

SLB-016 (10-8-06)

Understanding the Soul and Spirit

Human Life and the Soul

- *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6).
- The Bible says; *“There is a Spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding”* (Job 32:8).
- Here we are told that it is the spirit of man that is given understanding.
- The materialist tells us that the spirit of man is the air that he breathes, and that man’s body is all there is to his personality.

Human Life and the Soul

- Man does not have a living soul but he is a living soul.
- The Bible says: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).
- We must be careful not to confound that which is truly spiritual and that which is merely soulish, or physical, however.

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Psalm 31:9
- *"Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief." The soul and body are noted as separate. Psalm 63:1 "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Here the body and soul are noted as separate again.*
- Micah 6:7 *"Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"* Once again, the soul and body are noted separate.

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, *"I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43).
Interpretation: that very day, the thief will in a conscious way have fellowship with Christ in Paradise, despite the apparent destruction of his body.
- According to the apostle Peter, Jesus descended (upon His death) into Hades, which could not hold Him, and led the souls of the righteous dead (including the thief on the cross) which were imprisoned in Paradise (a compartment of Hades, which was reserved for those righteous dead) out of captivity, and *"led captivity captive"* (thus emptying Paradise, according to the apostle Paul).

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus, who were both still conscious at the same time as the rich man's brothers, who lived on. This scenario preceded Jesus taking the souls of Paradise with Him to heaven, therefore Lazarus remains in Paradise. The rich man stood in another compartment of Sheol where he could see Lazarus, but could never cross over. The patriarch Abraham comforted Lazarus, whereas the rich man remained in torment. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into Heaven," (although Lazarus was not there yet).

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- In Matthew 10:28 *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* Body and Soul are separate.
- In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 *"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Body and Soul are separate as well.

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- From a Christian perspective, that is a biblical perspective, it is the soul that differentiates humanity from the rest of creation.
- It is only into man that God breathes the breath of lives so that he becomes a living soul.
- Though the human body was fashioned from pre-existing materials ("dust"), the soul originated ex nihilo.
- This is integral to the second creation distinction concerning mankind: that they (male and female) are created in the image of the triune God, according to His likeness.
- All the other living creatures were created after their kind; but man in or according to the image of God.

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Calvin points to the relation between the two distinctives when he states that the "proper seat of [God's] image is in the soul" and that the image of God "is an inner good of the soul."
- Thus, the creation points to humanity as the pinnacle of creation as the image of God, and the soul as the pinnacle of man as the locus of the image of God in man.

The Soul and the Spirit are Separate

- The constitution of humanity has been represented throughout church history as either tripartite (consisting of body, soul and spirit), or bipartite, that is, body and soul.
- Berkhof sees the "prevailing representation of the nature of man in Scripture" as "clearly dichotomic."
- He admits that Scripture uses the terms "soul" and "spirit," but denies that this in any way conclusively establishes a trichotomic constitution of man.
- These two words are used almost synonymously or "interchangeably." They both refer to the "higher or spiritual element in man . . ."

The Soul and the Spirit are Separate

- Calvin, similarly, refers to the soul ("sometimes it is called 'spirit'") as man's "nobler part."
- This dichotomic view gained the ascendancy it now holds in the church by the Middle Ages, being firmly established by Augustine.
- Before him, early Greek or Alexandrian Church Fathers such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa held to trichotomic conceptions of man (though not all identical).

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Berkhof describes, "Body and soul are distinct substances, which do interact, though their mode of interaction escapes human scrutiny and remains a mystery for us."
- The union between the two may be called a union of life: the two are organically related, the soul acting on the body and the body on the soul. . . . The operations of the soul are connected with the body as its instrument in the present life; but from the continued conscious existence and activity of the soul after death it appears that it can also work without the body."

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Calvin saw a union of body and soul as a union without confusion analogous to the two natures of Christ.
- But along with this he held a distinction between body and soul.
- In the dichotomy of body and soul related through substantial duality, man is distinguished from the rest of the created order by the possession of a soul in which is seated the image of God.
- Though much has been opined about the meaning of the image of God, there is no precise definition of it in the Scriptures.

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- For the purposes here, however, revelation is clear that, as Henry has written,
- "From the beginning, man in the Bible is depicted not as an evolved animal but as a uniquely endowed creature specifically distinguished from the lower animal world and specially related to God by the divinely bestowed image."

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- Calvin agrees with this elevation of the human creature above all others: [W]e may gather that when [God's] image is placed in man a tacit antithesis is introduced which raises man above all other creatures and, as it were, separates him from the common mass.
- As seen above, Calvin ties his understanding of the image of God very closely to that of the soul.
- It is not unexpected, then, that he seeks to "know of what parts this image consists" by looking to "the faculties of the soul."

The Soul and the Body are Separate

- These he condenses to two:
- "the human soul consists of two faculties, understanding and will."
- The purpose of understanding is "to distinguish between objects, as each seems worthy of approval or disapproval . . ."
- That of the will is "to choose and follow what the understanding pronounces good, but to reject and flee what it disapproves."

The Source of the Soul

- Others see a greater diversity of aspects of the image – though, perhaps, Calvin would include them all under his duality.
- Henry sees rational and moral aptitude, capacity for self-transcendence, exercise of will, and immortality as elements of the divine image.
- "The divine image, a cohesive unity of interrelated components that interact with and condition each other, includes rational, moral and spiritual aspects of both a formal and material nature."

The Source of the Soul

- It is important to note that this image remains in man even in the fallen state.
- Whether, or better, to what degree it is spoiled by the Fall and just which of its faculties are lost or weakened is not of importance here.
- That the image remains in man even after the Fall is the significant point.
- The purpose here of reflection on the image of God is to see that man, because of ensoulment as the image of God, has significance beyond all other creation.

The Source of the Soul

- The Origin of the Soul in the Individual.
- There are three historically significant theories about the origin of the soul in the individual.
- A very limited acceptance of the Platonic, pre-existence of the soul was associated primarily with the Alexandrian school in the early Church.
- Championed by Origen, this theory taught that the souls of men existed in a state prior to that of the embodied, and in that previous state certain things occurred that account for the state in which the embodied soul is found.
- Specifically, this theory was used to provide for the fallenness of man – original sin.

The Source of the Soul

- According to Origen, the "inequalities and irregularities, physical and moral" are "a punishment for sins committed in a previous existence."
- But the Church for several reasons quickly rejected this theory.
- First, it had no Scriptural basis whatsoever, being chiefly derived from Plato by Neo-Platonic thinkers.
- Also, it tended to propose a lowered view of the body since the soul was seen as without the body initially and, therefore, not essentially lacking in its existence at death without the body.
- This is in contrast to Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 15.

The Source of the Soul

- This pre-existence destroys the concept of the unity of the human race in Adam, as all souls pre-existed him.
- Finally, as man has no consciousness of any pre-existing state and no idea of his soul being imprisoned in his body (but, in fact, "dreads the separation of body and soul as something that is unnatural"), this theory finds no support in man's consciousness.
- A second theory was closely tied to "the Stoic concept of an ethereal yet corporeal soul and the Aristotelian perception of it as the interpenetrating form of the body . . ."

The Source of the Soul

- This theory, known as traducianism, claims that the soul has its origin either "through the material act of generation out of the animate or inanimate matter ('material traducianism'), or . . . as an offshoot of the substance of the parental soul ('spiritual traducianism' or 'generationism')."
- In the early Church, Tertullian is most closely associated with this school, having said that the soul "is 'handed on' from parent to child," but Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome were also well-known proponents.
- It was the leading theory in the Western Church until well into the Middle Ages.

The Source of the Soul

- It was not until the close of the fifth century (420) when Anastasius II condemned traducianism as heretical, that creationism supplanted traducianism as the favored theory of ensoulment in the Western Church.
- Though it is easy to see why some would see traducianism as closely aligned with modern scientific "facts," this is really because it is amenable to materialistic reductionism rather than because it is logically apparent or empirically evidenced.
- On the other hand, materialistic traducianism finds least contemporary support among theologians.

The Source of the Soul

- Philosophically, traducianism is favored by the argument that a child cannot really be called the parents' child unless his soul is transmitted from his parents.
- In response, the philosophical argument from the indivisibility of the soul disallows the transmission of part of the parents' souls in any essential way.
- Also, that a material substance could effect a spiritual one proposes a disproportion between the cause and the effect -- that human physical gametes can produce an immaterial soul.

The Source of the Soul

- Scripturally, traducianism is said to be supported in that God breathed into man the breath of life (the soul) and then left it to man to propagate; that Eve's soul must have been transmitted from Adam as she was "from man" (1 Corinthians 11.8); that descendants are described as being in the loins of their fathers; and that God's creating ended after the sixth day and He rested from His creating work.
- Finally, traducianists believed the idea of original sin is easily accounted for in the passing of substance from the sinful souls of parents to the child; though this comes from an ignorance of the physical genetic origin and transfer of the sinful nature, i.e., the flesh.

The Source of the Soul

- In response, there is no Scriptural preclusion to God continuing to breathe into man the breath of life (including Eve), that is to create ex nihilo each individual's soul.
- That God only acts mediately in His creation after the original creation is refuted by the doctrine of regeneration.
- This theory ultimately results in a numerical unity of the substance of all human souls.
- As such it fails to explain why man is responsible only for Adam's first sin and not for all his sins and the sins of the rest of their ancestors.
- Finally, it raises questions about why the human nature of Christ is not sinful, by assigning the transmission of original sin as a soul, rather than bodily (genetic) function.

The Source of the Soul

- The third theory of historical significance is creationism.
- This view holds that each individual soul is a direct creation of God ex nihilo.
- It does not necessarily hold that the soul is created outside and therefore separate from the body, but that the source of the soul is not the substance of the parents – of their souls or their matter – but is immediately from God.
- Berkhof gives the following as the important arguments in favor of creationism:

The Source of the Soul

- (1) The original account of creation gives a clear distinction between the origin of Man's body and that of his soul.
- The body comes mediately, taken from the dust; the soul comes immediately from God's breathing it into the body of Man.
- (2) Creationism is more consistent with the immaterial and spiritual – and therefore indivisible – nature of the soul; traducianism, in holding that the substance of the soul derives from parents, necessitates a breaking off (or division) of the parental soul.
- (3) Only creationism preserves the high Christology, understanding that Christ, though possessing a real human nature, did not share a numerical unity with the sinful Adam.

The Source of the Soul

- Creationism has its critics as well.
- Two strong criticisms hold that creationism necessitates a commitment to dualism wherein the created soul is regarded as higher than the body that is derived from the parents; and [falsely] that creationism makes God the source of sin since He puts a sinful soul into the individual.
- Other criticisms have been alluded to in the discussion of traducianism: that God ended His creative activity after the sixth day of creation and now acts through secondary causes only; and that if the earthly parents beget only the body of their children, this does not allow them to fully claim the child as theirs, and it does not explain the mental and moral similarities between parents and child.

Human Life and the Soul

- “The Christian doctrine of immortality cannot be understood apart from the right conception of the tripartite nature of men.
- Many think that man is a physical being only.
- There is a great danger of any man thinking thus of himself.
- In his desire to satisfy the needs of the body there is the tendency on man’s part to lose sight of the fact that he is immortal.
- There have been persons who have lived all of their lives either in ignorance or willful neglect of a life after death, but upon their death-bed they suddenly realized that they were more than physical beings.” (Man A Trinity (Spirit, Soul, Body) By: Lehman Strauss , Litt.D., F.R.G.S.

Human Life and the Soul

- The two following passages from the Bible clearly establish the fact that man is a triune being composed of spirit, soul, and body:
- I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul* and *spirit*, and of the joints and marrow (*body*), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Human Life and the Soul

- Dr. Clarence Larkin uses three circles (*Rightly Dividing The Word*, page 86). The outer circle stands for the *body* of man, the middle circle for the *soul*, and the inner for the *spirit*.
- In the outer circle the 'Body' is shown as touching the Material world through the five senses of 'Sight,' 'Smell,' 'Hearing,' 'Taste' and 'Touch.'
- The Gates to the 'Soul' are 'Imagination,' 'Conscience,' 'Memory,' 'Reason' and the 'Affections.'
- The "Spirit" receives impressions of outward and material things through the soul. The spiritual faculties of the 'Spirit' are 'Faith,' 'Hope,' 'Reverence,' 'Prayer' and 'Worship.'

Human Life and the Soul

- Tennyson, In Memoriam, XLV—“The baby new to earth and sky, what time his tender palm is pressed Against the circle of the breast, Has never thought that ‘this is I’: But as he grows he gathers much, And learns the use of ‘I’ and ‘me,’ And finds ‘I am not what I see, And other than the things I touch.’ So rounds he to a separate mind From whence clear memory may begin, As thro’ the frame that binds him in His isolation grows defined.”
- Fichte called that the birthday of his child, when the child awoke to self-consciousness and said “I.” Memory goes back no further than language. Knowledge of the ego is objective, before it is subjective. The child at first speaks of himself in the third person: “Henry did so and so.”

Human Life and the Soul

- Jean Paul Richter, quoted in Ladd, *Philosophy of Mind*, 110—“Never shall I forget the phenomenon in myself, never till now recited, when I stood by the birth of my own self-consciousness, the place and time of which are distinct in my memory. On a certain forenoon, I stood, a very young child, within the house-door, and was looking out toward the wood-pile, as in an instant the inner revelation ‘I am I,’ like lightning from heaven, flashed and stood brightly before me; in that moment I had seen myself as I, for the first time and forever.”

Human Life and the Soul

- Hill, Genetic Philosophy, 282, suggests that this early state, in which the child speaks of self in the third person and is devoid of self-consciousness, corresponds to the brute condition of the race, before it had reached self-consciousness, attained language, and become man. In the race, however, there was no heredity to predetermine self-consciousness—it was a new acquisition, marking transition to a superior order of being.

Human Life and the Soul

- Connecting these remarks with our present subject of the self consciousness of the soul, we assert that no animal ever yet said, or thought, “I.”
- With this, then, Strong’s Systematic Theology makes a series of simple distinctions between man and the animal, so far as the immaterial principle in each is concerned.
- 1. The animal is conscious, but man is self-conscious. The animal does not objectify self.
- “If the pig could once say, ‘I am a pig,’ it would at once and there by cease to be a pig.”
- The animal does not distinguish itself from its sensations. The brute has perception, but only the man has apperception, i. e., perception accompanied by reference of it to the self to which it belongs.

Human Life and the Soul

- 2. The animal has only percepts; man has also concepts. The animal knows white things, but not whiteness. It remembers things, but not thoughts. Man alone has the power of abstraction, i. e., the power of deriving abstract ideas from particular things or experiences.

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- 3. Hence the animal has no language. “Language is the expression of general notions by symbols” (Harris). Words are the symbols of concepts. Where there are no concepts there can be no words. The parrot utters cries; but “no parrot ever yet spoke a true word.” Since language is a sign, it presupposes the existence of an intellect capable of understanding the sign,—in short, language is the effect of mind, not the cause of mind. See Mivart, in *Brit. Quar.*, Oct. 1881:154–172. “The ape’s tongue is eloquent in his own dispraise.” James, *Psychology*, 2:356—“The notion of a sign as such, and the general purpose to apply it to everything, is the distinctive characteristic of man.” Why do not animals speak? Because they have nothing to say, i. e., have no general ideas which words might express.

Human Life and the Soul

- 4. The animal forms no judgments, e. g., that this is like that, accompanied with belief. Hence there is no sense of the ridiculous, and no laughter. James, *Psychology*, 2:360 —“The brute does not associate ideas by similarity.... Genius in man is the possession of this power of association in an extreme degree.”
- 5. The animal has no reasoning—no sense that this follows from that, accompanied by a feeling that the sequence is necessary. Association of ideas without judgment is the typical process of the animal mind, though not that of the mind of man. See *Mind*, 5:402–409, 575–581.

Human Life and the Soul

- 6. The animal has no general ideas or intuitions, as of space, time, substance, cause, right. Hence there is no generalizing, and no proper experience or progress. There is no capacity for improvement in animals. The brute cannot be trained, except in certain inferior matters of association, where independent judgment is not required. No animal makes tools, uses clothes, cooks food, breeds other animals for food. No hunter's dog, however long its observation of its master, ever learned to put wood on a fire to keep itself from freezing.

Human Life and the Soul

- Even the rudest stone implements show a break in continuity and mark the introduction of man; see J. P. Cook, *Credentials of Science*, 14. “The dog can see the printed page as well as a man can, but no dog was ever taught to read a book. The animal cannot create in its own mind the thoughts of the writer. The physical in man, on the contrary, is only an aid to the soulical. Education is a trained capacity to discern the inner meaning and deeper relations of things. So the universe is but a symbol and expression of spirit, a garment in which an invisible Power has robed his majesty and glory”; see *S. S. Times*, April 7, 1900. In man, mind first became supreme.

Human Life and the Soul

- 7. The animal has determination, but not self-determination. There is no freedom of choice, no conscious forming of a purpose, and no self-movement toward a predetermined end. The donkey is determined, but not self-determined; he is the victim of heredity and environment; he acts only as he is acted upon. Harris, *Philos. Basis of Theism*, 537–554—“Man, though implicated in nature through his bodily organization, is in his personality supernatural; the brute is wholly submerged in nature.... Man is like a ship in the sea—in it, yet above it—guiding his course, by observing the heavens, even against wind and current.

Human Life and the Soul

- An animal has no such power; it is in nature like a balloon, wholly immersed in air, and driven about by its currents, with no power of steering.” Calderwood, Philosophy of Evolution, chapter on Right and wrong: “The grand distinction of human life is self-control in the field of action—control over all the animal impulses, so that these do not spontaneously and of themselves determine activity” [as they do in the brute]. By what Mivart calls a process of “inverse anthropomorphism,” we clothe the brute with the attributes of freedom; but it does not really possess them. Just as we do not transfer to God all our human imperfections, so we ought not to transfer all our human perfections to the brute, “reading our full selves in life of lower forms.”

Human Life and the Soul

- The animal has no power to choose between motives; it simply obeys motive. But man's power of initiative—in short, man's free will—renders it impossible to explain his higher nature as a mere natural development from the inferior creatures. Even Huxley has said that, taking mind into the account, there is between man and the highest beasts an “enormous gulf,” a “divergence immeasurable” and “practically infinite.”

Human Life and the Soul

- 8. The animal has no conscience and no religious nature. No dog ever brought back to the butcher the meat it had stolen. “The aspen trembles without fear, and dogs skulk without guilt.” The dog mentioned by Darwin, whose behavior in presence of a newspaper moved by the wind seemed to testify to ‘a sense of the supernatural,’ was merely exhibiting the irritation due to the sense of an unknown future; see James, *Will to Believe*, 79. The bearing of flogged curs does not throw light upon the nature of conscience.

Human Life and the Soul

- If ethics is not hedonism, if moral obligation is not a refined utilitarianism, if the right is something distinct from the good we get out of it, then there must be a flaw in the theory that man's conscience is simply a development of brute instincts; and a reinforcement of brute life from the divine source of life must be postulated in order to account for the appearance of man. Upton, Hibbert Lectures, 165–167—“Is the spirit of man derived from the soul of the animal? No, for neither one of these has self-existence. Both are self-differentiations of God. The latter is simply God's preparation for the former.”

Human Life and the Soul

- Calderwood, *Evolution and Man's Place in Nature*, 337, speaks of “the impossibility of tracing the origin of man's rational life to evolution from a lower life.....There are no physical forces discoverable in nature sufficient to account for the appearance of this life.” Shaler, *Interpretation of Nature*, 186—“Man's place has been won by an entire change in the limitations of his psychic development.....The old bondage of the mind to the body is swept away.....In this new freedom we find the one dominant characteristic of man, the feature which entitles us to class him as an entirely new class of animal.”

Human Life and the Soul

- John Burroughs, *Ways of Nature*: “Animal life parallels human life at many points, but it is in another plane. Something guides the lower animals, but it is not thought; something restrains them, but it is not judgment; they are provident without prudence; they are active without industry; they are skilful without practice; they are wise without knowledge; they are rational without reason; they are deceptive without guile.....”

Human Life and the Soul

- When they are joyful, they sing or they play; when they are distressed, they moan or they cry;....and yet I do not suppose they experience the emotion of joy or sorrow, or anger or love, as we do, because these feelings in them do not involve reflection, memory, and what we call the higher nature, as with us.”
- Their instinct is intelligence directed outward, never inward, as in man. They share with man the emotions of his animal nature, but not of his moral or æsthetic nature; they know no altruism, no moral code.”

Human Life and the Soul

- Without controversy, among Bible believers, Man has a soul, characterized by self-consciousness:
- 1 Cor. 15:45—“The first man Adam became a living soul. The last man Adam became a life-giving spirit.”
- And, also without controversy, the Believer is more than fallen Adam, more than a Soul with Self-consciousness, he is a new spiritual being, with God-consciousness, now his *raison d’etre*, his reason to be.
- Next week we will see how, when and why this God-consciousness affects our New Lives.