth is to speak of “having Christ” John 5:12, and of receiving Christ as in John 1:12. From G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 663 ff.

Man is a soul that has a body and man as a soul is incomplete without a body. Every living person becomes incomplete at death. This incomplete state at death is to be rectified in the resurrection of both the just and the unjust (Rom.8:9-11, 23; 1 Cor.15:42, 48-49; Acts 24:15). Scripture does not address how the body and soul are joined together, and how they act upon one another. The writers of Scripture simply assume this, and by observation, we know it too. We do not know why God made our soul to be joined to a body, when His is not, and since He made angels without bodies, we know that He may create sentient beings either with or without bodies. What we do know, however, is that man is a created spirit in vital union with a physical body. We also know that God the Holy Spirit acts in and upon us through our soul – our spirit.

We have seen from Genesis 2:7 that man first was a body, and then, through a special act of God, became a living soul or person. We see this also from passages in the New Testament such as James 2:26, “*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*” Note that in the separation of the body and spirit only the body is said to be dead. In Ecclesiastes 12:7, the Seeker identifies two constituent parts when he says “*and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*” Our Lord seems to identify the same two aspects of man when He says “*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matthew 10:28). In Philippians 1:23-24, Paul makes the distinction between the body and soul clear while assuming that there are only these two things that constitute man – “*I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ,*

Reisinger—Cont. from page 6

consult any man” (verse 16). Someone has said, “There were no personal workers there to give Paul assurance that he was converted.” Something is terribly wrong when evangelistic meetings need highly emotional appeals to get people saved (meaning to come up to the altar), and then need trained workers to give those people assurance that they now are Christians.

In Galatians 1:17-24, Paul introduces his post-conversion experiences as the third proof that he was called and taught by Christ personally and not by the other apostles. His pre-conversion days and the circumstances of his conversion prove that he had seen and spoken to the risen Lord. He now shows that it was years after his conversion before he met any of the other apostles. God had already established and accredited Paul’s ministry long before Paul met the other apostles. It was not possible that they either taught him or gave him authority.

[N]or did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles – only James, the Lord’s brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy” And they praised God because of me. (Gal. 1:17-24 NIV)

Almost immediately upon conversion, Paul went into Arabia. Someone has said, “Paul went into Arabia with a warped view of the Old Testament

Scriptures and the Holy Spirit as a personal teacher. He came back with Romans, Ephesians and Galatians in his heart.” Part of this was a new understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures that was radically different prior to his sojourns in Arabia. And part was by direct revelation by the Holy Spirit. Three years after his return to Damascus from Arabia, Paul went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter. He stayed with him for fifteen days, preaching among the disciples and refuting the Greek-speaking Jews. Fifteen days with Peter did not provide enough time to learn all the theology that Paul had obviously already grasped. He must have learned it in Damascus and Arabia. The only other apostle that Paul met on that visit to Jerusalem was James, and that seems to have been a one-time meeting. Paul then went to Syria and Cilicia, and said he was personally unknown to the churches in Judea except by reputation. John Piper explains how this statement proves that Paul did not receive some kind of commissioning from the Jerusalem church.

Even more, in verse 22 Paul says that the churches in Judea do not know him personally. The point here is: If Paul had been an understudy of the apostles in Jerusalem, these are precisely the churches where he would have worked. But they don’t even know him. Therefore, the whole attempt of the Judaizers to discredit Paul’s independent apostleship is a failure. On the basis of evidence which the Galatians could check out, Paul makes a compelling case that his amazing 180° turn from persecutor to apostle can only be explained by a revelation and commission from Jesus Christ. Therefore, his *apostleship* is “not from men or through man” (as verse 1 says), and his *gospel* (as verse 12 says) “he did not receive from man, nor was he taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” Therefore, the point of verse 11 is well established: “This is not man’s gospel.” It is God’s gospel: good news that comes from God and accords with his great heart of holiness and

love.⁴

One the vital lessons we learn in this section is that we need to be valiant for truth, but motivated by true love of the truth alone. When we treat tradition as truth that no longer needs to be checked and confirmed with Scripture itself, we are in danger. We risk becoming zealots who can act viciously in the name of Christ while sincerely believing that we are glorifying God. Every pastor’s study should contain a framed print of the words of John 16:1-3:

I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. (ESV)

We conclude this article with a summary statement by John Stott.

What Paul has been saying in verses 11-24 may be summarized thus: The fanaticism of his pre-conversion career, the divine initiative in his conversion, and his almost total isolation from the Jerusalem church leaders afterwards combined to demonstrate that his message was not from man but from God. Further, this historical evidence could not be gainsaid. The apostle is able to confirm and guarantee it by a solemn affirmation: “In what I am writing to you, before God, I lie not!” (verse 20).

This, then, is our dilemma. Are we to accept Paul’s account of the origin of his message, supported as it is by solid historical evidence? Or shall we prefer our own theory, although

Reisinger—Cont. on page 19

⁴ John Piper, “This Is Not Man’s Gospel: Sermon on Galatians 1:11-24,” February 13, 1983. Accessed on February 2, 2007 through <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons>. Email: mail@desiringGod.org. Toll Free: 1.888.345.4700.

Painter—Cont. from page 14

for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.”

In Scripture, the soul or spirit of man is said to dwell in the body, which is an attachment. Peter says that *he* was at that present time living in his *tabernacle*, or *body*, when he said in 2 Peter 1:13, “*I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder.*” Although Peter was not writing to settle disputes about the nature of man, he clearly thinks of himself as more than a body, even, though he – his soul – had a body and other people identified him by his body. He was more than a *mere* body. Aaron and Moses understood the same when they said “*O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh ...*” (Numbers 16:22). When Rachel delivered Benjamin, the Scripture says, “*And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin*” (Genesis 35:18). The body dies when the spirit departs.

A number of things we are seeking to establish are stated in 2 Corinthians

5:1-10:

For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened – not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may

receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Here, Paul refers to our natural body as it now is as a tent and an earthly home. At present, we groan and are burdened and the body is said to be mortal. He refers to our resurrected bodies as a building from God and a heavenly dwelling: it is life, meaning our bodies will live again and they will exist forevermore.

In verse 6, we learn something about the present life and about death – *at home in the body* means that while we are still in this life, we do not know the measure of the presence of the Lord that we will when we are *at home with the Lord* (verse 8). This confident assurance is not presumption or a simple persuasion of the mind, but is of God *who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee* who indwells and communicates in an experiential way (verse 5).

God gave (and gives) life as a spirit or soul and He takes it away: “the Lord, who ... formed the spirit of man within him ...” (Zech. 12:1); “as long

Examples of Interchangeability	
“...his spirit was troubled ...” Gen. 41:8	“My soul is cast down within me ...” Ps. 42:8
“Jesus was troubled in His spirit ...” John 13:21	Jesus said “Now is my soul troubled.” John 12:27
“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit.” Matt. 27:50	“the Son of Man came ... to give His life (soul) as a ransom for many.” Matt. 20:28 ¹
“... the spirits of the righteous made perfect ...” Heb. 12:23	“I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God ...” Rev. 6:9
“...worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth ...” John 4:23	“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30 (Lk.10:27)
“...I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded ...” Rev. 20:4 (These people are dead) See also Acts 7:59	“... the spirits of the righteous made perfect ...” Heb. 12:23 (These people are dead) See also Luke 24:39 and 1 Peter 1:22
“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day ...” Rev. 1:10	And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord” Luke 1:46

1. In the KJV ψυχη (*psuche*) is translated *soul* 58 times, *life* 40, *mind* 3, *heart* 1, *heartily* 1; it is not translated 2 times; for a total of 105 times.

as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils ...” (Job 27:3); “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). We must note that Scripture distinguishes the Spirit of God (and God is spirit), the Holy Spirit, from man as soul or spirit: “...the spirit of that person, which is in him? ...the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11). The Spirit of God acts upon man and is sovereign over him, but is always separate; He must be distinguished from man. We are compelled to resist any form of pantheism, ever so pious though it may seem.

It has often been pointed out that the soul and spirit are interchangeable terms in Scripture and that Scripture is often imprecise as to how it uses them. When the author’s intention is to emphasize a certain aspect of man, he may use language that is more precise. Context will tell us the nature of the word used and if anything is to be made from the Holy Spirit’s choice.

A few examples of interchangeability are show in the table on page 16.

Doctrinal Issues

In regeneration, man does not get a second nature that comes in along side of his present nature. Neither does God become implanted in him as a “divine nature” that lives in him and is under his control.¹⁰

If man simply received “another” nature when saved, then he would not actually be saved himself. If it is simply another nature, then our nature remains unchanged in the new birth and “we” are not the one justified. Again, if God has implanted a divine

Painter—Cont. on page 18

¹⁰ For a comprehensive treatment of these kinds of errors, see John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing The Word of Truth, A Critique of Dispensationalism*, (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2000), now part of Ligonier Ministries.

God’s Jewels

Arthur Pink

And they shall be Mine, says the Lord Almighty, in that day when I make up My jewels. Malachi 3:17 It almost surprises one to learn that the great and self-sufficient God has ‘jewels,’ but our surprise increases to astonishment when we learn that these ‘jewels’ are living creatures. And astonishment gives place to overwhelming amazement when we discover that these living creatures are fallen and depraved sinners redeemed from among men! Truly, nothing but Divine grace would ever liken such wretched worms of the dust, unto precious jewels! Yet that is the very thing which we find God doing in our text. It is not the unfallen angels or the holy seraphim and exalted cherubim who are spoken of as Jehovah’s valued treasure—but lost and ruined sinners saved by amazing grace!

The Lord has likened his people to ‘jewels’ because of their inestimable value in his sight. This is an exceedingly hard thing for the Christian to really grasp, for he feels such a wretched and worthless creature in himself. That the Lord of Glory should deem him of great worth is difficult to conceive. Yet so it is!

From the earliest times, men have thought much of precious gems, and fabulous prices have been paid for them. With great ardor and toil, do men hunt after gold; but with even greater eagerness and labor will they seek the diamond. Hundreds of men will labor for a whole year in one of the diamond mines of Africa, and the entire result of their efforts may be held in the palm of your hand. Princes have been known to barter their estates in order to obtain some gem of peculiar brilliance and rare excellence. Yet more desirable still, are his saints in the esteem of the Lord Jesus. The value of a thing in the eyes of its possessor may be gauged by the price he was willing to pay for it. So valuable was the Church unto Christ that he gave himself for it, and shed his precious blood to purchase it for himself. Thus, the saints are likened unto ‘jewels’ because of the great value which the Lord places upon them.

“You will be a glorious crown in the Lord’s hand, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God” Isaiah 62:3. What marvelous words are these for faith and hope to lay hold of! Our feeble intellects cannot grasp them! Wondrous is it to think of rough stones, which first look like small pebbles, being found in the mud and mire of earth; then cut and polished until they scintillate with a brilliancy surpassing any earthly object, and being given an honored place in the diadem of a monarch. But infinitely more wonderful is it that poor lost sinners, saved by sovereign grace, should be among the crown-jewels of the Son of God!

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Painter—Cont. from page 17

nature in us, which is really God, then He certainly would not need to be justified or anything else that is common to the salvation of man. Some hold that the Christian has two (maybe even three) natures: one carnal, Adamic nature; the other, the new nature. They hold that a Christian chooses which nature will be in control. If the old nature is in control, the Holy Spirit is suppressed and no sanctification takes place. According to this view, a person could be a Christian with no evident fruit for his or her entire life. The Holy Spirit would only do His work of sanctification if the person chooses to allow the new man, the new divine nature, to be in control.

Additionally, according to this view, Christ could be your Savior but not your Lord! People who hold this position might even quote Galatians 5:17, “*For the desires of the flesh are*

against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing what you want to do.” But what does Philippians 2:12-13 say? “*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” This shows us that there is a new dynamic at work in the saved. This new power at work in the human personality is reflected in a change of conduct and thought that finds its source in God and is continually motivated to obedience. It is God acting and then man acting in response.¹¹

¹¹ The epistle of First John makes it clear that there are objective tests that can be applied to test the authenticity of one’s faith. In virtually all of His teaching, our

There is a conflict in the Christian, but it is between two desires, not two natures. The Christian has a single nature, not yet perfected. The new principle in our nature does struggle with the old principle of our nature, but is still only “us,” not “me” plus another.

Dr. Gerstner makes an interesting observation about the dispensational view of faith.

We suppose that, when dispensationalists insist that experience is not necessarily involved in justification and salvation, they refer to a *sensing* of the presence of Christ. But, if faith is union with Christ, how is faith possible without sensing Him? ... The dispensationalist tends to conceive of faith as merely intellectual fact. One trusts in Christ for his salvation. That is, he recognizes himself to be a sinner and Christ to be the proffered Savior and believing that fact he is thereby

Lord was clear about real proofs of a person’s being saved or not saved.

Broke Her Heart All in Pieces

Thomas Brooks

“A Cabinet of Choice Jewels” 1669)

The more a man apprehends of the love of God, and of the love of Christ—the more that person will grieve and mourn that he has offended, provoked, and grieved such a Father, and such a Son. The more clear and certain evidences a man has of the love and favor of God to his soul, the more that man will grieve and mourn for sinning against such a God.

There is nothing which thaws and melts the heart, which softens and breaks the heart—like the warm beams of divine love—as you may see in the case of Mary Magdalene. She loved much, and she wept much—for much was forgiven her. A sight of the free grace and love of Christ towards her, in an act of forgiveness, broke her heart all in pieces. A man cannot stand under the shinings of divine love with a frozen heart, or with dry eyes. The more a man sees of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and enjoys of the love of Christ—the more that man will grieve and mourn for all the dishonors that he has done to Christ.

Then she knelt behind Him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them. Luke 7:38.

Courtesy of Grace Quotes
<http://www.gracegems.org>

justified. If that is what Dispensationalism believes about faith, it is seriously defective. Such a non-experiential faith would be no faith at all but the kind of conviction that even devils can and do have (see James 2).¹²

James 2:26 makes it clear that if there are no good works, there is no real saving faith “*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*”

Given that many believe the “will” of man makes the ultimate difference in a person being saved or not, we should not be surprised that many maintain that same sovereign “will” relative to one’s sanctification. Modern evangelical dispensationalism seems not to notice that spiritually-dead God-haters would choose Christ and then choose to be like Him. If choosing Christ and choosing to be like Him is actually contrary to the nature of man, it should be clear that God must do something in man’s nature if the problem is ever to be remedied. It should also be clear that it is the preserving power of God that assures us that all of God’s people will persevere to the end.

Both the New and Old Testaments abound with explicit doctrinal statements about and unmistakable examples of the depraved nature of man. An example from the New Testament is Ephesians 2:1-3.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

Another example is Titus 3:3, “For we ourselves were once foolish,

disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.” We could multiply these examples many times from the first three chapters of Romans, not to mention many other places in the New Testament.

The New Testament is clear that it is an act of God, and not man’s will, that makes the difference. It is God who sent His Son, and not we who requested Him. It is also God who takes the initiative to begin the change in us. The contexts of the two passages above are sufficient to prove this point.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved ... (Eph. 2:4-5)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:4-7)

So, my dear friend, we trust that you can see that meritorious works cannot save or sanctify us. Man is the object of God’s saving work and never the cause of it. It is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who receives all the glory in the whole of salvation. The redeemed are the ones who receive the blessing of it and who will spend eternity glorifying God in it. Ω

LETTERS

I-03-07

Dear John.

Thanks so much for the sincere help you all have sent for us. It really helped 'lighten the load' this month. God richly bless all your efforts. We love you!
Happy New Year!
D&MS

Looking forward each month for the magazine. It is a blessing to me. Always learning something new. Each month is something that helps me to help investigate the word of God. Trust this new year will be the greatest for Sound of Grace. God bless you all for the good work.
FS

Reisinger—Cont. from page 15

not supported by historical evidence? If Paul was right in asserting that his gospel was not man’s but God’s (cf. Rom. 1:1), then to reject Paul is reject God.⁵

Paul has defended the legitimacy of his apostleship and his message. He has proved the divine origin of both. In the rest of chapter 2, he will explain that justification is by faith, not by works of the law, and he will warn the Galatians of the consequences of accepting the message of the false gospel of the Judaizers.

To be continued

5 Stott, *One Way*, 36, 37.

In our last issue we published an article without knowing its source and asked for help in identifying it. The source is *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, by James Montgomery Boise, Vol. 2, Chapter 3, pages 209 - 211, IVP. This is an excellent work on basic theology. It is a modern version of Calvin’s Institutes without all the technical arguments. I recommend it highly.

Editor

¹² Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing*, 270.

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