

ARTICLE VI.

THE NEW BIRTH.

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IN the New Testament the *new man* is described as made up of body, soul, and spirit — *soma*, *psyche*, and *pneuma*. This suggests the true psychology of man in his normal state, that is, as he came from the hand of his Creator; and the true psychology, also, when man is restored to the divine image by regeneration and sanctification. I have noticed that those persons who accept this psychology, and who make a practical use of it, as a part of divinely revealed truth, appreciate it very highly, and they testify that it is a great help to them in understanding some of the most important truths of spiritual Christianity. Luther found in the Temple at Jerusalem a beautiful analogy to this threefold distinction in human nature in its normal condition. The body he likened to the *atrium*, or outer court; the soul to the *sanctum*, or holy place; and the spirit to the *sanctum sanctorum*, or holy of holies. The apostle Paul prayed for his Thessalonian converts, "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

From the earliest age of Greek philosophy, down to the present time, man has been generally regarded as made up only of body and soul. This is not to be wondered at. Aristotle and the other fathers of Greek philosophy cannot be supposed to have apprehended the spiritual part of human nature. They were unacquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures; and the

clearer revelation of truth, through Jesus Christ, had not yet been given. And, indeed, speaking in a general way, man *has* a twofold nature. He is made up, on the one hand, of that which is visible and tangible, and, on the other, of that which is invisible and immaterial. The Scriptures often speak in this general way. Our Lord himself used to speak of man's body and soul. And even to consult our own consciousness, we seem to have only a body and a soul.

But the question is, whether a further analysis may not properly be made; whether a careful reading of the Scriptures will not render a further analysis necessary. If such an analysis be made in the light of Holy Scripture, it may perhaps be found that the *psyche*, or soul, is the life, the intelligent life, the mere intelligence, intellect, or mind which is common to men and animals; and that the *pneuma*, or spirit, is that which is attributed, as a rule, only to *some* men, to the angels, and to God. The word *psyche*, or soul, and its equivalent in Hebrew, *nephesh*, is applied indiscriminately to men and to animals; the word *pneuma*, or spirit, and its Hebrew equivalent, *ruach*, is hardly ever applied to animals.

The Greek fathers in the Christian church generally accepted the apostolic view of the human constitution. But two of them, Origen and Apollinaris, having made an erroneous and harmful use of the threefold distinction, Augustine, the great theologian of the Latin Church, introduced the twofold distinction of body and soul, as inclusive of the entire man. Through his mighty influence in the Western Church this distinction has prevailed ever since. But in recent times a change has been going on. Many German theologians, including Olshausen and Delitzsch, have advocated the biblical psychology, that is, the study of human nature under its threefold aspect. In England some eminent divines, like Bishop Ellicott and

Dean Alford, have recognized and approved it. The Rev. J. B. Heard, of the Church of England, wrote an admirable book upon the subject, which was published by the Clarks of Edinburgh in 1866. In this country, I remember that the gifted and lamented Dr. Kellogg, of the Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, wrote an elaborate and luminous article on this topic, which was published in the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, in 1890.

The trend of thought in our day is toward the acceptance of this view, and that for several reasons. One is, that more use is made of the Bible than in former times. It is being studied more intelligently, prayerfully, and earnestly, by a greater number of people, than ever before. Another is, that the attention of the Christian world has, for many years, been directed specially and persistently to the work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men, and in the sanctification of believers; and to the prophecies and promises which the Bible contains in reference to the special presence and almighty influence of the Spirit in Gospel times. And still another reason is, that physiological research is giving scientists a leaning toward this view of human nature. The late Sir William Dawson, eminent in science, wrote as follows: "We are drawn more closely to that middle ground occupied by the New Testament writers which gives . . . a fair valuation to all the parts of the composite nature of man. . . . The New Testament has undoubtedly pointed to solutions of the mysteries of our nature at which science and philosophy are beginning to arrive by their own paths; just as, in another department, the Bible has shadowed forth the great principles and processes of creation in advance of the discoveries of geology."¹

¹ Conley, in his *Evolution and Man*, says: "Rational life is still higher, and enters and controls conditions untouched by the lower

I am not, in this article, opposing what theologians call dichotomy, nor am I defending trichotomy. So far as I know, I am not a trichotomist at all. Trichotomy, my revered and beloved teacher, Dr. Charles Hodge, used to tell us, is the doctrine that man consists of three distinct substances — body, soul, and spirit; and he argued against it on that ground. I would agree with Dr. Hodge in his contention, and I do not receive as truth much that has been written by trichotomists. I think that they got sight of a very important truth, and in the heat of their battling for it, they, as is usual in such cases, allowed some erroneous statements to escape from them.

With this frank avowal, I give it as my belief that it would be a very great gain to the cause of truth, if Christians would recognize and adopt the threefold distinction of body, soul (mind), and spirit, without adopting the division of man into three distinct and separate substances.

Man is a unit. But the manifestations of his life may properly be distinguished one from another. He is not cut up or divided when the manifestations of his life are thus distinguished. He is an organism, just as an animal or a plant is. The plant is one; but what variety there is in it! What distinctions we find it necessary to make between root, and stalk, and leaf, and blossom. So man is one; but he has body and soul, and conscience; and after regeneration, he has, or rather is predominantly a spirit.

Distinctions are necessary and useful. We distinguish between intellect, will, and emotions, without cutting up the human mind. We make a distinction between imagination and memory, without impairing the unity of the mind. In religion we make a distinction, clear and strong, between the **Forms of life**. **Spiritual life comes next, and enters a still higher domain. Without this higher life, the spiritual world must always remain a *terra incognita*, a land of mysteries and shadows."**

ther, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, without dividing the Deity into three substances. "To us there is but one God." Yet the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Making distinctions is not the same thing with making divisions.

So the Scripture distinguishes between the mental or rational in man and the spiritual. When once the spiritual is enthroned in the soul, by the act of God, the intellectual and the spiritual become interfused, and cannot be separated. The mind or soul is spiritualized. Every faculty or aspect of the mind is influenced. The spirit becomes more and more dominant. The entire man is spiritualized. What Joseph Cook used to call the "solar light" shines through the eyes, and the whole face is often illuminated.

The connection between mind and spirit is of course mysterious. For whatever is immaterial and invisible is to us full of mystery, that is, is incomprehensible. There is a profound mystery as to the connection between soul and body. But no one thinks of denying, because it is mysterious, that there is a close connection and a real distinction between them.

When man sinned he fell away from God; he became estranged from his Maker. He is ignorant of the nature and character of the Supreme Being. As a Being of unknown purposes and of almighty power he dreads Him. He shrinks from having any dealings with the Almighty. He is indeed, as the Bible says, "at enmity with God." In the fall of man, the spirit was the part of human nature which was directly affected. Being the connecting link between God and man, it received through sin a terrible shock, and was paralyzed. In man ever since, that is, in the natural man, the spirit has been dormant, or rather, as the Scripture has it, it has been "dead in trespasses and sins." The intellect and the body were affect-

ed subsequently and indirectly. In the natural man, conscience may be regarded as what remains of the spiritual part of our nature since it was crippled and disabled, and virtually deadened, by the fall.

The great salvation purchased for us by Christ upon the cross is applied to man as a guilty, lost, bewildered sinner, first of all and mainly, by means of the conscience. And salvation consists essentially in the enlightening, pacifying, and rectifying of the conscience, and, that is, in the rehabilitation of the human spirit. This change, called the new birth, is the one most urgent need of our fallen humanity. It is the greatest *desideratum* in human life. Our Saviour and his apostles distinctly taught that every human being needs to be born again, born anew, born from above, born of the Spirit, born of God. When a human spirit is, by divine grace and power, resuscitated and reestablished, the person thus regenerated becomes a child of God, becomes what our first parents were in the beginning, before they fell into sin, a son or a daughter of the Lord Almighty.

The image of God, in which man was created by the in-breathing into him of the Divine Spirit, and which was in large measure lost by his falling away from God through sin, is restored by the new birth and growth of the spirit. This grand change is not and cannot be brought about by religious instruction *merely*, or by moral training *merely*, or by the finest educational advantages *merely*. It is the work of Almighty God, working by his Holy Spirit upon a human spirit which is dormant, and virtually dead. As Henry Drummond, so gifted both as a scientist and as a Christian, said: "Spiritual life is the gift of the living Spirit. The spiritual man is no mere development of the natural man. He is a new creation from above."

The image of God, as I have said, is restored only in and by regeneration. The physical part of man does not reflect God. The psychical part reflects him very partially and dimly, if at all. As some writer has said with great truth: "We cannot think of God as a reasoning being. The steps by which we ascend from particulars to generals, the powers by which we abstract and associate ideas, eliminate error, and discover truth, are not acts which we can attribute to an infinite intelligence. In so far as man is a rational being, he is not the offspring of God, but the creature. God is said to be the Father of spirits, not of intellects." It is only the spirit of man which reflects the image of God. The *psyche* is the seat of self-consciousness. It is the *pneuma* that is the seat of a sense or consciousness of God.

In his natural condition man is called in the New Testament the psychical man, that is, man with the *psyche*, or animal intelligence, only. When renewed by the Holy Spirit he is called the pneumatical man, that is, man endowed with the *pneuma*, or spirit. James, speaking of carnal or worldly wisdom, says: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, psychical, demoniacal." And Jude, speaking of the scoffers who mock at religion, and walk after their own ungodly lusts, says, "These are they who separate themselves, are psychical, not having the Spirit."

Those who remain in their unregenerate, psychical state are, in the scriptural sense, unacquainted with God. They may be very intellectual, very moral, very esthetic, and highly cultivated. But their intelligence and moral sensibilities are, as the evolutionists contend, the same in kind with those of the more intelligent animals, only differing in degree, in that they are far more highly developed. They are destitute of the *pneuma*, save in the rudimentary form of the conscience. It is forever

true, as the apostle Paul emphatically declared in writing to the Corinthians: "The psychical man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are pneumatically discerned."

Men who are ignorant of the true character of God, because they have not been renewed by his Spirit, and have no spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently no adequate sympathy with him in his stupendous work, may in some instances be more acute and powerful in intellect, acquainted with a larger number of facts in history, science, and art, may be more refined in manners, than many, it may be than most of the true children of God. But they do not and cannot apprehend spiritual things, they cannot appreciate the unique and marvelous personality of Jesus Christ, they cannot be uplifted into sweet and holy fellowship with saints and angels and with God himself, until they have been born into the spiritual realm by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.

1. If these things be so, is it not of infinite importance that every sane person should earnestly seek to be regenerated, and thus introduced into the spiritual realm, which is the eternal kingdom of God?

2. What a blessed thing it is that the Holy Scriptures make it perfectly clear how this great change is brought about, and how a person may know whether he has been regenerated, or is still a stranger to God, and unsaved from sin and misery. It is in the act of receiving Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, and our Lord, that one is born anew, and becomes a child of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

3. Do we not see how futile it is for men to identify regeneration with baptism, or to regard it as in any wise the result of priestly performance, or ecclesiastical device?

4. What an infinite pity it is that *spirituality* is by so many confounded with *morality*, and that in the old and unreformed churches anything *ecclesiastical* is regarded and spoken of as spiritual, and that in literature and art many make no distinction between the *esthetic* and the *spiritual*! Without discrimination and accuracy in thought and expression, confusion and error must prevail. Would it not be greatly in the interests of true religion, that is, of spiritual Christianity, if the words *spirit* and *spiritual* were used by Christians only in the sense in which they are used by the Sacred Writers?

5. And is it not because of the defective and erroneous mental philosophy which prevails in the schools, one which ignores the spiritual part of man's being, and regards the intellect as his highest and noblest endowment, that we have so much bewilderment and confusion of thought and language, as well as a vast amount of skepticism in regard to true religion?

6. Do we not see what is the true work of the Christian pastor? It surely is, to develop the spiritual life of his people. Would it not be well if he were acquainted with each one in his flock, so as to be able to judge whether that person is *spiritually-minded* or not; is a *new man in fact*, or only a *psychical* man who is a church-member and called a Christian? Pastors should take heed not to engage in the fruitless work of exhorting people to perform Christian duties—before they have seen evidence that such persons have really turned to the Lord, and in doing so have been born again.

7. To the individual Christian, the development of spiritual life is a great work. It is against nature in a very real sense;

and it requires time, earnest attention, and a vast deal of prayer. *Absorption* in worldly business interferes with it; indeed, renders it impossible. So that the wisdom and goodness of the Lord are manifest in setting apart one whole day every week, on which we may give our entire attention, if we wish it, to this necessary, urgent, delightful work of getting ready for a higher, holier, and in every way more satisfying and glorious life with the Lord Jesus and the redeemed, in the heavenly places.

8. Which of the two occupies the more important position in the universe, and which is living the more desirable life — the humble and industrious cobbler who is acquainted with God, is in full sympathy and coöperation with the Lord Jesus Christ, is full of the Holy Spirit, and is by his prayers helping the Lord to govern the world; or the statesman, scientist, author, or artist who is making a noise in the world, but is spiritually blind, and without any vital interest in the mission and work of the Son of God, or in the future and higher life, revealed and brought near to us by the religion of the Scriptures and of the Spirit?

And is not the case of the gifted and favored man of renown so much the worse, because, if he were to yield himself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, by accepting Christ as his Divine Redeemer and Lord, and by entering into the experience of the life which is hid with Christ in God, he might be so much more useful to men than an unlearned cobbler can be?

9. Our Lord, at one time, when speaking of Herod, a crafty ruler, said, "Go tell that fox," etc. Is it not fair to infer from his words that the so-called wisdom of statecraft is only a higher degree of the mental quality with which the fox is endowed? And do we not often see in ecclesiastical, political, and commercial affairs, an exhibition of the same crafty

spirit which the Saviour would condemn, and which is so widely different from the sincere and honest dealing of those who are "imitators of Christ"?

10. The ignoring of the *spiritual* in man has been a most lamentable mistake on the part of some of our educators. Ignore the spirit, and the human intellect may be trained into an educated rascality. Both church and state are suffering to-day from the results of developing the *intellectual* in young men, while the spiritual principle is neglected. How frequently do we hear it said, "The man is smart enough, but he has no heart"; or, "Such-an-one has a clear, calculating head, but his heart is as cold and lifeless as an icicle"? Is it surprising that when the *spiritual* is ignored, and the merely *mental* is emphasized and extolled, in schools and colleges, that young people are issuing from them each year who depend upon their wits for a living and for their happiness? and who, when trouble in some unexpected form comes to them, have no strength of character to sustain them, but are ready at once, like ignorant and reckless fools as they are, to resort to suicide?

11. And are there not many excellent people, out of the church, and out of Christ, so morally good that Jesus would love them, but yet would have to say to each one of them, as he said to the rich young man, who was so morally good and personally loveable, "One thing thou lackest"? If all of this large class of people were informed, clearly and tenderly, of just what they lack, and why they lack it, and how they may obtain it, we have not a doubt that the general revival of religious interest, which all earnest Christians are praying for, would be greatly hastened in its coming.

For it was the bringing forth, out of the Word of God, of this one neglected truth, "Ye must be born again"; "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,"

that produced the "Great Awakening" of the eighteenth century, which ushered in the missionary and evangelistic activity of modern times. And do not the churches need an Awakening again, as much as they did in the time of Edwards, and Wesley, and Whitefield? Verily they do; for in the days of Darwin and Darwinian evolution, there was a great falling away from the Christian faith, from which we have not yet fully recovered. For while the leaders in scientific thought have returned to *terra firma*, and now admit the existence of the supernatural or spiritual, there are great numbers of superficial and careless readers and thinkers, who are still at sea, and in distressing doubt about the Holy Scriptures and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This, therefore, is the psychological time for ministers of the Word, everywhere, to bring forward the doctrine and work of the Holy Spirit, and to let the people hear continually of the New Birth, as the most urgent necessity of every human being who has not experienced it. The Great Teacher said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew." And his great apostle said, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural or psychical; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven."

This truth concerning the Holy Spirit and the New Birth is all-important, if we are to have a general revival of religious interest. And is not a world-wide revival of religion *absolutely necessary*, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves to-day? Socialism, in some form or other, seems to be coming rapidly in Europe and America, in fact in all the civilized world. What kind of socialism will it be? If things remain as they are in the churches, it will in all probability be a wild, infidel socialism, mixed up with communism and anarchy and

be revolutionary and bloody in its character. But let there be throughout the world, a genuine revival of faith in God, and in his Christ; a revival of paramount anxiety about things spiritual and eternal, and let there be such a reformation in morals and manners, as has *always* accompanied and followed a true revival of religion, and the coming socialism will be sane, conservative, and Christian. It will only be a further evolution of Christian democracy. It will be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It will be a wonderful improvement on the existing order of things, and a nearer approach to the prevalence on earth of the reign of Christ and of heaven.