

Biblical Psychology

by

Professor Herman Hanko

Emeritus Professor

Seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America



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Forward

This book has a rather long history. The material in the book was originally prepared for a course in Biblical Psychology to be taught as an elective in the Seminary. When I was asked by the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies to teach a course in Biblical Psychology during a summer in 1984, the material prepared for Seminary use became the main body of material, although adaptations were made to make it suitable for teachers rather than prospective ministers. The book that was subsequently published contained the material of that course.

It has been proposed that the course be re-taught since almost twenty years have elapsed since it was originally presented to the teachers, and in connection with that proposal, I was asked for permission to reprint the book. I thought it best to go over the material carefully to edit it, expand it in places, and clarify it where it needed clarification before it was republished. This present edition is the result of that editing.

I must give credit for the contents of this book to two men especially. One is Dr. Herman Bavinck, whose work on biblical Psychology I translated a number of years ago and which is available from the Seminary in syllabus form. I have leaned heavily on that book for some of my ideas. The other material which has been instrumental in my thinking on this subject is material prepared by Rev. Herman Hoeksema, not now available, so far as I know, in any form, but originally prepared as part of a Catechetics course in the Seminary.

While the book is somewhat technical, I hope to use it as a text for the course which, the Lord willing, will be offered in the summer of 2003. If it is helpful to the teachers to make their work in Protestant Reformed Schools more effective, we all have our covenant God to thank, who has given us such a rich heritage.

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BIBLICAL PSYCHOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In the area of human relationships nothing is quite so popular today as psychology. Hundreds of books have been written on the subject and clinics and counseling centers of all kinds have sprung up throughout the country. Man, beset with innumerable problems, seeks help from psychologists of every kind in an effort to solve his problems and to come to terms with his environment and with his fellow man. Some centers of counseling are completely worldly and even anti-Scriptural, while others are more or less based upon Christian principles. But, whether Christian or anti-Christian, all of these counseling centers, psychiatric clinics, or mental institutions deal with the practical aspect of psychiatric treatment. Almost nothing has been done in the field of psychology itself. This is not to say that underlying all psychiatric care, whatever form that may take, is not some theory, whether biblical or non-biblical; but this theory is often presupposed and is not clearly articulated. This is true even of those centers of psychiatric care which claim to be Christian. Even though counseling may be more or less Christian, a genuine biblical psychology is almost always lacking. It may not always be necessary to possess a clearly defined Christian psychology in order to engage in counseling or psychiatric treatment, but it can hardly be denied that a clearly defined Christian psychology, will nevertheless be of value, for principles always underlie and determine practice. While anyone whose interest runs along these lines may have many books on his shelf dealing with all kinds of theory and helps in the practice of counseling and psychiatric care, few books can be found which attempt to develop a genuine Christian, biblical psychology. The books in this field a person may possess are usually very old.

An effort must be made to produce a psychology that is in the genuine sense of the word biblical. Especially if counseling and psychiatric care are to be genuinely biblical and based upon the Scriptures, such a Christian psychology is of critical importance. To understand what the Scriptures have to say about man can only aid in bringing the Word of God to bear upon the problems that the child of God faces in his life. The more completely one desires to base his counseling upon the truth of the Scriptures, the more imperative it becomes to understand what God's Word has to say about man himself.

This book is an effort at least to begin such a study.

THE TERM 'PSYCHOLOGY'

The term psychology comes from two Greek words: *psuche* and *logos*. The first word, *psuche*, is the Greek word for "soul", and the second Greek word, *logos*, is the Greek word for "word" or "doctrine" or "teaching." The term "psychology" means therefore, literally, the doctrine or teaching concerning the soul.

In a certain sense of the word this term is a misnomer. Certainly in modern psychology this is true because modern psychology denies the existence of the soul altogether. But also from the viewpoint of our study the term is a misnomer because our study is not limited only to a study of

the soul. In fact, the term psychology is based upon an erroneous conception of the relationship between the body and the soul that has its roots in Greek philosophy. This erroneous view dates back to the philosophy of Plato, which has had a tremendous amount of influence on Christian thought. This erroneous distinction is presupposed in the term psychology, because it defines the term soul as some kind of non-material substance which is locked up in the body, somewhat analogous to a bird locked up in a cage, the result of which is that no real organic connection exists between soul and body. Nevertheless, we shall have to face the fact that we are not going to be able to change the term and will have to live with it. But we must remember that the proper object of any study in psychology is man, man in his entirety as he came forth from the hands of his Creator, man as unique among all God's creatures, man as a distinct creation of God. He is unique because he possesses a unique form of life that can be called soul-life. And this man is the object of our study.

LIMITATIONS

In saying this, we have also immediately limited our subject. A study of psychology could easily lead into many different related fields of inquiry. It could, for example, lead into various questions that have occupied the attention of philosophers. One need only think of Descartes' dictum, "Cogito, ergo sum," and the philosophies of British empiricists to recognize the fact that philosophy has often become intertwined with psychology. The same is true of that branch of philosophy known as epistemology. John Dewey's theories of education, e.g., were as much psychology as epistemology. With these areas of psychology we cannot busy ourselves.

Nor is our concern with what has sometimes been called Abnormal Psychology. This is a separate branch of psychology and, while extremely interesting and even of some practical benefit, is not the main concern of our study. We are interested in what the Scriptures have to say concerning the nature of man as he was formed by the hands of his Creator, as he fell into sin, and as he is redeemed by the power of the grace of God through the cross of Jesus Christ. What is man according to Scripture? This is the question that faces us.

SOURCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHOLOGY

It is at this point that an important question arises. The question is what is the source of our knowledge concerning man? It is our purpose to develop a psychology which is genuinely Christian, i.e., genuinely biblical. We are committed to this. But the question arises in this connection, is our sourcebook in the development of a biblical psychology only the Scriptures? Is all the data of our subject to be gleaned from Scripture alone, or is it legitimate to make man himself the object of our study? In a study of history, e.g., it is obvious that, while a true understanding of history must take into account the truths that Scripture sets forth, no one can limit himself to a study of Scripture. He must deal with the formal data of the events of the past. The same is true, doubtless, in a study of any of the natural sciences. Scripture gives the fundamental principles of science, but, if we want to learn about photosynthesis, we are going to have to take a plant apart and analyze it in the laboratory. Both Scripture and creation form our textbook for science. The question is, is the same thing true of psychology? Must all our

information be gleaned from Scripture? Or may we make man, himself, a source of our knowledge, and on the basis of that knowledge develop a Christian psychology? Modern psychology limits itself simply to a study of man's behavior. In fact, this is almost exclusively the interest of modern psychology, so that it is simply an attempt to explain in an intelligible way why man acts as he does. But the study of psychology is more than that. It is the study of man himself, not simply in his activity, not simply what makes man do what he does, but man himself. Socrates said, "Know thyself." Alexander Pope put this in the form of a famous couplet: "Presume not thou the world to scan; the proper study of mankind is man."

To make man himself the object of study in the development of a Christian psychology seems necessarily to involve two approaches. On the one hand, it involves not only a study of man's external behavior, but a study of what goes on inside of him as that is available, so to speak, through the techniques of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, there is involved the means of introspection by which one looks not at others but inside of himself and makes himself the object of his study. One would think that a better idea of human behavior can be learned from what goes on inside one's self through intense introspection than by guessing what is happening inside other people. Nevertheless, in these two ways we make man a source of our knowledge in the study of psychology in addition to the data that we can glean from Scripture.

But the question of the legitimacy and profit of such study has to be raised. The question must be asked whether it is even possible to make man the object of one's study, whether that be through the observation of other people or through introspection. Can one gain accurate data from such a study? We can never look inside a person and must always judge and evaluate only external conduct. And we know well enough from experience that people, in their outward demeanor present themselves in the best possible light. Judging the internal workings of the mind and heart is always, it would seem, mere guesswork. The same is true of introspection. While from a certain point of view it might be easier to know ourselves than to know others, the fact is that Jeremiah was right when plaintively he cried out: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). It would seem altogether too true that such an approach to psychology can only lead subjectivism. Man is then both the subject and the object of this study. It would seem difficult if not impossible to avoid subjectivism either in the study of others or by introspective self-examination.

In spite of all this it is, no doubt, possible to some extent to construct a Christian psychology by making man himself the object of investigation. But if such a study is to be in any way successful, the investigation must be done as objectively as possible, whether one studies his fellow man or himself. This means that such a study must be carried on only as man functions in all of life's relationships, and, more importantly, as man is described from every point of view in Scripture. It is only within the boundaries of Scripture's description of man as created, as fallen, as saved in Christ that one has the necessary information to avoid the mire of subjectivism. Within that framework of all the Scriptural givens must any study of man be carried on and any conclusions reached.

We must, however, be warned against certain dangers that arise in this connection. For one thing, empiricism will help hardly at all. The soul of man is not material and cannot be the object of empirical investigation in the same sense in which empirical investigation is used in the field of the natural sciences. We may not reduce psychical phenomena to chemical reactions or processes

explainable in terms of the laws of physics as materialistic evolutionism insists on doing.

Modern psychology attempts to study man by the scientific method, by laboratory techniques. We must insist that we cannot know man by looking at Rorschach blots, or by studying rats in a maze. These methods are based on a denial of the soul. The soul is not material. In the nature of the case the soul is not open to empirical study, for one cannot investigate, with laboratory methods, something which is non-material. We cannot, therefore, include psychology with the natural sciences and attempt to study it empirically.

We must be warned also against using our own psychological life as a norm for all of life. It can probably be said with some justification that Freud does that. He has been accused by some of universalizing his own neuroses. Man may, we said, be the object of our study in psychology, but only with rigorous limitation. We must, therefore, have some kind of trustworthy source of information about man outside of man, objective to man. We have that in Scripture.

The Scriptures are not, needless to say, a textbook in psychology. They are the written and infallible record of the revelation of God in Christ. Man and a description of man appears on the pages of Holy Writ only as a part of all God's works. When man is discussed in Scripture it is not from the viewpoint of a laboratory study but rather as man is caught up in and is a part of the stream of history. For that reason, if we make it our business to develop the Scriptural concept of the soul, e.g., we will find that it is next to impossible to give a scientific definition of what the soul is. The term is, in fact, used in different senses in Scripture. That makes Scripture alive in its discussion of what man is but it certainly makes our task in this study more difficult.

We cannot then obtain formal definitions from Scripture, but Scripture does tell us all we need to know about man. This is not to say that the whole of our discussion of psychology must depend on Scripture alone for its data. There are aspects of psychology that we will have to study by making man himself the object of investigation; but that must be done only in the light of what we know to be the principles of Scripture. Scripture gives us the proper scope, all the essential elements, and the entire framework within which limitations we make man the object of our study. Psychology would be an impossible study if it were not for the fact that we have the objective norm for it in Scripture. Though there are no Scriptural passages that state explicitly the principles of psychology, all the fundamental principles of psychology are nevertheless in the Scriptures. Scripture speaks of the revelation of the God Who saves His people. Scripture therefore deals with man as he was created, as he is by virtue of the fall, and as he is redeemed and saved by God's power. In the course of telling us about man, the Scriptures give all kinds of data concerning man as a whole and therefore concerning psychology. Again, this does not mean that Scripture gives everything that there is to be known about psychology. A legitimate tool of psychology is also the study of man himself. But though this is a legitimate tool, it must be carried on always and only in the light of God's Word. The principles set forth in Scripture are the governing principles of all our reflection.

To give but one illustration, a study of what is called Abnormal Psychology is a study which must be circumscribed by and understood in the light of Scripture itself. And this means that the study must be done in the light of the fact of sin. When one abstracts his study from the fundamental principles of Scripture, he ends up with the strange and unbiblical Abnormal Psychology of today's modern world.

Hence it is true that in the area of psychology, to a greater extent than in any other area of human intellectual endeavor, Scripture constitutes the basis for all psychology and sets up for us the bounds of all our investigation. Anything we may or can learn from a study of man must not only agree with what we learn from Scripture, but must be understood in the light of Scripture's teaching.

Chapter I: HISTORICAL NOTES

WRONG IDEAS OF PHILOSOPHY

Psychology has always been a subject of considerable interest. It can be said to have started with Socrates and Plato. The early Greek philosophers limited their investigations to a study of the cosmos and an attempt to explain it. But with the advent of Socrates, the emphasis shifted to a study of man himself. This does not mean that metaphysical questions were ignored. Plato, in occupying himself with metaphysical questions, developed the first system of Idealism. But Plato was concerned also with the study of man himself. In his study of man himself, and in connection with his epistemology especially, Plato was the first to speak of man as possessing a soul. He taught that the soul was a spiritual entity in man which was an individual, separate, and unique part of man and which stood in relation to the body in a way roughly analogous to the way a bird is caged in a bird cage. Just as a bird is limited to the confines of the cage so the soul is limited to the confines of the body in which it is trapped. Only at the moment of death does the soul escape from the body. That notion involves two fundamental errors. The first is that the soul is an entity completely separate and distinct from the body, and the second is that the soul is immortal, i.e., that it cannot die. Both these erroneous notions were adopted by Christian thought and influenced Christian thinking until the present.

QUESTIONS PRESENT IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

In Christian thought, various ideas related to psychology developed in connection with the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. In connection with the defense of the truths of the Trinity and the person and natures of Christ, the church had to define such key concepts as "person," "nature," "soul," "body." It did this, however, not abstractly, but rather in connection with the defense of the faith. This was especially true when the church set forth in the Chalcedonian Creed, the truth that Christ unites his human and divine nature in the one person of the Son of God. In its answer to the error of Apollonarianism (the erroneous teaching that the divine logos was the rational soul in our Lord's human nature, thus denying that Christ possessed a complete human nature), the church defined the truth that Christ had not only a human body, but also a human soul.

At the time of Augustine, in the defense of the doctrines of sovereign grace, other concepts and ideas were developed. In connection with the doctrine of original sin, the question of Creationism vs. Traducianism arose, i.e., whether the soul is created by God at the moment of conception or whether the soul came from the parents. Tertullian was a traducianist, while Augustine hesitated to commit himself although he leaned toward Creationism. The debate between creationism and traducianism was related to the question of original sin because, if sin affects both body and soul and is communicated from parents to children, does it not follow that the soul also is received from the parents?

In the Middle Ages among the scholastics the question of Trichotomy vs. Dichotomy arose, that is, is man made up of body, soul, and spirit, or just body and soul? In connection with this the

question of the primacy of the intellect or the will was also discussed from both a psychological and a spiritual point of view. And, in addition to this question, the whole subject of the freedom of the will was debated.

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology itself, however, became a separate discipline only in more modern times. Modern philosophy had its beginning shortly after the time of the Reformation. It has as its unique feature a disjunction between philosophy and religion. In the Middle Ages, under the influence of Scholastic philosophy, philosophy and religion were interwoven. Especially Thomas Aquinas was the one who married Aristotle and Christ, brought Athens into Jerusalem, and attempted to make the philosophy of Aristotle and the religion of the Christian faith a unity. But modern philosophy made a disjunction between philosophy and religion. It did this partly because of the influence of the humanism of the Renaissance, but also partly because the arid character of Scholasticism brought disillusionment with this form of philosophy. By means of this disjunction, one area of thought was considered the proper area for reason, while another area of thought was under the control of faith. The area of reason produced philosophy, while the area of faith produced theology. On the one hand is reason producing its philosophy, and on the other hand is faith producing its religion. They are two separate systems having nothing to do with each other and operating in different fields. In the early history of modern philosophy, philosophers insisted that, as far as religion and the faith of the church were concerned, they were purely orthodox and they claimed to agree with the church's Confessions. But that was the area of faith. In the area of reason, however, they developed their philosophies. Faith might not intrude in the area of philosophy any more than reason might intrude in the area of faith. While this was the most fundamental premise of modern philosophy, it was a disjunction which could not work. Man is not created as a kind of creature who can separate faith from the operations of his intellect. The result was that in modern philosophy religion more and more came under the judgment of reason. Only that could be acceptable which met the requirements of reason and which could stand up under the scrutiny of reason.

An instance of such a distinction is still found today in theistic evolutionism. Those who attempt to hold both an evolutionary interpretation of origins and sacred Scripture speak of the fact that science belongs to the laboratory where the empirical method is to be used, while the study of Scripture belongs to the area of faith, which is the province of the church. The practical consequence is that if it becomes necessary to reinterpret one or the other in the interests of harmony between the two, it is Scripture which needs re-interpretation, not scientific theory.

The result of this was that, especially in Britain, the so-called British Empiricists arose. While they were also rationalistic in their philosophy, they concentrated on epistemology and developed a naturalistic and materialistic view of man. Modern psychology has its roots in British rationalistic empiricism.

Freudianism

The father of modern psychology is usually considered to be Sigmund Freud. He was born about the middle of the nineteenth century and grew up and lived in an era of tremendous change in the

field of science. It was in the latter half of the nineteenth century that Charles Darwin published his *Origin of the Species*. Freud was three years old at the time. Charles Darwin held that man is strictly and only a part of nature though extraordinarily complex. In 1860 Gustav Fechner founded the science of psychology and began a scientific study of the mind. It was during this same period that Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch founded the science of bacteriology, Gregor Mendel founded genetics, Hermann Von Helmholtz founded physics and discovered the law of the conservation of energy, and James Maxwell, Max Planck, Marie and Pierre Curie, and Lord Kelvin made advances in the field of dynamics and taught that man is an energy system governed by the laws of physics.

It was the period of optimism. Man was thought to be capable of anything to which he set his mind. All truth was available by empirical study and scientific discovery. And man was capable of subjecting it all to his own uses and to the advance of the good of humanity.

It was within this context that Freud did his work. He spoke of the personality as consisting of three major systems. These were not realities, but processes, functions, mechanisms, and dynamisms, so that the three systems interact, blend, or oppose. Mental health means a unified and harmonious functioning of all three systems: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. Mental health is the perfect adaptation of the person to the environment, by which is meant the ability to fulfill needs and desires. If there is disharmony between the three systems, there is disharmony with the environment, and the person is maladjusted, at odds with himself and the world, able to operate at only reduced efficiency. The Id is the accumulation of all the energy from our animal ancestry. It is governed by only one principle, the energy principle of pleasure. It seeks only the release of energy through the attainment of pleasure. The Ego is the executive of the entire personality and is governed by the reality principle. It directs the personality so that the pleasure principle can be brought into harmony with the reality principle. The Superego is the moral and judicial branch of the personality. It is formed through training and determines the rightness and wrongness of activity. Freud gave us such terms as: libido, rationalization, repression, psychoanalysis, etc.

Other Psychologies

Freud's disciples were many. Some differed from him in certain respects. For example, Karl Jung differed from Freud chiefly on the question of the conscious and the unconscious. Freud taught that the unconscious is a storehouse of instinctual urges, sexual desires infected with Oedipus complexes, various repressed thoughts, wishes, and painful experiences. Jung added a collective unconscious to the individual which was the inherited memories from ancestors from the dawn of time. He added the ideas of introverted and extroverted personalities. Adler spoke of the greatest desire of man as being to enshrine himself with divinity.

The Neurological School was divided into different groups. Behaviorism taught that the psychic life is only a physiological response to stimuli or sensory excitements transmitted by neural paths through the brain to muscles and glands. It developed the theory of conditioned reflexes. Two kinds of drives, the various hungers and ultimate aversions, explain man's behavior because all he does is to be understood in terms of obtaining pleasures and avoiding annoyance. Abnormality is wrong conditioning so that socially unacceptable social patterns are developed. The cure is unconditioning and reconditioning. Functionalism stressed that the operation of the whole person

must adjust to the environment by making it work for him. Dewey's pragmatism is an example of this. Gestalt psychology opposed the mechanism of Behaviorism. The mind perceives the total sensory field, not the individual units. The mind always seeks the patterns of least resistance, i.e., the least pain and unpleasantness. The mind is dynamic, composed of energy always seeking release. This energy is purely material and physical and the direction of this release is determined by conditioning. The Purposivistic School stressed that the goal of the personality is seeking to cope with the environment. It does this either by self-assertion or submission. There is a certain dependence on stimuli to the extent that there are instincts which are the source of all mental activity. Intelligent manipulation of the instincts constitutes rational behavior.

A few examples of more modern views in psychology can briefly be mentioned. Nikolai Berdyaev considered the great problem of today the question of what man is. The answer to this question, he said, is going to determine the future of our present civilization. He made the remark that if it is true, as many thinkers of today insist, that man views himself as an animal, he will more than likely also begin to live as an animal. If he thinks of himself as a sensual creature, his life will more than probably be a sensual life. If, however, he regards himself as a rational being, chances are, says Berdyaev, that he will probably live in terms of his understanding, i.e., live a life of the intellect without regard to any other part of his being.

The zoologists who dabble in the field of psychology, particularly men like Morris and Desmond, say that man is only one of some eighty-odd varieties of the ape, although he happens to be a hairless variety; and so psychology is defined in terms of man's nakedness. We must examine man in his nakedness and his response to it. The biologist speaks of man as he oozed from some primordial slime as a result of some cosmic accident. Dr. Camell has said: "In the modern view of man, man is a grownup germ sitting on a cog of a wheel of a vast cosmic machine which is destined ultimately to blow itself up."

Marx, the father of Communism, defined man as *homo faber*, man the maker, the fabricator, and has limited his definition of man to purely economic terms.

The Existentialist and the Voluntarist define man in terms of choice. Freiderich Nietzsche is an example. To live successfully one must get in touch with his own inner drives. Life is a power struggle and we like those whom we can use for our own advancement. Perhaps more than ever in our modern day man is defined in terms of being a sensual creature. Hugh Hefner is the ultimate purveyor of this philosophy. Then again, man is defined in terms of a machine. At the Carnegie Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh much research has been conducted on the essential difference, if any, between man and a computer. John Paul Sartre summed it all up in his view that man is a being controlled by his feelings. He described man with his bleak pessimism and total helplessness, the helplessness of despair, as being nothing but a useless passion.

All these views have in common the idea that man is only material. They deny the existence of the soul and insist that man is understandable and explainable in terms of chemical reactions, the interplay of electrical charges, and that his behavior can be empirically studied in terms of the laws of physics.

CRITICISMS

Even on a purely philosophical basis, serious criticism can be raised against any materialistic view of man. Materialism has never succeeded, for example, in explaining many of the psychical and psychological phenomena of man's life. It has not succeeded in explaining consciousness or even self-consciousness. It has in it an inherent contradiction. If man is nothing more than on-going chemical processes and the interplay of electrical charges, no matter how complex those processes are, it is clear that one ends with some sort of complex bundle of chemical reactions, known as man, capable of knowing chemical processes whether other men or himself. Or, to put it a bit differently, how can mere chemical processes ever truly know: have consciousness of something outside the process; and, still more puzzling, have self-consciousness? Such crass materialism has never been able to understand or explain the subject-object relationship (knower and thing known) which is fundamental to all knowing. And, ironically, materialism is totally and wholly deterministic. Man is the product of forces which are entirely and totally outside of his control. He is a bit of flotsam carried along by the waves of history without any control over them.

More importantly, however, modern philosophy denies all the fundamental principles of the Christian faith. A materialistic view of man denies the creation of man in the image of God and has no place for such a concept in all of its thinking. By denying man as created in the image of God, materialism also denies the loss of that image through the fall, and the restoration of that image through the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. For that reason, too, materialism must of necessity deny total depravity and even the existence of sin. Even guilt is only the product of self-delusion, because sin is nothing else than remnants of our animal ancestry.

Modern philosophy and psychology teach that man's actions are explainable in terms of forces which are outside his control and direction. His bizarre behavior must be explained in terms of mechanical or chemical malfunctions, and sin is nothing else than maladjustment. There is no objective standard of right and wrong governing man's life, but right and wrong are determined only by majority vote in the prevailing social context. As social mores change, so does the definition of right and wrong. Rehabilitation, retraining, and reconditioning take the place of guilt, punishment and retribution. Prisons are no longer places where people who have committed crime pay their debts to society, because of guilt which they have incurred by their crimes, but prisons become institutions of rehabilitation and reconditioning.

The devastating consequences of sin are denied, and the problems of society are solved by pouring into society billions of dollars. Man is not changed; his environment must be changed. When man riots, goes on a rampage, steals, breaks windows, commits arson, etc., he is not guilty of the crime, but must be pitied because of an environment which has shaped and formed him. When man is maladjusted or has psychological problems of one sort or another the solutions to these problems are not to be found in Scripture but are to be found in various psychiatric techniques of one sort or another. Psychoanalysis, with its idea of free association and dream interpretation, must overcome resistance to repression.

Client-centered therapy must be used to give a positive image to the client, while the therapist only listens as the client tries desperately to learn concerning himself. Transactional analysis puts its emphasis on interpersonal relationships and the need of communication. All of these and many more techniques become means to solve man's problems and somehow to lead him to the kind of behavior which is acceptable to society. But the result is that society deteriorates, crime runs

rampant, social problems grow worse, mental problems increase, and man brings himself to the brink of self destruction.

Man is on a treadmill. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity, because a materialistic man is a man without God. Boasting of his natural goodness, his capabilities in the areas of science and technology and thinking to advance to greater heights of wisdom and culture, man commits spiritual suicide.

Chapter II: THE CREATION OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

Man is one. As he came forth from the hand of his Creator, he is one creature of God with one nature. This truth, the most basic in all our discussion, has been almost universally denied by those who still hold to the notion that man is composed of body and soul. The idea that body and soul are two separate entities has come about under the influence of Greek philosophy, which has so completely permeated subsequent thought that it is almost impossible to counteract its influence. We may, in the course of our subsequent discussions, consider man from different viewpoints, i.e., from the viewpoint of his body, or soul, or spirit, or person, or nature, etc. But the fact remains that we must make no sharp distinction so that man is viewed as consisting of various parts which can be separated and considered apart from each other. Man is one marvelous creature who was formed by the hands of his Creator. We may well echo the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 139:14: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Body, soul, and spirit (whatever now those terms may refer to) are so closely related and interwoven that they cannot really be considered separate from each other. They belong together to form what Scripture calls man. Man in his entirety stands related to those about him and to God in such a way that he cannot exist as man apart from these relationships. He stands related to God above all else and was created to live in covenant fellowship with God. This is unique to him. This is also the fundamental relationship in which he stands, which relationship governs every other relationship of his life. It is true, he also is related to his fellow man. He cannot live alone and still be man. He even stands related to his fellow man with the whole of his being. Furthermore, he also stands related to the creation about him. He was created as head of the creation and king over all. To the creation also he stands related with the whole of his being. And indeed his relationship to his fellow men and to the creation about him is ultimately and finally determined in the deepest sense of the word by his relationship to God. But the point that now needs emphasis is this: in all these relationships the essential unity of man must be understood and maintained.

GENESIS 2:7 AND MAN'S CREATION

The Unity of Man

In our discussion of man we must proceed from the description which is given to us of man's creation in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

This passage is crucial as far as the starting point of psychology is concerned, for it describes man as he came forth from the hand of his Creator. Genesis 2:7 is, of course, not the only passage which speaks of man's creation. In Genesis 1:26, 27 man's creation is described in terms of the fact that he is image-bearer. Psalm 139 alludes to the fact that man is fearfully and wonderfully made. Many other passages in Scripture as, e.g., Psalm 8 and I Corinthians 15:44, have indirect references to man and to the nature of man by virtue of his creation. Nevertheless, in Genesis 2:7 we have a crucial passage for our understanding of the nature of man.

In all the passages which either directly or indirectly refer to man as he was created by God, it is

important to note that Scripture does not isolate the physical or psychical character of man and speak of man's creation from one limited perspective. David, e.g., in Psalm 139, after noting that he has been fearfully and wonderfully made, concludes with the prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." The text does not abstract the physical and psychical from the spiritual, but defines man in terms of his special relationship to God. Man is always pictured in Scripture as having been created in God's image, as God's friend-servant, as the crown of God's creation, and from the viewpoint of his fall and redemption in Christ.

Thus, when we talk about man strictly from the psychological viewpoint, we are really isolating an element of his being. We do not then have the whole picture. This is not a little dangerous. At the same time, we cannot enter into all the religious and spiritual implications of man, for this is the proper study of Systematic Theology. We are of necessity bound to isolate man from a psychical viewpoint; but we must remember that our picture will as a result be incomplete. We are not in that case being totally honest with the Scriptural data, and we must be on our guard lest we end with the wrong balance as far as the psychological aspect of man is concerned.

Genesis 2:7 speaks of the creation of man as involving a twofold act of God. Man became a living soul as a result of: 1) God's creating him from the dust of the ground, and, 2) God's breathing into him the breath of life. It is very important that we note that, according to the text, one being (man, a living soul) was formed by the twofold act of creation. It would really be better, for that matter, to call this creative work one act of God with two aspects. Man did not become a living soul simply as a result of the breath of life breathed into his nostrils; he became a living soul as the result of both aspects of that creation. The fact that he became a living soul includes his being formed from the dust as much as it includes his reception of the breath of life.

It is striking to note that when Scripture in Genesis 1:20, 21, and 24, speaks of the creation of other living and moving creatures, it uses a word identical to the word used in Genesis 2:7. In verse 20 of chapter 1 we read, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life." In verse 21 we read, "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth." And in verse 24 we read, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind." In the expressions which are found in these verses, "creature that hath life" and "living creature," the same words are found which in Genesis 2:7 are translated, "living soul." Thus in 1:20 we could read, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the living soul that hath life"; in verse 21, "God created great whales and every living soul"; and in verse 24, "God said, Let the earth bring forth the living soul after his kind." The expression that is used in the Hebrew is *NePHeSH HaYaH*. The word *NePHeSH* in the Hebrew is the word for "soul." It is the equivalent of the Greek word *psuche*, from which we get our English word, psychology. The idea is, therefore, that man and all living and moving creatures share this in common that they are living souls. They are all of the earth earthy. That is, they all share a common soul-life. In this respect they are identical.

What does it mean that man was created from the dust of the ground? First of all, negatively, the reference is not to a particular aspect of man as he was created by God. We must not interpret the first part of Genesis 2:7 (man created from the dust) as referring to man's body, while the second part (the breath of life which was breathed into his nostrils) is made to refer to the soul of man. That is, by the way, a common interpretation. According to that theory, man was first made a sort

of dirt man, an inanimate object that was made alive by the breath of God. The fact is, however, that the first part of verse 7 does not refer simply to man's body. Nor does it refer to man's body as a living organism, like the animals, and that the breath of life was what made him different from the animals. That God created man from the dust suggests a distinct creation — distinct from all other creatures.

We emphasize again that a grave danger in the study of psychology is to try to chop man into pieces. It is Scriptural to speak of man as body, soul, spirit, person, mind, etc. But the nature of man can not be dissected so as to make it possible to say, this part is his body, this part is his soul, etc. Man is simply indivisible. It would probably be easier to understand man if he were divisible, but he is not. The notion that man's nature can be dissected or cut into pieces is rooted, really, in a misconception of Genesis 2:7. If we think of man's creation as being the creation of two different parts - the creation of the body first, and the addition of the soul - we conclude that the soul is like a caged animal that escapes at death. That is an erroneous conception. Formation from the dust must emphatically not be understood to be an explanation of the creation of the body, which body had to be raised to a higher level by the breath of life.

So true is this unity of man that, in speaking of aspects rather than parts, it is always true that the different aspects merge into each other in every facet of man's existence. A rose has the aspect of color, feel, aroma and shape; but all aspects blend into one rose. So it is with man.

Man A Living Creature

It is true only of man that we read, "the Lord God formed man." In connection with the other living creatures, who are also living souls according to Genesis 1, we read that God commanded the waters or the dust to bring forth these creatures. But in the case of man we read of a particular and distinct creative act of God. While, therefore, man shares a common soul-life with other living and moving creatures, he was nevertheless shaped and formed in a very special way. There is an indication here of a careful and fatherly forming of man as it were by God's own fingers. Already this indicates that man, though having a common soul-life with other living and moving creatures, is also unique.

The life which all creatures in God's creation share is something extraordinarily mysterious. Life itself is a mysterious gift of God that is really beyond explanation. The biologists, zoologists, chemists, etc., addicted to the theory of evolution, explain life in terms of chemical reaction. And evolutionists boast of the day when they will succeed in creating life in the test tube. Nevertheless, the fact remains that life is a unique gift of God that He gives to His creatures. Scientists can discover that a tree grows because of the process of photosynthesis. There is a chemical process involved here which is understandable to scientists through an empirical study of living plants. But the fact remains that a tree is a living tree. It has a principle of life which is unique to it. That life is the gift of God. In that hierarchy of the creation that God has formed, which constitutes the organic unity of the creation, there are higher and lower forms of life all of which culminate in man. The world of plants has a life unique to it. Animals are living souls. Worms are living souls. Fish are living souls. So are apes. But man is also a living soul. He shares with others this distinct feature. Nevertheless, he is higher than the animals, as a dog is higher than an earthworm. He stands at the pinnacle of the creation, as one who possesses life in a rational-moral way. He has a life that is above the other kinds of creatures, and in that sense he stands alone. God formed man and endowed him with the life which is unique to him. Just as man

was created in the image of God, so the animals were created in the image of man. The mysterious gift of life that all living creatures share and which is uniquely a gift of God is nevertheless sharply distinguished in the different kinds of creatures that God formed by His power. Man is created by the fingers of God. He is endowed with a nobility of character that is unique among all creatures, and as such he is created as king and lord in all the earthly creation.

All this makes the creation an organic unity. Man stands at the head. He stands as image bearer of God. Under him stands the world of animals and living and moving creatures, which themselves have their own hierarchy. The higher animals also possess certain processes of thought and of volition. In that respect they reflect man. The evolutionists, noticing this fact, and seeing a similarity between man and the higher primates, and certain other similarities as they go down the hierarchy of the levels of the creation, find proof of evolution. But what is forgotten is the fact that when God created all things He created things in such a way that each level of creation is reflected in a lower level. This kind of life which the creature higher than it has is reflected in the image of the creature lower than it. And so the creation is one.

Created From Dust

To turn now more specifically to the expressions which are found in Genesis 2:7, we must note first of all that the expression, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground," refers to his earthly existence in the world. Man was created body and soul. But his creation as one creature with body and soul refers to the fact that he was of the earth, earthy. He possessed an earthly side to his creation. The whole man was created an earthly creature and he is therefore one who is able to live only on this earth.

This means, in the first place, that man as a part of this earthly creation, is related to it, belongs to it, is a part of it, and can never escape from it. Man in his totality is part of the earth. The Scriptures do not say, "Your body is dust, and to dust your body will return." They say, "Thou art dust and to dust thou shall return." Thus the soul is part of creation from dust.

When God originally formed the heavens and the earth He created heaven and earth as two distinct and separate creations. The heavenly creation differs from the earthly creation. The earthly creation is material, made out of stuff that can be handled and measured. But the heavenly creation is spiritual. This does not mean that the heavenly creation is not substantive, but the substance that it possesses is different from the earthly creation. Its essential character is spiritual. It is made out of God's creative act in such a way that it has an essential difference from the earthly creation. It cannot be measured with earthly instruments and cannot be seen with earthly eyes. To put it a bit differently, God created the heavenly creation and the earthly creation in such a way that there is an impassable barrier between the two. The creatures who belong to this earthly creation cannot penetrate that barrier to enter into the heavenly creation; and the creatures God created to inhabit the heavenly creation cannot penetrate that barrier to come to earth.

It is true that, according to God's eternal purpose, man was created to live in fellowship with Him in heaven. And certainly the Scriptures teach us that the elect who are redeemed in the blood of Christ shall some day inherit the new heavens and the new earth. But it must be remembered that this is possible only through Jesus Christ. This is not a part of the work of the original creation, but is a part of the wonder of grace, the work of re-creation, performed by a miracle of God in the salvation of the church from sin and death.

So completely is this true that man cannot possibly go to heaven according to his original creation. He cannot live there. The heavenly creation is foreign to his whole makeup. Flesh and blood, according to I Corinthians 15:50, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It is only by the wonder of grace in Jesus Christ that the barrier has been broken down. Only because of the wonder of grace, i.e., because Christ became flesh and dwelt among us, is it possible for angels to come to this earth to visit the saints of God, and it is possible for God's people ultimately to go to heaven to inherit the kingdom of heaven. The heavens and the earth to become one in the new and heavenly creation which shall be established only because of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. "And so it is written, The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:46-49). Apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ it is impossible ever to go to heaven. This is true not only because of the fact that man has fallen and has become sinful, but even as he was created in a state of righteousness he cannot enter heaven, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. He was created of the dust of the earth and he is therefore, with the whole of his being, earthy.

In the second place, man's creation from the dust of the earth means that God created man as an organic part of the creation. Man is a part of the cosmos. He belongs to it and is dependent on it. Just as there is an interdependence on all the parts of the creation, so man is an integral part of that earthly world. He has to eat, drink, and breathe from this earthly creation. And this dependence involves the whole man, not just his body. The whole man (body and soul) has been created to live in this world. Man is adapted with the whole of his nature to this earth.

Even his senses by which he acquires knowledge are limited to this earthly creation. He cannot see angels nor hear them sing. He is bound to the earth.

Because man is of the earth, earthy, Scripture speaks of man as "flesh" when it wishes to emphasize that sinful man, under the punishment of God, is transient, passing, weak and subject to death. Peter, in his first epistle, 1: 24, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, says: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." The idea is that when man sins it is this earthly aspect of his creation which dominates in his life. With this in mind, i.e., that the entire nature of man is of the earth earthy, it is easy to see that it takes a tremendous miracle of grace to transform man to live in the heavenly creation.

Nevertheless, man is not only material substance. He possesses a soul. While, indeed this soul is also of the earth earthy, it is not material, but spiritual. That is, it is not made of "stuff" which can be measured, put under a microscope, weighed and subjected to empirical study and analysis. The fact that the soul is spiritual does not mean that the soul is capable of living in heaven. It is not. It remains of this earthly creation. Yet, it is spiritual in substance, although perhaps a better word to use is "psychical." It is the unique rational-moral life with which man is endowed and by means of which he is able to function as image bearer of God in the midst of God's creation.

The Breath of Life

But God also breathed into man the breath of life. This describes the second aspect of that one act of man's creation.

Negatively, this must not be understood, as we have already said, as referring to the soul or the person or the spirit of man. That breath of life is not an aspect of his psychological makeup. Nor is that breath of life to be interpreted as referring to certain ethical qualities which man possesses. It is not a definition of the regeneration of man. Whether a man is regenerated or unregenerated makes no difference as far as the breath of life is concerned. Even the unregenerated man is created in such a way that he possesses the breath of life.

Positively, we can say that this breath of life has as its effect that there is an aspect to the creation of man that enables him to live in a particular and unique relationship to God. If man were only of the earth earthy, God would be completely beyond man's reach, beyond man's comprehension and knowledge. It is the breath of life that gives to the whole man, body and soul, that spiritual dimension which makes it possible for him to stand in contact with God and God's Word. It is not that he possesses something opposed to or apart from the material or physical aspect of his creation; this simply means that he is able to sustain a relationship to his Creator. He is able to stand in an intellectual, volitional, moral relationship to God. He can transcend his earthly, material, physical environment. He is able to know God and the things of God. He can stand in a relationship of friendship with or rebellion against God. He can, as it were, stand in contact with things which belong to God. Nor does he lose this through the fall. Even after the fall man still stands in that relationship to God. He is still able to transcend his earthly environment and relate to spiritual truths. He is still able to know God and the things of heaven. And it ought to be emphasized that this is true of the whole man. It is not merely his person or spirit that stands in contact with heavenly things, but his whole nature can, because God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, live in a unique relationship to God his Maker. God created man in such a way that the whole of his nature was capable of standing in relation to God. Man, though of the world, can contemplate eternity, and that is only possible because God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

This too is unique to man. It makes man the kind of living soul which differs sharply and completely from every other living and moving creature in God's creation. Though in respect to his earthly and material existence he is part of this creation and can therefore, along with the animals, be called a living soul, he is more than this. He is capable of being image bearer. He is capable of standing as God's representative in the midst of this present world. He is capable of living in a moral and ethical relationship to Him Who created him. And neither sin nor redemption touches this fundamental aspect of man's creation.

But what especially makes this possible is the kind of life he possesses, a rational & moral life. With the whole of His being, in body and soul, his life is rational-moral. He has a mind and a will.

Because of both these aspects of man's creation he stands as one living soul in the midst of God's world. Formed from the dust of the earth and possessing the breath of God in his nostrils, he occupies a unique position in the creation. It is this that places man in the threefold relationship we mentioned above. Because of the nature of his creation, he stands first of all in relationship to

God. This is the fundamental and critical relationship in which he stands which basically determines all the other relationships of his life. In his relationships to his fellow men and to the creation about him the ethical character of that relationship is determined by the ethical character of his relationship to God. If he stands in relation to God as friend servant, representing God's cause in the midst of the world, loving the Lord his God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, he lives also in the relationship of love to his fellow man. He rules over the creation as king under God to the praise and glory of his Creator. But if his relationship to God is that of enemy and rebel, so that he hates God, opposes Him and wars against Him, this determines his relationship also to his fellow men and to the creation. Then he also hates his fellow man, seeks only himself, and walks in disobedience to the commands of God. In relation to the creation, he no longer represents God's cause but represents the cause of Satan and the powers of darkness. He rules in the creation as tyrant and despot, forcing the creation to serve his own evil and lustful purposes.

But because he possesses the breath of life, he cannot escape the fact that his relationship to God is the fundamental relationship in which he stands. He is a living soul with two aspects, two dimensions to his creation, both of which make him what he is.

Because he is fallen, no possibility of any proper relationship on any level can be expected of him. All the problems of life have their roots in the fact that man has become God's enemy. The solution, therefore, to all life's problems lies in only one direction - in the restoration of that relationship between himself and God. Because sin lies at the root, sin must be removed. And only when sin is removed through the cleansing and atoning power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can the redeemed man once again live not only in proper relationship to God, but also in proper relationship to his fellow man and to the creation about him.

Chapter III: BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

While Scripture emphasizes again and again that man is one living soul, Scripture also speaks of various aspects of man which can be distinguished from each other: body, soul, and spirit. In other connections Scripture also speaks of man's heart, flesh, and conscience. It is to these concepts in Scripture that we now turn.

Before we enter into a discussion of these various concepts in Scripture however, we must be reminded once again that we may not chop man into parts. Man was created as one living soul, and not one single aspect of man can be understood apart from each other aspect. Man's body is the kind of body that alone can be united to his soul. And man's soul can only function in relation to the particular body with which it is united and which man receives from the hand of his Creator. Nor can man's person be separated from soul and body. He is a person because he possesses a rational and moral nature. The same is true of the spirit and heart. Neither is anything apart from the other aspects of man and all can and do function only in the whole man. God created man as a whole. In fact, more wonderfully, the body and soul of an individual belong so closely to each other that neither aspect is able to function without the other, nor is the body of one individual able to function with the soul of another—if such could even be considered possible.

The concepts body, soul, and spirit are used in many different ways in Scripture. The concepts are rich, broad, and extensive. Besides, there is in Scripture no formal treatments of the concepts from a psychological point of view. We will therefore have to develop the concepts from implications which we glean from Scriptural data.

Bearing these thoughts in mind we turn now to a discussion of these individual concepts.

THE BODY

Scripture uses different terms that stand related to the one fundamental concept of man's body. Scripture speaks of the fact that man is dust and flesh. Together they designate man's earthly nature, i.e., that he is of the earth, earthy: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Furthermore, these same terms indicate man's smallness and insignificance, especially in the whole universe of God's creation: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance" (Is. 40:15). In his entirety man is nothing but dust and ashes. Hence also man is only flesh. The word "flesh" indicates precisely man from the viewpoint of his weakness and need: "The voice said, Cry. And he said. What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Is. 40:6-8). This same term "flesh" has also the connotation of man from the viewpoint of his sin. It designates man's

ethical and moral perversion and the depravity of his nature. It is for this reason that in the regenerated child of God there is the constant and unrelenting struggle between the work of the spirit and man's sinful flesh: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Sensations

These concepts stand closely connected with man's body. It is not our purpose to go into detail concerning the physiological structure of man's body. This information can better be obtained from a good textbook on human physiology. But there are a few remarks concerning man's body that we must mention in this connection. God, in creating man with a body, created man with five senses—sight, hearing, smelling, touch, and taste. These five senses are the means by which man, with the whole of his being, stands in contact with the world about him. They are the doors through which stream an unending river of sensations. These sensations pour into us without cessation, so that we are able to know the world that God has created and in which God has placed us. And, because the creation is God's revelation of Himself, they are the means whereby we are able to know God through the Word that He speaks and the means by which we are able to stand in relationship to our Creator. Apart from the objective Word of God in the creation, no knowledge of God is possible in the psychological sense. If one considers knowledge from a spiritual viewpoint, all such knowledge of God is suppressed by the ungodly (Romans 1:18) and the natural man is unable to know the things of God.

These sensations stream into us whether we are conscious of them or not. We receive, in fact, many sensations of which we are either not conscious or only peripherally conscious. And though they are either not conscious or only semi-conscious, we can often recall them through memory. One can, for example, be reading a book when another says something to him; and, though not consciously aware of hearing anything at the time, if he is asked several minutes later what was said, he will often be able to recall it.

One continues to receive this stream of sensations even while he is asleep. That is plain from the fact that one will be awakened by the ringing of the telephone and will not be bothered at all by sounds to which he is accustomed. Even in sleep, obviously, there is a certain discrimination and interpretation exercised with respect to the sounds heard. And, as far as the waking state is concerned, we are conscious only of those things to which we direct our attention. We may, e.g., be standing in a room and concentrating our attention on a conversation and not be consciously aware of the color of the walls, though we certainly "see" them.

The Nervous System

Within the body and connected to the senses is the nervous system. This nervous system is composed of two parts: 1) The nervous system proper which includes the sensory and motor nerves, and 2) The brain, which though a part of the nervous system is also its center. Scientists even today know very little about the nervous system. It is a marvelous handiwork of God. Even the little bit of knowledge that we have of the eye, e.g., makes it clear that the eye is nothing less than amazing. Sensations from the outside world are transformed into electrical impulses and carried from the sense organs, through the system of nerves, to the brain. And commands which are given in the brain are again transformed into electrical impulses which cause the various

muscles of the body to move and which enable the human organism to function. What is amazing, too, is that the external stimuli, that are transformed into electrical impulses and are carried to the brain by way of sensory nerves, retain their identity. The color of a pen, for example, is recognized by the brain as a result of electrical impulses sent from the retina of the eye. We cannot comprehend how that happens.

We know further concerning the brain that it operates as a central switchboard. It receives impulses through the sensory nerves and transmits impulses through the motor nerves, but in doing so it collects, organizes, and enables one to comprehend all the information that is revealed through the senses.

There are especially two things about our senses and the sensations we receive which we accept on the basis of Scripture, but that cannot be proved by any rational line of argumentation. The first is that our senses give to us an accurate representation of the creation about us. This has been repeatedly denied throughout the history of philosophy and psychology. At the bottom of all the philosophical theories that deny this, as, e.g., the philosophical system called Idealism, is a distrust of the senses. We insist, however, that the senses are trustworthy, that what appears to the senses as different from what it is (a stick held in the water, for example, which appears to be bent) is explainable by other elements of reality (the refraction of light). We believe on the basis of Scripture and the Scriptural doctrine of revelation that what we see with our senses is what is truly there. All philosophical arguments to the contrary cannot shake this fundamental truth. To deny this is ultimately to commit oneself to agnosticism.

The second point that needs to be emphasized is that our senses give us a complete knowledge of the creation. The creation, as God formed it, has five facets to it, the facets of sound, color and shape and size, odor, texture, and taste. Because the creation has five facets to it there is one of these facets available to us by means of each of our senses, so that when we receive sensations through our individual senses, our senses pick up the entire character of each creature we examine. The creation does not have an additional dimension to it that is unavailable to our five senses. This too cannot be proved by rationalistic argumentation. We believe this on the basis of faith, and the object of our faith is the truth of revelation. This does not, of course, preclude the use of microscopes and telescopes in the exploration of parts of the creation.

This whole idea is denied by the theory of extra-sensory perception. The very name indicates that those who believe in this maintain that there is a dimension to the creation which is not available to us through the five senses, but which is available to some who possess extra-sensory perception in some degree. There are implications and dimensions, so they argue, to the creation which are not available in ordinary ways, but which we can acquire through extraordinary powers.

All this we repudiate on the basis of Scripture. When God created this earthly creation it was the instrument of revelation through the means of which we come to know the God of heaven and earth. This implies that our knowledge of the creation, which we possess by means of our senses, is a complete knowledge. If this were not the case, revelation would be impossible. Even now, after the fall, when God reveals Himself to us in Scripture, the revelation of God is still only available to us through the means of our earthly senses. Although Scripture is given by divine inspiration, nevertheless Scripture remains a human book with human words written on material paper that belongs to this earthly creation.

Although therefore it is because of the breath of life that man has a knowledge of God, this knowledge of God comes to us through the instrumentality of the body. It does not come in any other way. To say that it does leads one into the slough of mysticism and subjectivism, both of which are ultimately agnosticism.

Sin and Its Effects

It is perhaps worth our while to say a bit more about this in connection with man's fall from his original state of rectitude. All of Scripture teaches us that creation was made by the Word of God: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). This means that in the creative act God spoke a word. That word became, in the first place, the power that called the creature into existence. The elm tree, as it was originally created, was formed by God's creative word that called that particular creature into existence. That word made that creature to be there and gave to that creature its form and shape and essential character.

In the second place, that same word of God defined the relationship in which that tree stood, first of all, to God, and secondly, to all the creation about it in its own particular and unique place which it occupied in the organism of God's creation. God's word defined that relationship. God said, as it were, by His Word, that this is the place this tree shall occupy in relation to all other trees, in relation to the whole world of plants, in relation to the soil in which it is planted, in relation to the air it breathes, in relation to the animals that find shade under its branches, and in relation to the food that comes from its fruit, etc., etc. How this tree stands in its organic unity with the whole of creation God's word defines.

In the third place, that creative word of God continues to be spoken so that that tree continues to exist. God continuously speaks that word and by it the creature has its life and being. This act of God is generally known as God's providential upholding and ruling of His creation.

In the fourth place, that same word of God defines the purpose that God has in mind for that tree. It defines that purpose specifically and concretely and as that tree stands in relationship to the whole of the creation.

In the fifth place, because of all this that word of God constitutes, in the truest sense of the word, the essence of that tree. That is what essence is. The essence of a tree is that word of God defining all those things.

Now when Adam stood in the midst of God's creation, he could hear that word of God. He could therefore understand all these things perfectly — so much so, that he could see the relationship in which that tree stood to God, to the whole creation and to himself.

Sin destroyed all this. There are two reasons why this is true. In the first place, the curse came on that tree and upon the whole of the creation. Because the curse has come on that tree, the Word of God that we hear is now the word of God's anger and curse. That word of God's curse is so strong that it drowns out the original word in the creature. Secondly, sin has affected us. When Adam named the animals, the names that he gave to the animals were names which were echoes of God's Word and which defined all the relationships and truths concerning the individual animal. We

cannot do that any more. We cannot even see the essence of the tree. The best we can do is say that the essence of the cow is its “cowness”, that which makes it uniquely a cow, and the essence of a horse is its “horseness”, that which makes it uniquely a horse—which is, of course, saying almost nothing. Beyond this however we cannot go.

The Importance of Scripture

However, God gave us Scripture, and Scripture gives us the fundamental principle of all these things. The central truth of the revelation of God in Scripture is the truth of Jesus Christ. Through Scripture we are able to understand the fundamental truths also of this creation. We are able to understand that the purpose of every creature is to be redeemed in the new creation through the cosmic significance of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are able to see that the fundamental relationship in which all things stand to God is a relationship in which they stand to God through Jesus Christ.

It must not be forgotten that in the middle of that creation God placed man. Man is also a word of God. The creative word by which man was formed is also a word which defines man's relation to God, his relation to the whole creation, and his relation to his fellow man. Because he is created to be an integral part of the creation, there is a certain correspondence between the Word of God in man and the Word of God in the creation about him, a correspondence which enables man to hear the word of God in the things that God made. The essential part of that is that man was created with five senses that give him contact with the objective world in which he lives. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. That is why he can hear that word of God. Since the fall destroyed his spiritual ability to see that word of God, that power is principally restored only through Jesus Christ and the redeeming work of grace which Christ performs in the hearts of His elect. Again we can see that the ultimate purpose of God in all the things which He does is the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell.

Thus also the spiritual dimension of man's existence stands connected with the functioning of his body. As we said, even Scripture belongs to the objective world. It must be read. We cannot know Scripture except we see the words on the pages of Scripture with our eyes or hear these words read with our ears. The same thing is true of the preaching and the sacraments. We hear the preaching and see the elements of the sacraments. Because of sin, the preaching and the sacraments require also the operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart, for the natural man cannot discern the things of God. But it remains true that there is no knowledge of God apart from the knowledge obtained through the senses. There must be faith, which is a spiritual power given by God also through the operation of the Spirit. But the fact is that faith does not exist apart from knowledge, and that knowledge is obtained through the senses. God adapts His revelation to our senses. Nothing that we know, nor the knowledge that we possess, comes to us in any other way than through our senses.

To sum it up, the data which comes to man from external sources comes through the senses, but the comprehension, assimilation, belief, and application result from the functioning of the whole man in body and soul.

SOUL AND SPIRIT

Differences From Animals

As we turn to a discussion of the concept soul there are a number of problems that we encounter. One such problem is: how does the soul of man compare to and differ from that of the animals? Man, as we noticed earlier, is not unique in that he has a soul; animals also have souls. Scripture declares concerning animals that their soul is in the blood. Leviticus 17:11 states: "The life of the flesh is in the blood," but the Hebrew word for "life" is NePHeSH, the same as that used for soul in Genesis 2:7. The idea is not simply that the text speaks of the life of animals; the emphasis falls rather upon the fact that the soul of an animal is in its blood. It is true, of course, that when an animal's blood is shed, his life is gone. But what Scripture means is that the life peculiar to the animal is in its blood. The same cannot be said of man. When a man's blood is shed, his physical life is gone; but he does not cease to exist as the animal does. The life of man, then, differs from the life of animals, as in turn the life of animals differs from that of plants. Plants also have life, but, as far as we know, have no soul. Animals are distinct from plants not only in the power of locomotion, but also in this that the animal possesses a soul life. It is capable of some kind of conscious activity that is unique to the soul. The type of activity, the degree of awareness and consciousness differs from animal to animal. God created the animal world as an organic unity with all the parts interrelated and connected to each other. It is very well possible that before the fall, the serpent was the connecting link between animals and man, for Eve was apparently not at all surprised at the serpent's ability to speak. The serpent probably held the highest level of animal soul life in all the animal kingdom.

Animal psychology is a fascinating subject. Some animals have an ability to figure things out and to act on the basis of conclusions to which they come. There are also very simple forms of animal life. But we are interested, in this connection, only with the fact that animals do indeed have a soul that is in the blood. There are questions which arise in relation to that, questions which deal with the precise nature of the soul, how the soul is distinct from the brain, how it is different from man's soul, etc. Are these differences only in quantity or are they qualitative and essential?

However these things may be, both animals and men possess a certain soul life. But because the soul life of the animal is in its blood and because when animals die and their blood is spilled their life is gone, the soul life of an animal differs from that of a man. The difference is this: man's soul life is rational and moral, while the soul life of animals is only a dim reflection of this. Animals are created in the image of man even as man is created in the image of God.

Relation between Soul And Body

A second question that arises in our discussion of the soul is: what is the connection between the soul and the body? This is a very difficult question. Over the years, a number of different answers have been given to this question. Materialism simply denies the existence of the soul altogether and explains psychical phenomena in terms of chemical reactions or the interplay of electrical charges that can be understood and explained in terms of physical laws.

Idealism, on the other hand, denies all that is material and therefore also denies the body. Idealism never has any problem with the question of the relation between the soul and the body because the body simply does not exist. All that exists is Idea. In the history of philosophy the theory of Parallelism has been developed to explain this connection between soul and body. Parallelism teaches that there is no connection between the soul and body, but that the two function in a way

analogous to two finely tuned clocks that keep perfect time. God created both soul and body and as a master Craftsman. He so finely tuned both, that although there is no interaction between them, they function in unison and in perfect agreement with each other. This explanation gained in its day a great deal of support.

Another theory is the theory of Interactionism. This theory was first proposed by the philosopher Rene Descartes. He took the position that, although the body and soul are distinct from each other, both are open to influences from each other. Although he did not explain the way in which they are open to influences to each other, he found the point of juncture in the pineal gland, a theory which is of no help at all.

Occasionalism was first proposed by Malebranche and Geulincx. Their theory was that no interaction of any kind exists between the soul and body. There is only a repeated appearance of mutual influence, which is due to the interference of God. God acts directly upon the soul and body so that, while there is no actual interaction, the impression is left that there is.

Others have attempted to solve this problem by making distinctions within the concepts soul and body. One can speak, e.g., of a physical body and a psychical body on the one hand, and a physical soul and a psychical soul on the other hand. The chasm between the soul and body is crossed then at the point where the psychical body and physical soul touch each other.

The difficulty with all these distinctions and theories is that they really do not succeed in solving the problem. Man is composed of body and soul. The body is material and the soul is spiritual. The question is: how is it possible to bridge the chasm between the soul and body when one is material and the other spiritual? How can that chasm which is created by the essential difference between body and soul be bridged? What constitutes the bridge between the two? Or to put the question in a somewhat different form, sensory impulses are carried not only to the brain, but also through the brain, to the soul, which is the final receptor of all sensory perceptions. And the soul is not only a receptor, it is also the conscious power in man which gives commands through the brain. The question then is, how do impulses from the brain, which are physical, enter the soul, which is spiritual? How can the chasm existing between these two aspects of man be bridged? The problem is lessened somewhat when we remember that when we say the soul is spiritual, we do not mean, heavenly; rather we mean, different in the quality of the substance; but still of this earth earthy.

The Nature of the Soul

Another problem that we face is the problem of whether the soul is in fact a metaphysical reality. Is there a definite substance within man, distinct from the body, spiritual in essence, which is a metaphysical substance with its own essential properties? H. Bavinck in his book *Biblical Psychology*, tends to deny that the soul possesses such a reality and prefers to speak of the soul in terms of a particular and unique principle of life which belongs to man. Yet, while adopting this position, he seems to ascribe to the spirit that metaphysical reality which he takes from the soul. Rev. Hoeksema, when he defines soul, defines it in such a way that he gives substantial and essential reality to the soul. His definition is: "That spiritual subsistence or entity which is the seat of life from a rational, volitional viewpoint." His use of the words "subsistence" and "entity" indicates that he ascribes to the soul metaphysical reality.

Thus the soul life of animals is, therefore, physical in the most basic sense of the word, although the physical does not negate a certain “psychical” aspect to an animal’s life. But the soul of man is “spiritual.” We must be careful here, for we do not mean “spiritual” in the sense of godly: A spiritual man is a godly man. Nor do we mean spiritual in the sense of God being a Spirit (John 4:24). Rather, the soul is a substance in its own right. In the metaphysical sense of the word, a soul is substantial. But a soul is a substance which differs from the body which is material. A soul is spiritual in a way that is roughly analogous to an angel, who, while not physical, is a real, substantial being.

As we attempt to find answers to these questions, the following points can be mentioned. Although the Scriptures distinguish between "soul" and "spirit" there is no essential difference between the two — using the word "essential" in its etymological sense. They are the same in essence. The Scriptures do not therefore teach a certain trichotomy — that man is composed of three distinct and individual substances. It is, therefore, correct to say that man is composed of body and soul or, perhaps better, man is composed of body and soul-spirit.

It is also clear from Scripture that the soul-spirit constitutes a separate entity in man. It is, in distinction from the body, spiritual in character and essence.

This soul-spirit in man is the basic fundamental principle of his life. Part of our difficulty in understanding this entire concept lies in the difficulty of defining life. What is life? It is certainly more than chemical reactions. If it were limited to chemical reactions scientists could undoubtedly create it in the laboratory. They have not nor will they ever be able to do this. They will almost certainly be able to make something which resembles life - especially because in the organic unity of the creation there are various creatures which seem to come close to bridging the gap between organic and inorganic life, such as e.g. viruses - but it is an absolute certainty that they will never be able to create life itself. God is the only source and creator of life. But the point is that we do not know what life is. It is something created by God, surely, but it defies any attempt on our part to define it. However this may be, man's life, in the whole of his nature, is soul-spirit life. And the unique character of that life is that it is rational, volitional life. Animals, as we have already said, also have a soul. But their soul-life or psychical life (thinking, willing, and feeling on an animal level) is in their blood. The soul-spirit life of man is rational and moral life. This is its deepest character.

Scripture defines life as fellowship with God. The curse is death because the curse is God’s word of anger and condemnation which drives that which is cursed away from Him which means that he dies. We sing in a versification of Psalm 73, “To live apart from God is death...” Because man was created as the head of the creation and was organically united to it, when the curse and death came upon him, the curse and death came on the whole creation. The work of Christ brings life to His elect and to the whole creation, for Christ is Head over all. This life shall be perfectly realized in the world to come. He is life: “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4).

We must not hold to the idea, however, that the relationship of soul-spirit and body is as the ancient Greeks spoke of it; as if the soul is some kind of bird locked up within the cage of the body which at last escapes at the moment of death. Rather, the soul permeates and interpenetrates the entire body. We may not say, e.g., that the soul is located in the brain, or in the chest cavity, or in the abdominal cavity. We may not say that the soul can be discovered in a certain part of the body. It is impossible to find the soul by dissecting various organs of the body. The soul

permeates and interpenetrates every part of that body and is completely interwoven with it and inseparably connected to it.

One perhaps immediately thinks of the fact that Scripture sometimes speaks of death as being a separation of soul and body, which would seem to suggest that the soul can be separated easily from the body. But we must remind ourselves of the fact that death as the sentence of God upon sinful man is not normal in man's existence, but is emphatically abnormal. God created man to live, and death is God's divine interference with that which is normal. It is God's divine wrath, so that death tears to pieces that which belongs together. The fact of death and the fact that Scripture defines death in terms of separation of soul and body does not invalidate the truth that the soul and body interpenetrate each other completely.

So true is this that, in some sense of the word, the soul is transmitted through generations, from parents to children. While we are not interested here in getting into the old discussion of the relative merits of traducianism vs. creationism, we must not say and cannot say that only the body is transmitted through conception and birth. This is evident from the fact that there are certain qualities of the soul and certain characteristics of the soul that are obviously transmitted from parents to children. Such gifts as intelligence, music, mathematical ability, character traits, and such like things, which belong emphatically to the soul and not to the body apart from the soul, are nevertheless transmitted from parents to their children. They are communicated through conception and generation and are not as such created. A child inherits not only the bodily looks of his parents but he inherits also soul-like qualities. These are transmitted in such a way that children resemble their parents also in these respects.

There is at this point a great mystery. The mystery centers in the question of how the soul-spirit and body can exist together interrelated with each other when one substance is essentially material and the other is essentially spiritual. Although finally our answer to this problem must be what the Psalmist expresses in Psalm 139:14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," we must be careful that we understand the meaning of the word "spiritual." When we speak of the soul-spirit as spiritual, the meaning is not spiritual in the sense of the heavenly creation that is also spiritual. Even our souls must be transformed before they are able to enter glory, and this transformation is not only necessary because of sin, so that the transformation involves the cleansing from sin; but it involves a change, wrought by grace, of that which is created to live in this world to that which is recreated to live in heaven. Also our soul-spirit is of the earth earthy and is completely adapted to life in this present creation. Nor does the term "spiritual" refer to moral and ethical purity in the sense in which we use the word, e.g., in the expression, "He is a very spiritual man." Although the soul-spirit is spiritual, its essential spirituality is best expressed by the negative term non-material. It is this difficulty with the definition of the term that gives us difficulty in understanding this problem.

Man's Spirit

Although the spirit of man is essentially the same as the soul, the term "spirit" nevertheless looks at the soul from a different viewpoint. That difference is essentially the same difference as is found in the two expressions used in Genesis 2:7: man was on the one hand taken from the dust of the ground, and on the other hand God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The spirit is not therefore a distinct metaphysical substance in man. It looks at the soul of man particularly from the viewpoint of the soul's relationship to God. When Jesus died on the cross, He commended His

spirit to God (Luke 23:46). Solomon speaks of the fact that at death our spirit returns unto God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This same idea is clear from I Corinthians 2, particularly verses 10 and 11. Paul is speaking here of the mysteries, the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. In verse 9 he writes: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This is true because these are spiritual things. In verse 10 Paul writes, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Then the apostle adds, "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." That is, of course, a reference to the Holy Spirit. In verse 11 the apostle goes on to say that there is an analogy of this in man: "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." To this he adds in verse 12: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." The Authorized Version is correct here when the word "spirit" in the phrase, "spirit which is of God" is not capitalized. The apostle is saying two things. He is saying that it is because of the spirit in us that we are able to know the things that are of God and that the spirit is especially important in self-consciousness. In self-consciousness it relates to our awareness of what God has made us in Christ - things which can be spiritually discerned only.

Thus man possesses a soul-life which is the highest life in all this creation and which enables man on the one hand to live in a relationship to God, and on the other hand, to stand at the head of the whole creation as its king. Man's life of soul-spirit is rational and volitional.

This distinction is also reflected in Scriptural terminology. Scripture distinguishes between the body (*soma*), the soul (NePHeSH or *psuche*), and the spirit (RuaCH or *pneuma*). I Thessalonians 5:23 mentions all three: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What was breathed into man's nostrils was the breath of life. It is this word which is also translated in Proverbs 20:27 by spirit: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." The New Testament equivalent of this Hebrew word is *pneuma*. But in Matthew 26:36 we read that Jesus spoke of the fact that His "soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

The spirit therefore is, though identical with the soul, that aspect of the soul which makes it possible for man to live in relationship to God, i.e., to know Him, to know the things of God, to live in a moral ethical relationship with God. When we speak of the soul, we speak of the fact that man has a rational moral life and is able to live as a thinking and willing creature in the midst of God's world. It is precisely this rational and moral life which is necessary also to enable man to live in an ethical relationship with God. But that he is a rational moral creature is no guarantee that he in fact does know God. It takes rationality and morality to know God, but that in itself will not assure that he will. In order to know God this rational moral creature must also have a spirit; there must be a spiritual aspect or dimension to man's nature. It is the spirit that makes it possible for man to be more than a creature of this world, to know that God is and must be served, to know angels and devils. Without a spirit, man could not know spiritual things.

This distinction therefore between soul and spirit (though both terms refer to the same substance) is in keeping with our understanding of the twofold act of creation. Man is part of this earthly creation by virtue of his having been formed from the dust of the earth. But man stands in relationship to spiritual things because of the breath of life that God breathed into his nostrils.

Thus, because of this unique character of man's nature man stands as the highest of all God's creatures.

Chapter IV: PERSON, CONSCIENCE, AND HEART

PERSON

Scripture itself does not speak of person. That is, it does not use the term person at all in the sense in which we use it in psychology. In our English translation the term does sometimes appear, as in such expressions: "God is no respecter of persons." Or in Hebrews 1:3 the King James translation has: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." But in all of these instances the word is not used in the sense in which it is used in psychology. In the latter passage (Hebrews 1:3) the word that is used in the Greek could better be translated, "essence" or "subsistence."

Definition

Part of the difficulty which the early church faced in defending the doctrines of the trinity and the person and natures of Christ was precisely the problem of defining the key term "person." Not until the church adequately defined this concept was the church able to write the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Creed. In opposition to the heresies of Arianism, Semi-Arianism, Appolonarianism, and Nestorianism the church defined the Trinity in terms of the truth that God is three in person and one in essence, and defined the doctrine of Christ in terms of two natures perfectly united in the one person of the eternal Son of God. (For an extended treatment of this subject confer my notes on these controversies in the syllabus, *Ancient Church History*.)

But, though Scripture does not mention the term "person" as such, it nevertheless implies this concept. In fact, especially in connection with the doctrines of the trinity and person and natures of Christ, it is perhaps more in keeping with Scripture's emphasis to distinguish between person and nature than to distinguish between soul and body.

At any rate, the Greek word for "person" as it appears in the New Testament and as it was finally used in the church is the word *prosopon*, which means literally, "towards the eyes." This is probably intended to convey the idea that the person is especially manifest in the eyes of an individual. One can learn more about a person from his eyes than in any other way. Our English word "person," however, comes from the Latin word *persona*, which means literally, "to sound through." The term came from Latin drama. All the players wore masks. The *personae* (cast) were those who sounded through the mask. The word, therefore, took on a broader meaning, namely, that the person is what comes to expression through the mask.

In his *Catechetics Notes*, originally prepared for use in the Seminary, Rev. Hoeksema defined the "person" as, "an individual subsistence in a rational, moral nature." There are certain objections that can be brought against this definition as, e.g., the ambiguity of the key term in the definition: "subsistence." Nevertheless, it is very difficult to formulate a formal and satisfactory definition of this concept and this definition can well serve our purposes with the following addition; "which subsistence is the subject of all the activity of the nature."

The early church, in its final creedal definition of the doctrines of the trinity and of Christ, made a distinction between person and nature. From a certain point of view, this distinction is more

suitable than the distinction between body and soul. It is an important distinction on the one hand because it is fundamental to our understanding of the incarnation; and, on the other hand, it helps us to understand that the nature is transmitted through generation from parents to children, while the person is "created" by God. These two ideas stand related to each other. Christ received His human nature from His mother; but personally our Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the trinity, the person of the eternal Son. In the one person of the Son, Christ unites the human and the divine natures.

Bearing in mind this distinction, the term "nature" looks at man from the viewpoint of his essence. The difference between "nature" and "essence" is not fundamental. The two terms refer to the same thing, but look at it from a different perspective. The essence of a thing is its being, just as the essence of God is His own eternal and unchangeable being. The nature is the essence from the viewpoint of its *activity*. The nature includes therefore the body and the soul-spirit but looks at the entire man from the viewpoint of his activity. The person, on the other hand, is the subject of all the activity of the nature. That is, the person is that part of man which originates and actually performs all the activity, although it is able to do this activity only through the nature. The nature is the instrument of the activity of the person. Christ possessed the divine nature in such a way that He was truly very God of very God. To that divine nature He united the human nature which He had received from His mother. This human nature which was united to the divine nature was a complete human nature including both body and soul-spirit.

Only a rational, moral nature can be a personal nature. An animal that does not possess a rational, moral nature cannot be a person. Animals have a kind of soul life, a sort of instinctual life that reflects dimly the rational and moral nature of man. This is why, incidentally, a study of comparative anatomy will reveal similarities between animals and man. In spite of the similarities however, the animal's soul life is not rational and moral. Animals therefore cannot have personal natures. It is rather interesting in this connection to note that animals do not have faces. They have noses and eyes and snouts; but they do not have faces. Only humans have faces, and that is probably because especially the face of a man reveals his person. Nevertheless, the point is that a person can subsist only in a nature that has a mind and a will. And a nature that is rational and volitional must of necessity be also a personal nature. It is impossible to conceive of an impersonal, rational, volitional nature. But it is likewise impossible to conceive of a person existing apart from a nature with a mind and a will. A rational moral nature must be a personal nature. An impersonal rational and moral nature is an impossibility. This is true of Christ as well. Christ had no human person, but His human nature was nevertheless a personal nature because the divine person assumed to Himself the human nature. For this reason too we do not believe that the eternal Son of God, when He came into our flesh, could have left His divine nature in heaven. That divine nature could not exist in the abstract, apart from His divine person. Christ, as it were, took His divine nature with Him, uniting the divine and the human nature in the one divine person. That is, of course, the wonder and the mystery of the incarnation. But the point is, at any rate, that there cannot exist a rational moral nature with a person, and there cannot be a person without a rational and moral nature. The two belong together.

The Functioning of the Person

The person is the subject of all the activity of the nature. That person is, in a sense, unchangeable--unchangeable through all of life and through death on into eternity. The state of

that person may change; the conditions of his life may be drastically altered; but as to its essential character the person remains unchanged. An individual always remains the same person from the moment of his birth on into all eternity, whether he spends eternity in heaven or in hell. There is, so to speak, an unchangeable core to man's being that remains always the subject of his activities.

All the activities of the nature therefore are, in a very real sense, activities of his person. The "I" is my person. I am conceived. I am born. I grow up. I live. I eat. I drink. I sleep. I run. I grow old. I love or hate. I am happy or sad. I die. And I go to heaven. Throughout, the person is the subject. From the very moment of conception, the person functions through the nature. So true is this that at the moment of death I die. Not, you notice, my body dies; but I die. And I go to the grave. At the same time, it is also true that at the moment of death I go to heaven. I await the return of Christ. And at the moment of Christ's return I live with body and soul in everlasting perfection in glory.

This is evidently the Scriptural presentation of the death of Christ. We do not read that Christ's body arose, but that "Christ was raised up from the dead" (Romans 6:4). Christ, as the subject of all His activities, went to the grave - though it is surely true at the same time that He also went to glory, as is evident from His word to the thief on the cross: "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Even dying, apparently, is an activity of which the person of man is the passive subject; although Christ was also active in His death, for it was part of His obedience to the will of God.

The person is united with the nature at the moment of conception. This is clear from what David writes, e.g., in Psalm 139: "For thou hast possessed *my* reins: thou hast covered *me* in *my* mother's womb.... *I* am fearfully and wonderfully made.... *My* substance was not hid from thee, when *I* was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see *my* substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my* members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them" (vss. 13-16).

From this it is clear that abortion is murder. If abortion is performed one second after conception it is still murder. It is murder because it is the destruction of a person. The person remains no matter what happens, no matter what may be the experience of an individual. That person lives on, even after abortion has been performed. That person remains intact from the moment that God forms it at conception into all eternity. Fundamentally and basically it is always the same. It is the same person who is conceived in the womb who also goes beyond death into eternity.

The person permeates the whole of man's nature and gives to the nature its own unique individuality. It was in this connection that the problem of creationism versus traducianism troubled the church from the time of the early church fathers (Tertullian and Augustine) all the way to the Scholastics. The question, to put it simply, was: "is the soul created by God, or is it inherited from the parents?" The church, of course, was not interested in this question as a matter of psychology. It became an issue as it involved the doctrine of original sin. The question was: Granting that sin is a corruption of the nature, how is depravity transmitted from parent to child? According to the creationists, the soul was created by God at the time of conception. But it seemed to some church fathers that original sin, as a corruption of the nature, could be explained only in terms of traducianism. Traducianists, incidentally, also noted that a child's character often resembles that of his parents. Even that, they claimed, seemed to give support to the idea that the soul was transmitted through conception and birth.

But the whole controversy of creationism versus traducianism involves the question that has been wrongly put. The controversy revolves around whether or not the soul was created — as if the soul is of separate existence. The real answer to the problem of seeking an explanation of original sin lies not in a distinction between the soul and body, but in the distinction between the person and the nature. The person is created; the nature is inherited. The nature comes from the parents. Guilt is transmitted through the person; corruption through the nature (Confession of Faith, 14).

The Harmony of Person and Nature

The person, which comes from God, gives its own individual character to each nature, so that it makes of each man a distinct, separate, individual creature. Although, having said this, it must be added that the person does not “mold” the nature.

In a certain sense of the word it is not quite correct to say that the person is created by God. To say that the person is created is to imply that the person forms a substantial and essential part of man's being. This would give the person some kind of metaphysical existence in distinction from the nature. This would be incorrect. It is perhaps better to say that the person is the result of the direct act of God upon the nature at the moment of conception which gives to the nature its unique individuality.

This unique individuality is, of course, something that exists in the entire creation. According to scientists, there are no two snowflakes which are exactly alike. The same is true of every leaf on a tree. Each has its own unique pattern. Likewise, no two persons are alike — from the beginning to the end of time. That is a marvelous thing. There never have been, are not now, and never will be two people who are alike. This is true even of identical twins. Even though they look alike in all respects, they nevertheless have remarkably different personalities, and there is such a vast difference between their persons that although they have many things in common, they are easily distinguished by those who know them.

The nature, though inherited from the parents, is in perfect harmony with the person. In this marvelous work of God there is nothing arbitrary or mechanical as if, so to speak, the individual and personal stamp which God places upon the nature by making it personal cannot be done in any kind of willy-nilly fashion. That is impossible. The individual and personal stamp which God puts upon each nature is one that is in perfect accord with that nature. At the moment of birth that individual and unique stamp of God upon the nature makes that person with his nature the kind of individual he is for all his life. To put it a little differently, the attributes or characteristics which belong to the nature are individual characteristics which are in perfect harmony with the individual and personal stamp which God makes upon that nature and which we call person.

The person, therefore, is stamped upon the whole of the nature. The personal and individual mark or stamp, while in complete harmony with the nature, extends to every part of that nature as well. It is the mark or stamp which, in harmony with the nature, makes the intellectual and volitional characteristics of that nature unique and individual. It is the mark or stamp that individualizes all the emotional life of that person. It is well known how the person extends even to the fingerprints, so that the fingerprints of each individual are unique and can be used for purposes of identification. With modern scientific equipment, differences in voices can be detected so that even the most skilled imitators can never imitate successfully the voice of another in such a way that it is beyond the detection of sensitive equipment. Each individual's voice is unique in timbre

and pitch, etc. The facial characteristics of an individual are unique and are determined by the person and by the character of that person. Science has discovered that the DNA molecule is unique to every person and a person can be identified by this molecule.

Personality

It is at this point that it is possible to make distinction between person on the one hand and personality or character on the other hand. The person is the individual and unique stamp that God makes upon the nature that makes that rational moral nature a functioning nature of which the person is the subject. The character or personality is determined by the attributes that belong to the individual person and nature. It is not only the person itself, therefore, which is fixed at birth, but it is also the character itself that is substantially unchanged and unchangeable. We cannot alter the personality of an individual without destroying the personality itself. There are many things, of course, which seem to bring about what are apparently radical changes in personality.

Traumatic experiences, brain damage from an accident or a stroke have been known to do that, as also radical alterations in the circumstances of one's life. Nevertheless, it can probably be said that there is no basic and fundamental change that can be wrought upon the personality as such. A person remains essentially the same. That which seem to us to be changes are not changes in the personality as much as in the manifestation of that personality in the activity of the nature. Yet the person always functions and can only function in harmony with the nature, even when the nature undergoes radical changes.

Perhaps an illustration will make this somewhat clearer. Many have observed that a person who suffers brain damage through an accident or through a stroke has an alteration in his personality. It is also generally speaking true that such "alterations of personality" are never for the better, but are always for the worse. There is however an explanation for this. Such devastating accidents affect the person in such a way that he longer functions normally. The nature of a man is depraved and corrupted because of sin. When a man functions normally he exercises a certain amount of control over the outward manifestation of that depraved nature. Man is by nature capable of unbelievable crimes. But as long as one is normal and healthy, he succeeds in holding down the outbreaks of this depravity of his nature. When an individual however suffers brain damage, some of the controls are gone. To a certain extent free rein is given to the depravity of the nature. All the corruption, that is always there, now comes out when the controls are weakened or gone entirely. But, for all that, the basic fundamental personality of an individual remains unchanged. It ought to be noted that this fact of human behavior once again indicates the close relationship between body and soul.

From a spiritual point of view, this relation of the person to the nature is not so easy to explain. God regenerates the hearts of His people, and, whatever now that may mean in terms of the nature of man, the influence of a regenerated heart is strong and affects the entire nature, body and soul. A man's thinking, willing, words and deeds all are now directed by the principle of regeneration. At the same time, however, that same nature remains corrupt and depraved and capable of the most heinous sins. Paul speaks of this struggle in Romans 7:15-25, and describes it vividly in Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

And so the personality pervades the whole of the nature -- the whole psychical, psychological, and physiological life of man. It is difficult to describe this. The personality is reflected in the

functions and activities of the soul. The personality plays a part in the intellectual and volitional aspect of man. The personality so completely permeates the man so that even this stamp of individuality is upon the body. Even in our everyday language we express the pervasiveness of the personality. If someone steps on our toe, we say, "you have hurt *me*." What one does to my toe, one does to me. A man cannot hurt my body in any of its parts without hurting me. And especially perhaps the face is the mirror of the personality. We can learn the kind of person an individual is oftentimes by looking at his face, and especially his eyes. And yet, at the same time, the person must and does always fit the nature. The person determines the nature of an individual, and the person cannot function through any other nature but its own. Such harmony exists between person and nature in an individual that no other person can possess my nature, and no other nature can be driven by my person.

Implications

All these things have many important implications.

It is this fundamental truth, for example, which is part of the doctrine of the catholicity of the church. When God saves His church in Christ, then the full number of the elect is brought into glory. But in that body of Christ, each saint has his own place in which he can and does function and in which he serves the unity of the church as a whole. But this is possible only because each saint possesses a distinct character of his own, attributes and qualities of personality and nature, fundamental differences of person, all of which enable him to occupy a place in the body of Christ which is uniquely his. God gives that personality at conception with a view to the place that that individual child of God will occupy in the church.

That personality as it functions through the nature is prepared for the place in glory that God has determined for it by all the experiences of this present time. In II Corinthians 4:17, the apostle Paul speaks of the fact that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh* for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Our experiences in life, all determined by God and all in perfect keeping with our own individual personalities and natures, prepare us for our own unique place in heaven.

We have a reflection of this in the family and in family life. Each member of the family is an individual person. When one member of the family is absent from the table at mealtimes, we say that his place is empty. If God is pleased to take one of the children of a family to glory, then we say that no one can take his place. That is true even if a family should have three or four more children. No other child can take the place of that child who died, because that child was unique. He possessed his own personality and occupied his own place in the family because of it. It is this unique individuality which makes the heavenly family of God the church of our Lord Jesus Christ where each saint occupies his own unique place.

It is also because of this that there is possibility of fellowship. Only persons can have fellowship. Indeed, one who is personal needs fellowship. This fellowship is possible, first of all, with God. For God is Himself a personal God. But, secondly, it is because we are persons that we can have fellowship with our fellow men. When we know someone else we know another person. And the more intimately we know him the more intimately we know his person; which knowledge forms the possibility of all fellowship and is an essential part of human life.

We ought to be reminded once again of the fact that man stands in a threefold relationship: a fundamental relationship to God, a relationship to his fellow men, and a relationship to the creation about him. This relationship, as it belonged to Adam in Paradise, was a relationship of fellowship, a fellowship that was essential to his life. Sin disrupted all this and it is only through the grace of Christ that this fellowship can once again be restored. It is all of this which forms the basis for the truth concerning the covenant.

The basic unchangeability of the person has many practical implications. In the work of a pastor within the church of Christ or a teacher in the school or a parent in the home, it must always be remembered that a person with whom a pastor or teacher or parent deals cannot be changed fundamentally as far as his character is concerned. Nor may anyone make it his goal to alter the basic and fundamental personality of those with whom he works. There is sometimes the temptation to do this, especially when a pastor or a teacher must work with someone whose personality is "undesirable." But it cannot be done without a destruction of the individual himself. Not even regeneration fundamentally alters the character of the personality. The person remains always basically unchanged. The person is God's individual stamp upon the nature. What must be done in the church or school or home is to bring the whole of the person by the power of the Word of God under the control and direction of grace. God wants a person to be the kind of person he is and to remain unchangeably that person. God made him that way. If we succeed in changing that person we destroy the person. This we may not do. But that person must come under the control and direction of the Spirit and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is clear from the fact that certain undesirable characteristics of an individual can be made desirable by the work of grace without a fundamental alteration of the character. For example, a person may have a very stubborn character or may have a very fiery temper. But the difference between stubbornness and steadfastness is not an essential difference. A stubborn person, whose character comes under the dominion of grace, can become steadfast in the cause of the truth of the gospel and in the cause of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So a man whose character is one of a fiery temper can, under the domination of grace, become one who is filled with holy wrath against sin and zeal for the cause of God. The difference does not lie in the character but the difference lies rather in the controlling power of sin versus the controlling power of grace.

Consciousness and Self-consciousness

Finally, the person is the subject of the powers of consciousness and self-consciousness. Consciousness, in this context, is synonymous with awareness. The individual is aware of the creation about him as he receives the knowledge of that creation through his senses; but he is also aware of himself as a thinking and willing creature. He knows and thinks and wills, but he is also conscious of the fact that he knows and thinks and wills. He is aware not only of all that he does, but he is aware of the fact that he is the subject of what he does.

In the natural development of the individual, consciousness usually precedes self-consciousness. People can seldom recall very much from the first five years of their life, and this is most likely because people do not have much self-consciousness during those early years. Children are surely conscious or aware of what is happening, but are not usually conscious of the fact that what is happening is happening to them. Self-consciousness is something that gradually develops until such a time as a person becomes aware of himself as an individual. This is also why small children speak of themselves in the third person rather than in the first person. Such self-consciousness

does not come all at once. It is developed as the child matures physically and psychologically.

Character Traits

Every individual has character traits as well as character sins. This is true because the psychological cannot be separated from the spiritual. A person has sins which are his uniquely because of his own peculiar character. A quick temper, e.g., may be a particular problem for an individual because it is a particular characteristic of his personality, and from which he cannot free himself. He can, however, by the grace of God, succeed in controlling it and even of turning it into proper channels, but he cannot rid himself of it — it is always there and he must always remain on his guard against it. Everyone has his own weaknesses and character sins. They appear very early in life and continue with a person as long as he lives. One must learn to know these character sins in himself and one should deliberately avoid situations which provoke the kind of sin into which he can easily fall. When he is aware that he is beginning to fall into it (losing his temper, e.g.) he should quickly go away so that the situation which is the stimulus to that particular sin is changed. Certain sins are simply rooted in one's character and in what kind of person he is. The battle against them goes on for one's entire life. This is, in part at least, of the meaning of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation."

It must be remembered that one who has a tendency to be afraid, is a perpetual worry-wart, is quick tempered, is gloomy and pessimistic in outlook, is sinning. And to the extent that that is the case we must seek changes in ourselves and in others. But we must not think that we can or ought to try to alter personalities. An introvert will always be an introvert. Any change that is worked is going to have to be a spiritual change, not a change in the personality.

We should note, too, that there are certain traits which, though part of the personality, can be said to be the result of heredity. This is the case because, as was mentioned earlier, the person is not given by God arbitrarily, but is always given in harmony with the particular nature that is inherited. We can say that God, by His providence, shapes the development of a particular inherited nature, from Adam to that particular individual, so that that nature is exactly suited for and patterned to fit the person that God intends to give him.

The personality can be said to be the expression of one's person through his nature. Since the personality is an expression of the person, it is also to a large extent fixed after the individual reaches the age of about five years. God uses the environment during those early years to play a role in the direction that the whole person takes in his life. The person is surely created, but it is developed during the early years of life, just as the body is developed. It is the time from birth till age four or five that is determinative as far as the development of the personality is concerned. That is why, incidentally, covenant instruction is so important during those years. The basic characteristics of the person, as given to the nature at the moment of conception, are, to a large extent, fixed. As the individual develops and grows, however, the environment does bring some influence to bear on that person. The environment determines how that person created by God manifests himself. The character of the personality, in other words, is determined to a certain extent by the environment. Children are imitators of their parents, also as far as certain personality traits are concerned. Again, the influence of the environment is not such that any basic changes are effected in the person. It can however make some adaptations in the personality.

CONSCIENCE

What the Conscience Is

Our English word "conscience" comes from two Latin words: "*con*," which means, "with"; and "science," which comes from the Latin verb, "*scio*," and which means, "to know." Etymologically, therefore, our English word "conscience" means, "to know with." The Greek word for conscience, which is used in Scripture, has precisely the same etymological root. It comes from the Greek words *sun*, and *eidesis*. The word "conscience" means, therefore, that a man knows something with someone else; and as Scripture develops the idea of conscience, Scripture makes clear that conscience means, to know with God. The one with whom we know something is God.

Now when Scripture uses the word conscience it refers particularly to moral-ethical knowledge. Or, more specifically, it refers to the knowledge of right and wrong. The conscience is, therefore, the knowledge which an individual has of what God says is right and wrong.

Objectively, God makes known His will with regard to all moral and ethical matters in His law. There is the objective law of God in which God defines what is His will with respect to His rational, moral creatures. That will is even revealed in creation, as Paul makes clear in Romans 1:18-32. That which may be known of God is made manifest through the things that are made. Paul says that what is known is God's eternal power and Godhead, which terms refer to the fact that even in creation God reveals Himself as the only true God and reveals to man that, because He is the only true God, He alone must be served. All men, through the creation, know that they stand before the obligation to serve God and to serve Him alone. The result is that even those who do not know the Scriptures or who have never heard the gospel, nevertheless know what is the will of God. However, that will of God is more clearly revealed in Scripture and as Scripture is preached in the gospel.

Paul speaks of the knowledge of God's law as revealed in the creation in Romans 2:14, 15. He is still speaking of the knowledge which the Gentiles have of God, but emphasizes here their knowledge of God's law. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

But this objective manifestation of the will of God in the things that are made does not yet refer to the conscience. The conscience is subjective. The conscience is, if we may put it that way, the voice of God within the consciousness of the individual person.

The objective speech of God which is present in the entire creation or which is revealed more specifically in Scripture is sealed upon the inner consciousness of the individual. God Himself sees to it that what He speaks objectively is subjectively sealed upon the consciousness of every person. There is the objective manifestation of God, the objective speech of God, but there is also the subjective work of God whereby that speech is sealed upon the consciousness of the individual.

This subjective speech of God is the conscience. It is not, however, a second speech of God, so that there is one word of God in creation or in Scripture, and another speech or word which is

subjective and within. Always the subjective testimony of God in the consciousness of the individual is in connection with and inseparably related to the objective word of God. There is the objective law of God in which God defines what is His will toward His rational and moral creatures, but in connection with that there is the subjective work of God whereby the awareness or consciousness of what constitutes the will of God is sealed upon the consciousness. One may and can never say that one's conscience tells him to do something which is contrary to the revealed will of God.

How the Conscience Functions

The conscience, however, is not merely an abstract code of law. It is not as if God speaks objectively, "thou shalt not kill," and then in the conscience God says the same thing and seals upon the consciousness the bare law, "Thou shalt not kill." This is not what the conscience is all about. Rather, the conscience, as the subjective sealing of the objective word of God in the individual, is always in connection with the moral deeds that the individual performs. This is the important thing. In other words, the conscience is not just a communication of a code of law, not simply a communication of a body of precepts. But it is the judgment that God renders in the consciousness of the individual upon the deeds which the individual performs. It is always in connection with what the individual does. It is in connection with his activities, his life as he walks in this world, as he conducts himself every single moment and acts in all the relationships of life. It is the ability to weigh one's conduct and judge it in the light of God's law. God speaks to that individual through His law in such a way that God's voice is heard in the consciousness of that individual concerning the rightness or wrongness of what that person does. God pronounces His judgment. The judgments that God pronounces upon the deeds of men are not postponed until the judgment day when all men shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ and shall be judged for what they did in the flesh. But God's judgment is passed upon man's conduct every moment of his life. Every single man knows every moment what God's sentence is upon his conduct. God sees to it that the man knows whether what he does is in harmony with God's will or whether it is not by God's approval or disapproval.

In that sense of the word, the conscience is after the deed. The conscience speaks, not before the deed, but after the deed. This does not mean that a man has to commit murder before he hears the word of God that condemns him for this sin; but it does mean that when the thought of murder arises in his heart or in his mind, God immediately passes sentence upon that thought and the conscience of that man testifies that what he contemplates doing is wrong. Just as soon as from the deepest impulses of his nature, the deepest resources of his heart, sin arises within him, the judgment of God expresses itself upon what he thinks. If he nevertheless proceeds with his plan and actually murders, the judgment of God follows upon that too, and God expresses in the consciousness of that individual the wrongness of what he has done.

All this points to the fact that the testimony of God in the consciousness, which we call the conscience, is a very concrete and specific judgment that God makes upon every deed of His rational and moral creatures.

Now it stands to reason that the closer one stands to the purest light of the truth, the more sharply also does his conscience speak. The more clearly God reveals in His objective speech what is His will, the more sharply also does the conscience speak and the more sharply also does God's judgment come upon the one who violates God's law.

In Romans 2:14, 15, Paul speaks of the conscience of those who stand outside of the preaching of the gospel: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Paul is speaking here of the law, not in the sense in which the nation of Israel received it through the ten commandments, but in the sense in which those outside the sphere of the gospel receive it through the creation. By the phrase, "are a law unto themselves," the apostle does not mean to say that these people are lawless in the sense in which we use the expression that man thinks he is a law unto himself; but he means that, though the Gentiles had not the law, they do by nature the things contained in the law, because they too have a law. They have a law, as the apostle goes on to say, because they show the work of the law written in their hearts. They do not have **the law** written in their hearts; only the people of God have the law written in their hearts, which enables them to perform the law of God. But they possess **the work of the law** in their hearts. And the apostle explains that this means that their conscience bears witness and testifies of the rightness or wrongness of their conduct. They accuse or else excuse one another. They know what the law teaches even though they do not have the law as it was given to Israel. They not only know what the law teaches, but so emphatically is the work of the law imprinted upon their hearts, that they know the difference between good and evil, and their consciences testify of the good and the evil of their works, regardless now of whether they actually commit a sin or not. Their consciences testify of what is good and what is evil in their life and in the lives of others with whom they live. These Gentiles live outside the sphere of the gospel. But the nearer one comes to the pure preaching of Scripture, the more sharply also is the law of God impressed upon the consciousness of the individual. That is why, as Jesus says, it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, and for Tyre and Sidon than it will be for Chorazin and Bethsaida. Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon never saw the wonderful works of the Lord Jesus. But Chorazin and Bethsaida did.

A Good Conscience

This brings up the question whether the wicked who never share in the blessedness of salvation can have a good conscience. The answer to that is clear from Scripture: They cannot. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked" (Prov. 3:33). That curse is with them every moment, dogging their footsteps, filling their homes – even while they are outwardly prosperous, and reminding them constantly of God's disapproval of their disobedience to His law.

This fact is crucial for an understanding of the lives of the wicked. The curse of the Lord is a frightening thing when it comes through a bad conscience. In a certain sense, a man cannot live with a bad conscience. He must do one of two things when his conscience condemns him: he must either silence the voice of his conscience or see his conscience ultimately destroy his life. Paul speaks of the wicked as searing their consciences with a hot iron (I Tim. 4:2). This puts a man beyond salvation. For it is what Scripture means by the hardening of the heart. But this bad conscience is also the deepest cause of all the mental troubles that plague our world.

This testimony of God in the consciousness of the individual is not, however, only a testimony of judgment upon wicked deeds, but it is also a testimony of God's favor upon him who walks uprightly. God always passes judgment. He says to the one who commits a sin: My judgment is upon you for evil. He says to the one who walks in the ways of His law: My favor rests upon you,

for you walk according to My will.

To live in good conscience before the Lord means to live in the consciousness that God's approval rests upon us. It is to live in the consciousness of God's favor and love. There is nothing so spiritually wonderful and also necessary for our spiritual and mental wellbeing than to have a good conscience, to live in the consciousness of God's favor and love upon us.

The question is how it is possible for a man to live in good conscience before God when he sins. All men are sinners and, as the Psalmist says, "Our sins rise up against us, prevailing day by day."

The answer to this question is that one who lives in good conscience before the Lord lives in the consciousness of the cross and of the atoning power of the blood of Christ. That in turn means two things. It means in the first place that the one who lives in good conscience before God learns to bring his sins to the cross, to seek forgiveness and pardon for them, so that he knows by faith, clinging to the cross, that his sins are forgiven in the blood of Christ. It is as Hebrews 9:14 expresses it: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." But, in the second place, to walk in good conscience before God as that good conscience comes through the consciousness of the power of the cross for us, means that we learn that repentance from sin includes not only sorrow for sin and confession of sin, but a turning from sin and a forsaking of sin to walk according to God's commandments. Doing this is also walking in the power of the cross, because the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was a sacrifice that had as its saving effect not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the power of a new and holy life. Although that power of the cross that renews us is perfected only in glory, nevertheless it is begun in us while we live in this world. The **desire** is crucial here.

True happiness, true and genuine mental and spiritual wellbeing arises out of walking before God in good conscience. There is no other way. This is a most fundamental truth that must be driven home by parents to their children, by pastors to their parishioners and by teachers to their students.

Illustrations From Scripture

There are some striking statements in Scripture that demonstrate this truth. There are many such texts, especially in the Psalms but there are two or three to which special attention can be drawn. In II Kings 20 we read of the sickness of Hezekiah and of the message which the prophet Isaiah was called to bring to Hezekiah, that he had to set his house in order for he was to die. That announcement of the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah was the occasion on the part of Hezekiah to offer a prayer. We find this prayer in verse 3 of this chapter, a prayer that illustrates what is meant by walking in a good conscience before God. Hezekiah prays, "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." Taken at face value the verse could easily be interpreted either to mean that Hezekiah was without sin or that Hezekiah was a proud Pharisee who boasts before God of his own goodness. Yet neither is correct. We know from other passages of Scripture that Hezekiah in fact did sin. Yet the Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer and sent Isaiah back to him with a word of comfort and promise. The statements of Hezekiah are therefore statements that he could say before God in the consciousness that God's approval and favor rested upon him. And he was confident of God's approval and favor upon him, having the testimony that he walked in truth and

with a perfect heart and that he did that which was good in God's sight, because he walked in the consciousness of the hope of the promise of the coming of Christ. The Lord heard that prayer and did not challenge the statement of Hezekiah in any sense or say to him, "No, it is not true; you did not do what you say you have done." The Lord promised Hezekiah healing.

Another such passage is to be found in the book of Job, chapter 1:1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." This is not Job's statement concerning himself, as was the case with Hezekiah, but it is rather God's sentence concerning his servant Job. Of Job God says that he was perfect and upright, that he feared God and that he turned away from and refused to have anything to do with evil. You notice that Satan does not challenge that statement either. When Satan appears with the sons of God before the Lord, the Lord says to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (vs. 8). Satan does not challenge that statement of the Lord but simply says, "No wonder this is true of Job, because it pays for him to do that." God's testimony to Satan was also God's witness in Job's consciousness

A similar verse is found in Luke 1:6, where we read of Zacharias and Elisabeth that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." They were not only objectively righteous in the sense of the forgiveness of sins in the blood of the promise, but their walk was blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. These things are said of Job and other saints because of the fact that all their sins were forgiven them as they clung by faith to the hope of the promise, and because through the power of that promise of Christ's sacrifice on the cross they walked before the face of God in the way of His commandments. This is what is meant by a good conscience before God.

HEART

Strictly speaking, the concept "heart" in Scripture does not have psychological connotations and is not a psychical concept, but a spiritual, ethical one. For that reason we need only briefly mention a few things concerning the heart as it is discussed in Scripture.

The heart is the most deeply hidden essence and innermost center of a man's life. Scripture teaches that the heart is the deepest source of all the life which man lives. In Proverbs 4:20-23 we read, "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence, *for out of it are the issues of life.*" It is especially this last part which is important. One must be diligent in keeping his heart, because out of it are the issues of life. If one keeps his heart, he keeps all his life.

The heart is the domain of the unconscious and is the fountain of all the thoughts, desires, and affections which are the functioning of the nature. Scripture often speaks of the thoughts of the heart, of the desires of the heart, of the intentions of the heart, even ascribes to the heart eyes (Ephesians 1:18, where the word translated in the AV, "understanding" is actually "heart"), and speaks of loving the Lord our God with all our hearts. All the activity of the nature has its origin in the heart. It is the ethical and moral center of all ideas and thoughts, of our entire emotional

life, of all our desiring and willing, of all the activity of the body.

More particularly however it is the ethical center of all man's life. While it is clear from Scripture that the heart can be affected by devils who have access to it, it is also the heart which is the center of God's work of salvation. If the heart is depraved, the entire nature is depraved and all the issues of life from the heart are corrupted continuously. If, however, that heart is regenerated by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, that is the beginning of the work of salvation which is finally completed when we are completely made new in the coming of the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The heart is therefore the ethical center of all of man's life.

The difficulties which arise in understanding what the heart is are due to the fact that the heart is often considered some kind of a psychological entity in its own right. This the Scriptures deny. Emphatically the heart is the moral and ethical center of man. The heart is therefore, in a certain sense of the word, an abstract concept. It has no corresponding reality of the substantive kind. We can perhaps say that the relationship is as follows. By virtue of the fact that a man has a soul, he has a rational and moral life that makes him able to live in an ethical relationship with God. The spirit is that aspect of the soul wherewith man actually does know God and knows that He must be served. But the heart determines what he does with that knowledge and the moral and ethical character and direction of his entire life. The heart is a kind of microcosm of the entire nature. But it is this from a moral and ethical viewpoint. When the heart is regenerated, the entire nature is principally turned in the direction of the service of God even though that nature continues to be under the influence of sin. The relationship between the regenerated heart and the nature of man is a relationship that is difficult and mysterious; but concerning this we shall have something to say in a later chapter.

Chapter V: THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL

THE EMOTIONS

Introduction

The emotional aspect of man's psychological life is very difficult to understand. A few words of introduction are, therefore, not out of order.

In some parts of the church following the Reformation, and even during the Middle Ages, there was a tendency improperly to de-emphasize the emotional dimension of man's life. The ideal man, so it is implied, is one who can so control his emotions that he is governed solely by mind and will. Emotions displayed are signs of weakness. It is not completely clear why this fear of emotions developed. It may, be rooted in the national character of certain people. This may also be because the Reformed faith that we believe and confess emphasizes especially the intellect. This is, of course, not exclusively the case, for the Reformed faith also emphasizes the fact that commitment to the truth must not be only intellectual, but must also be volitional. But the emphasis falls upon the intellectual dimension of the truth nevertheless. This is not, in itself, bad, for the truth is above all a body of knowledge that has to be appropriated with the mind. In John 17:3 Jesus defines eternal life as being the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. It is true that the knowledge that is spoken of here is certainly more than intellectual knowledge. It is the knowledge of the heart, the true, experiential, living knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is certainly, first of all, knowledge of the mind. Without that knowledge, spiritual knowledge and everlasting salvation are impossible.

Because of this emphasis on the intellectual aspect of the truth, the emotional aspect of a person's life has been overlooked and de-emphasized.

As I said, this may be characteristic of the Dutch nation. The Italians and French are intensely emotional people. But the Dutch and Germans tend to be more phlegmatic. So the emotions are de-emphasized in a person's life, so much so that we tend even to frown upon the outward expression of emotions. We pride ourselves oftentimes in being able to hold our emotions in check and in not revealing them for others to see. It is oftentimes an embarrassment to weep in public. We consider this a sign of weakness, a sign of lack of self-control. In fact, we even define self-control in terms of the ability to control the emotions and to keep them so completely in check and so tightly reined that emotional expressions are all but non-existent. The ideal man is often considered to be the man who can so completely conceal his emotions that he does not show them in one way or another. He is an emotional Stoic.

Yet, some of the most important attributes of the Christian are emotional. We fulfill the law when we love the Lord our God and our neighbor for God's sake. But love is an emotion. It is more than that – as we shall see; but it is that as well. The same is true of the fear of God which, Scripture says is the beginning of all wisdom. Fear is Something more than mere emotion, but fear is an emotional characteristic of the child of God.

Emotions in Scripture

Whatever may be the truth of this matter, the Jewish people with whom the Scriptures are particularly concerned were an intensely emotional people. Some of the expressions David uses in the Psalms are so foreign to us that we consider them almost hyperbole. Not only is it clear from Scripture that the Jewish people, who were God's people, were an intensely emotional people, but the striking part is that God is pictured in the Scriptures in terms of being deeply emotional in His own Divine Being. We have an idea, somehow deeply rooted in our souls, that the transcendence of God means that God is holy, inscrutable, unmoved, and emotionless. The Scriptures tell us that that is far from being true.

It is, however, very difficult for us to understand God's emotional life because, for us, emotions always involve change. In God there is no change. God is the eternally unchangeable One. Thinking and willing also involve change for us. But in God they do not. We must not have in our minds the idea, however, that because of this God is unemotional. In fact, this is a dangerous idea to hold, because when, for example, we speak of God's anger, we speak about God's anger in such a coldly, impersonal, abstract, and emotionless way, that God's anger means nothing any more. It means nothing as it burns against us or against our sin. We have a great deal of difficulty, for example, understanding what is meant when the Psalmist sings: "In thy wrath and hot displeasure/Chasten not thy servant, Lord." When the Psalmist felt the chastening hand of God poured upon him, he experienced the Lord's wrath and hot displeasure. This affected him deeply and intensely because he knew that God's anger was upon him because of his sin. When we come to think of God in almost emotionless terms, we lose the fear of God's anger and wrath upon us. It becomes a meaningless something or other, which does not strike terror in the depths of our souls. We have ruled out of our thinking that God is truly emotional. Nevertheless, even if indeed we cannot understand how God can still be the unchangeable One while His emotions are very real, to this truth we must hold.

Emotions in Psychology

From a practical aspect, the emotions are also of considerable importance. In dealing with other persons, either as pastors or teachers, and in our personal relationships, it is important to take into account the emotional dimensions of a person's life. To fail to do this is to ignore an important part of the individual's life and to harm our relationship with him. It is quite important, therefore, to have some kind of idea of what the Scriptures teach concerning the emotions.

During the time of Greek and Medieval philosophy, and during a great part of the modern period, even when psychology in some respect was discussed, the emotions were almost completely ignored. It was not until the time of the French Enlightenment and the work of Jean Jacques Rousseau that serious attention was paid to the emotions. Rousseau was an Enlightenment thinker and a humanist who reacted fiercely against the barren sterility of rationalistic philosophy. In place of the cold intellectualism of Rationalism, Rousseau gave to the emotions an important place. In fact, Rousseau considered the emotions to be not only a third faculty of the soul alongside of the intellect and will, but considered the emotions to be the most important faculty of the soul or even the only faculty of the soul of significance. All the intellectual and volitional life of man was determined and governed by the emotions. Rousseau did not only emphasize this in theory, but he was himself a man who was almost totally governed by his feelings. He allowed his emotions to have free rein in his life so that he became as close as is possible to being a man who

lives by feelings only.

In that respect he anticipated our modern twentieth century. A great deal of attention has been paid to emotions since the time of Rousseau. Many different theories of emotions have been advanced. There is the James-Lange theory that, within the context of a materialistic view of man, takes the position that the emotions as feelings of the soul are not first, but the bodily changes, the physiological changes, are first. The emotions are the expressions of these physiological changes. Similar physiological changes, however, accompany different emotions.

The Cannon-Bard theory of the emotions teaches that the hypothalamus is the center of emotion. Awareness of emotions and bodily change take place at the same time. A stimulus causes the hypothalamus to alert the nervous system that creates bodily changes. To these the brain reacts and these are feelings.

The Cognitive theory emphasizes the mental processes involved and interprets emotions in terms of bodily changes not only, but also our interpretation of them.

Others have wanted to make emotions a passive condition of the soul. Feeling then has a twofold meaning. There is the feeling of pain as an objective condition, and the consciousness of that feeling. Feeling is a condition of the soul brought about by all kinds of circumstances, but they are not genuinely feelings until we become conscious of them.

Still others have said that emotions are the subjective, active, immediate perception of our inner life, thus making emotions a part of mental activity and not a separate faculty.

It is a striking fact that all the theories of emotions that are promoted are based upon a materialistic view of man and make the emotions, as well as the intellectual and volitional life of man, a part of the physiological life of man. Man has no soul. He is a composite of chemical changes, electrical impulses and physical forces. All the phenomena of his life can be interpreted in terms of the laws of physics and chemistry.

Emotions as A Faculty of the Soul

To make the emotions a third faculty of the soul is extremely dangerous. In the first place, this idea gives to the emotions too great a role in man's psychical life. In the second place, such a position inevitably leads to mysticism, for emotions emphasize feeling and mysticism is a theology of feeling.

Man is a dependent creature; and because he is dependent he must have some authority in his life greater than he is. This authority, this rule of what a man believes and how he lives, is objectively in the Scriptures. But when man rejects the authority of Scripture, he must find some other authority for his life. There are only two possible directions in which he can go: the direction of rationalism, which sets the mind as the ultimate authority, or the direction of mysticism, which makes feelings this authority. The whole history of western thought is controlled by the swing of the pendulum from rationalism to mysticism and back again. There is first of all the rise of rationalism, and when the barrenness and sterility of rationalism become evident, the pendulum swings in the direction of mysticism. If you trace the line of church history you will find that there are always present these two lines of thinking. This goes back all the way to the Montanists of the third century, to which the great church father Tertullian joined himself. But both ultimately make

man autonomous. If one makes of the emotions a third faculty of the soul, the result is inevitably some form of mysticism. Religion and faith are reduced to emotional experiences and the guiding and authoritative principle of man's life is his feelings. This idea is resurrected in our modern day in Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is a reaction against doctrine. Doctrine is dead, cold, and lifeless; it kills and has ruined the church. So the pendulum swings in the direction of feelings. Men want emotions, inner experiences—an emotional experience of some kind or another. If some course of conduct makes one feel good, is it not the right things to do? Does not man have a right to feel good? Religion is reduced to a matter of feeling.

In the third place, the danger of making the emotions a third faculty of the soul is the danger of man becoming a victim of his emotions. The emotional life of man is so intense and important that his emotions become the principal governing force of all his conduct. His entire life is guided by emotions so that ultimately he has no control of what he does. We are finding more and more of this emphasis in our own day and it is disastrous. It is perhaps best summed up in the slogan, "If it feels good, do it." It is a principle that pervades even the thinking of our children. If a child does something wrong and is called to account for his action, he may be asked. Why did you do this? His answer is oftentimes, I did it because I felt like it. The child is expressing the idea that the important thing in a man's life is his feeling. People do things because they feel like doing them. It seems, from an emotional point of view, the thing to do. Their whole life is directed by this principle. Their whole life becomes an emotional life and becomes a life so controlled by emotions that the emotions are the only things that count. But they are accountable to none for what they do, because who can deny the power of the emotions. If one feels like doing something, who can deny that individual the right to do it? Is there someone who can appeal to a higher authority than their own feelings to condemn what they have done? Is there anyone who can condemn an action when emotions have such a powerful grip upon one that one is helpless before the onslaught of his emotions? This is the kind of society in which we increasingly find ourselves. Guided by the emotions, a man may even murder in a fit of uncontrollable rage and appeal to temporary insanity as a successful defense against his crime. A man may divorce his wife and marry another on the grounds that he has a right to happiness. Whether objectively the law of God condemns this is of no account. And so all morality is destroyed. An objective standard of right and wrong that is appropriated by the mind is denied. The emotions become the governing principle in a man's life, and emotions, being irresistible, become the explanation and excuse for all that a man does. If one feels like doing something, it is the right thing to do. And if a majority in a given community have feelings about a particular kind of conduct that kind of conduct is automatically approved.

While, therefore, on the one hand we must emphasize the importance of the emotions in a person's life, on the other hand we must be very sharply warned against the danger of making the emotions a third faculty of the soul.

What Are Emotions?

What then should be the proper conception of emotions?

Emotions arise primarily from the fact that we are dependent creatures. Because we are dependent creatures we have needs. You will recall that earlier we spoke of the fact that man, by virtue of his creation, lives in a threefold relationship: a relationship to God, to his fellow man, and to the creation about him. This threefold relationship in which man lives by virtue of his creation is all

part of his dependence. Only God is independent. As the independent One, He is the fountain and only source of His own existence in Himself. Because of this, it is only in God's nature to give. All God can do is give. He cannot receive. What can He receive? What is there that anyone can give to Him? Everything is His to begin with, for He has created all things, and even the cattle on a thousand hills are His. It is in His very nature only ever to give. On the contrary, we are dependent creatures. We can never give but only ever receive, as far as our relationship to God is concerned. God is always full and we are always empty. Every moment we must be filled out of the fullness of God. Thus we are dependent upon God by virtue of our creation and this dependence is total and complete.

But we are also dependent upon our fellow men. We cannot live apart from our fellow men. We depend upon them, and part of life is the reciprocal relation to them in which we live. Because we are equal with our fellow men our relationship to them is characterized by giving as well as receiving. Man is by virtue of his creation a gregarious creature. He is absolutely dependent on fellowship and communion with other people. No man is an island. His life is full and complete only in relationship to others.

But man is also dependent upon the creation in which God has placed him. He is dependent on the air that he breathes, on the food of the creation to eat, on the water of the creation to drink, on the earth from which he obtains the necessities of his life. He cannot live anywhere else but in the midst of this creation.

Because of this he has needs. These needs flow directly from the threefold relationship in which he stands. If he is to live as a man, therefore, those needs have to be satisfied. It is the satisfaction of those needs which lies at the basis of all our emotions. In relationship to our needs, therefore, emotions in the fundamental sense of the word are reactions of like or dislike. They are reactions of like or dislike to that which is presented to us as the fulfillment of our needs: to God, to our fellow man, to the creation in which we live. They are the reactions of like or dislike towards all things and all people with whom we stand in contact and are necessary for us to live as normal in the world.

Whether our reaction is one of like or dislike is determined by a multitude of factors: our upbringing, our environment, our associations with those who are a part of our life, the kind of people we are, etc. But most fundamentally, our likes or dislikes are expressions of our relation to God.. It is characteristic of the totally depraved man that he hates God and, as a result, hates anything connected to God. He has a natural aversion to that which God approves. And he has a natural desire for that which God disapproves. This is so strong in man that oftentimes one finds even in little children a strong liking for what is sinful merely because it is sinful. And this grows stronger with the years.

Again it must be stressed that our relationship to God is fundamental and determines our relationship to our fellow men and to the creation. It is our relationship to God which determines the character of our relationship to all else. Adam in Paradise lived in the consciousness of this relationship to God, and all his emotional life, his feelings of like or dislike, were rooted in spiritual ethical perfection. He knew the Lord his God with perfect knowledge and understanding by means of the things that were made. He willed the will of God because he was created in perfect holiness and righteousness. The result was that he loved what God loved and hated what God hated. His emotional life, dependent upon his intellectual and volitional life, was rooted in

his fundamental love for God. This controlled all the other emotional aspects of his life in relationship to the woman whom God gave to him and in relationship to the creation in which God placed him as king. He liked that which was pleasing to God and rejected that which was displeasing to God. His likes and dislikes were all determined by the fundamental relationship of love in which he stood to his Creator. He found his complete happiness in God and in living a life pleasing to God.

Man is a unity. Man stands as one living soul in the midst of God's creation. The fall brought havoc to the emotional life of man and had all kinds of evil consequences for him. This is true once again because of the fact that through the fall man became a hater of God. He now liked what God disliked, and disliked what God liked, if we may put it that way. He denied his dependence upon God, attempted to gain the throne of God, and set himself up as autonomous in believing the lie of Satan: "Thou shalt be as God." The lie which man believed brought about his total alienation from God. Thus he lived in sin. He lives the life of a rebel. What is pleasing to God is displeasing to him and what is displeasing to God he sets his heart upon. It was a total corruption of his nature.

This determines therefore also his relation to his fellow man and to the creation. Basically man likes himself, is totally selfish, seeks himself in everything he does, and excludes others from his likes or dislikes unless in some way they can be manipulated by him and serve him

All of this is restored only by redemption in Christ. It is through redemption in Christ that the fundamental relationship to God is reestablished by grace as a relationship of love. In the state of total depravity all man's emotional life in relationship to his fellow creatures and in relationship to the creation is determined by his hatred of God. As restored through the power of grace in Christ, the emotions of the regenerated man are once again sanctified and the child of God is enabled to live in a proper relationship with his fellow men and with the creation about him.

The emotions therefore are not separate from the operation of the intellect and the will, nor can the emotions be set up as a third faculty of the soul. Presently we shall discuss the relationship between the faculty of the intellect and the faculty of the will; but for the moment it ought to be emphasized, first of all, that the emotions are not only totally dependent upon the intellect and the will in their functioning, but also that the emotions are most basically a part of the activity of the will. They are predominantly part of the volitional life of man and must be considered and understood as such.

The emotions can be divided into three distinct classes: the desires, the emotions proper, and the passions.

Classes of Emotions

Before we enter a discussion of the classes of emotions, I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Herman Bavinck, whose classification I have followed. In fact, the terminology also belongs to Bavinck, although my words are a translation of his Dutch. The words used, therefore, in describing these different classes are arbitrary and it is entirely possible that better terminology can be found.

Desires

To turn first of all to a discussion of the desires, we can say, in general, that they can be defined as a lower, and perhaps the lowest, form of the activity of the will. These desires arise directly out of our needs and wants. Because we are dependent creatures we have needs that must be satisfied, and out of these needs arise our desires.

These desires can, in turn, be subdivided into three different categories: inclinations, wants, and longings.

Inclinations

Inclinations are general tendencies or desires that have no specific or fixed object. They arise out of a certain feeling of dissatisfaction, an unsatisfied feeling, because of a need which is for the most part unconsciousness, and which does not have, therefore, specific and fixed objects in our consciousness.

It is well to notice at the outset that we are, in the nature of the case, speaking also of the faculty of the mind. We are talking about emotions, but of our consciousness of these emotions; and this implies a certain function of the intellect. Nevertheless, these inclinations also, because they involve likes or dislikes, are primarily functions of the will. These inclinations are general tendencies that have either no fixed object, or only vaguely fixed objects.

These inclinations are both innate and acquired. It is not always easy to tell which is which. While especially modern child psychology has attempted to determine which inclinations are innate and received through birth and which are acquired by environmental factors, these efforts have not usually solved the problem. It is clear, however, that a small infant enters the world with some of these inclinations, and that he acquires others as he grows and develops. These inclinations do not remain the same as the infant becomes a child and the child becomes a youth and the youth becomes an adult. As a person develops, physically, psychologically, and spiritually, these inclinations change. They are very closely connected with habit, and in fact develop in connection with habit. They are vague and somewhat ill-defined and not always of such a kind that we can give a clear account of them.

To give some examples of these inclinations we may point to the fact that man, because he stands in relationship to God, has a sense of dependence upon someone greater than himself. Because he stands in relationship to his fellow man he has a need for love. Because he is dependent on the creation in which God has placed him, he becomes hungry and has a need to satisfy hunger. These are inclinations.

These inclinations are vague and ill-defined for different reasons. It may be that a real need exists, such as the need for companionship, but that the lack of companionship is not clearly perceived because of other distractions. It could also be that changes brought about by physiological developments are not clearly understood because they are new. Usually, with increased maturity, the reason for these inclinations is more easily determined, and become wants. Under certain conditions, e.g., we may have a sense of unease that is only vaguely in our consciousness, and, if conscious, is inexplicable.

Wants

Wants, the second category of desires, are inclinations that come to consciousness. These imply a

very specific and concrete activity of the intellect. They have a very definite and clearly defined object. Although they are closely related to inclinations, they nevertheless are far more specific and more sharply defined than inclinations are. The wants of an individual are also clearly defined in terms of his moral ethical character. The word "want" can be used, and often is used, in the bad sense of the word, when the object of our want is something forbidden by God. Wants are desires for particular things. They may constitute a desire for a particular kind of food. In the deepest sense of the word, the want of sinful man is to be independent of God so that he can live his own life apart from God and apart from God's sustaining power. In relationship to his fellow man, his wants are always rooted in his basic selfishness. In relationship to the creation about him he sets his heart and mind upon the things of the creation in distinction from and over against the things which are of the kingdom of heaven. But wants may also be neutral, or morally acceptable. The need for food when hungry, for companionship when lonely are cases in point.

The intellect plays a major role in the satisfaction of wants. The intellect determines the nature of the want, how best it can be satisfied, whether satisfaction is, under given circumstances able to be, wholly or partially satisfied, etc.

Longings

The third kind of desires is longings. Implied in longings is the difficulty of obtaining the object. Longings, therefore, are somewhat stronger than inclinations and wants. They are not only fixed and well-defined, but the desire for them becomes more intense because the object is difficult to acquire. These longings can be for material things or for spiritual things: for anything that relates to ourselves and the satisfaction of our own personal desire. In longing is rooted the sin of covetousness, and it must be remembered that covetousness is the most fundamental of all sins. He who keeps the tenth commandment keeps all the law of God. But he who breaks the tenth commandment breaks the entire law.

Moral Implications

In our discussion of desires we have concentrated especially on the desires from the viewpoint of our likes. But it must never be forgotten that the opposite side of the coin, the antithesis of like, is dislike. Every inclination, every want, and every longing has its opposite. And both are included in the emotions.

These emotions are deeply rooted in the activity of the will. They cannot be understood apart from the functioning of the will and, in fact, belong to the operation of the will in the life of man.

In Scripture, longings are often used in the good sense for spiritual things. David sings, in Psalm 42:1: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

Desires can and must be controlled by the will. It is because of this fact that in the life of a man there is found a struggle. This must not be confused with the struggle of which Scripture speaks, for example in Galatians 5:17 and in Romans 7:14-25. It is a struggle that is found in the life of every man whether regenerated or not. The spiritual struggle that is the fruit of regeneration in the hearts and lives of the people of God is the struggle of the new man in Christ as it is pitted against the old man of the flesh. The struggle of which I speak here is rooted in the fact that it is

impossible for a man to satisfy every one of his desires. In fact, the majority of his desires are beyond satisfaction because of the circumstances of his life in which the Lord has placed him. It is this difficulty in attaining the object of one's desires that form such an important part of his emotional life.

Desires are not necessarily wrong. They are wrong only when the following things are true of them. They are wrong when they are directed toward unlawful objects, i.e., objects which are forbidden by God. They are wrong when the object that is desired is desired in the wrong order or in the wrong measure. One may place material things in order of precedence above spiritual things. While the desire for material things is in itself not wrong, if it takes precedence over spiritual things it is. Or if one desires more than what God has been pleased in His wisdom to give him, that desire also becomes wrong. Desires are wrong when the objects that are desired can be obtained only in a way which God has forbidden. The object itself may not necessarily be wrong, but if a man chooses to acquire this object through theft, the desire becomes wrong. It is out of this wrong use of desires that the basic and fundamental sin of covetousness arises.

All of this implies that this matter of desire is extraordinarily important as far as the spiritual and ethical life of man is concerned. The control and direction of a man's desire by the will is of essential and critical importance in a godly life.

It is at this point, therefore, that we speak of some very interesting spiritual and ethical implications. It is basically in this area that the struggle between the old and new man, as described by Paul in Galatians 5:17, arises. Precisely here is the center of the battle, the arena in which the battle between the old and the new man takes place.

In connection with this, it is clear too that the requirements of the Scriptures, that we learn to desire only lawful objects, comes to the fore. We must learn to desire things in the correct order and in the correct measure. And it is out of this that there arises the Scriptural admonition to temperance, self-control, self-denial, which later Jesus called the chief marks of discipleship. If any man would be a disciple of Christ, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow Christ. The importance of these things in the life of the Christian is hard to over-emphasize. This is increasingly true in our day, when the pattern for life in many is to give in, to surrender to every single desire which one has. In fact, so common is this, that the thought persists today that if a man wants something, he has all but a legal right to it. The mere desiring of something gives him the right to claim it as his own. He is discontented or unsatisfied if he does not attain it, and even uses wicked means to gain what he desires. We have become guilty of bringing up a generation of children who have invented in their souls the idea that to desire something is tantamount to obtaining it, and that life is simply nothing else but the satisfaction of desires. Waterink, in a very graphic way, points this out in one of his books where he talks about this matter and underscores the fact that already at an early age we give our children anything that they desire. He points out, e.g., that if our children want jam on their bread we give them jam. If they want cold cereal, we give them cold cereal. If they do not like corn flakes and prefer sugared cereals, we give them what they want. We give in to their every desire. They want a toy and we buy them the toy they want. At the very best all we can do is postpone their desires for a couple of weeks, but sooner or later they get their way. The result is that a generation of children grows up in the church that believes that to want something gives them a claim upon it. They have a right to it because of the mere fact that they want it. The Christian virtues of self-denial and temperance, moderation and

self-control, are virtues that are practically unknown in our day. We give no thought to the principles of Christian stewardship. The mere wanting is sufficient to justify the acquiring. And Waterink points out that, because of the fact that this is a fundamental aspect of the Christian's spiritual life, if he loses the battle here his entire life becomes more and more under the control of the old man of sin and is directed by it.

Because this is the crucial area of the battlefield on which the soldier of Christ fights, not only the battlefield of his own flesh, but the battlefield of his world in relation to his desire, contentment in the way of God as the opposite of covetousness and as the perfection of the whole law becomes of crucial importance for the child of God. It is almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of this aspect of life, whether in the school or home or church. It is very difficult in an age of affluence, when things we desire are easily acquired because we have the financial resources to obtain them, to teach our children the necessary disciplines of the Christian's life. The importance of these things, however, warrant putting forth every possible effort to fight against the spirit of our times.

Emotions Proper

The second main category in our emotions is called emotions proper. These emotions proper can be divided into two categories, that of the feelings and what the Germans call *Gefühle*. (While the translation of this German word would also be “feelings,” it has something of a different connotation in German. We use it here for want of a better word.)

Feelings

In the category of emotions, the feelings are roughly comparable to the inclinations in the category of desires. Feelings too are general, vague, and indefinite. They are sometimes so vague and indefinite that we are hard pressed to give account of them. In distinction from inclinations, which are a part of desires and which arise out of needs, these feelings arise out of sensations. These sensations may be indefinite and difficult to define, but they are sensations which are made upon us and which lead to like or dislike. They are awakened in us by sensations which we receive from our surroundings, aroused by such things as the weather, temperature, different colors, sounds, reactions and attitudes of others, etc. On the periphery of our awareness, as we come into contact with other people and with the creation about us, all sorts of things in our environment create in us indefinite, general, and vague impressions of likes and dislikes which we cannot immediately account for. One can, e.g., feel out of sorts and really not know why until he has had time to think about it and time to concentrate on what possibly could have influenced him to feel the way he did. If he thinks about it long enough he can sometimes discover what it was that gave him this general feeling. But most of the time these things are awakened within us only on the very periphery of our awareness and we are hard pressed to give an account of them. We have reacted with a feeling of like or dislike to those things that make impressions upon our consciousness.

Gefühle

The *Gefühle*, on the other hand, are stronger feelings that have their origin in more definite sensations, which are specific and concrete, and which are clearly defined before our consciousness. They are primarily of two kinds: they are sensuous and include such feelings as

hunger, thirst, cold, heat, etc. Or they are spiritual, and include such emotions as shame, aversion, abhorrence, thankfulness, honor, awe, love, and fear.

Because many of these emotions are present in one at the same time, even though one may dominate, the emotional life of the individual is complex, often not clearly understood by the individual himself.

Because these emotions, both feelings and Gefühle, are part of the activity of the will, they too are in a measure controlled by the operation of the will, and for them we are responsible before God.

Passions

Finally, the third category of emotions can be called passions. They differ from emotions proper only in this respect that they are extraordinarily strong and violently shake the soul. Always they are noticeable in the effect they have upon the body. They often make a man a slave, blind to reason and common sense. If allowed to dominate, they gain such control over a person that he is directed in his life exclusively by them. These too must be under the control of the will. And these three together form the emotional life of man.

It must not be forgotten that all these categories are a part of and must be explained within the context of our likes and dislikes.

INTELLECT AND WILL

INTRODUCTION

The soul-spirit has two faculties or powers: the faculty of the mind and the faculty of the will. The faculty of the mind or of the intellect is a separate power in the life of man which can be defined as "the faculty of perceiving, knowing, reasoning, understanding, apprehending, judging, remembering." The will, also a separate faculty of the soul, can be defined as "the power of the soul to determine itself in its activities and that in connection with and in relation to the world outside of itself and in relation to God."

Although the intellect and will are separate faculties and powers of the soul, they are inseparably connected. There can be no action of the intellect without an accompanying and complementary activity of the will. The opposite is likewise true, namely, that there can be no act of the will without an accompanying and complementary activity of the intellect. Always the two function together. There can be no act which does not involve both the mind and the will. And, to carry that idea a little further, there is no act of the mind or will which does not involve the whole man.

The question arises in this connection whether the will or the intellect is primary. While this discussion has been carried on for many centuries in Western thought, and while the answer which was given to this question determined the emphasis placed either upon the rational aspect of man's life or the volitional aspect of man's life, we need not allow this question to detain us very long. The question will be answered differently, depending on what one has in mind. From the viewpoint of the knowledge which a man acquires, the intellect is, no doubt, primary. A man cannot react to anything except there be certain sensations which he receives and which are

presented to the will by the intellect. The will cannot function in a vacuum. Nevertheless this does not mean that even in the functioning of the intellect the will does not play an important role. The will can, to a certain extent, determine what we come to know and what we do not know. The will exercises some control over the intellect with respect to its becoming aware of something outside of itself. The will plays a role in attention. Educators refer to it as motivation, which means that if a child wants to know something, the learning process is made much easier. If a subject is pleasant to an individual (i.e., the will finds it desirable) it is easier for one to set his mind to it and learn it (an activity of the intellect). It is really only through the activity of the will that one is able to attend to something in order to learn it. Nevertheless, in the act of knowing, the intellect is dominant and precedes the activity of the will.

On the other hand, the will is primary from a spiritual and ethical point of view. In the spiritual and ethical life of man the will determines the direction of the entire man. If, as is the case after the fall, the nature of man is depraved, the will is also absolutely in the bondage of sin so that the possibility of even willing the good lies beyond man's ability. Only through the power of regeneration is the will renewed and the spiritual-ethical direction of man changed. Paul stresses the primacy of the will when he says in Romans 7, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." In the work of sanctification it is the softening and cleansing and renewing of the will which is the basic fruit of regeneration, which work affects the whole of man's conduct. This does not mean, of course, that regeneration makes the will perfect. It certainly does not. But the renewal of the will, the breaking of the hard will, the turning of one's will away from sin is certainly a Scriptural idea. The will is primary also as far as sin is concerned. Every sin which man commits is a volitional act, an act of the will.

Nevertheless, here too the intellect plays its role. In the sinner a man cannot will sin unless he knows sin, and in the regenerated child of God the renewing power of sanctification is changed only through the preaching of the gospel which comes to man via his senses and intellect. Our Canons define regeneration as it affects the mind and will in this way: "But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit pervades the inmost recesses of the man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree it may bring forth the fruits of good actions" (3/4, 11). Regeneration in the narrow sense of the word is that work of God whereby He, beneath the level of man's consciousness, renews the heart. That life of regeneration begins to affect the nature, including the mind and the will, only as the gospel is preached and heard with the hearing of faith. It is through this work of God, the sovereign and irresistible and efficacious call, that the will is renewed.

POWERS OF THE INTELLECT

The faculty of the intellect has certain individual powers which can be distinguished from each other.

The first power of the intellect to be considered is the power of sensation.

Sensation

There is, first of all, a physiological function of the body that is involved in sensation. Stimuli, which affect the senses, are carried along the neural paths and terminate in the brain. It is not of these sensations that we speak. The soul also functions in that it receives the stimuli coming into the brain and forms an image of them. Now, sensation is no longer the stimulus itself, but the interpretation of that stimulus whether it be color, shape, taste, or whatever. Sensation as the power of the soul can be defined as: "The power of the soul whereby it is aware of reality, or whereby it is able to receive and interpret impressions from the objective world." Sensation, in the sense in which we are speaking of it, is therefore a part of the activity of the soul, not of the body. The soul is the ultimate receiver of the stimuli which come via the sense organs, nerves, and brain. The soul receives these stimuli and forms images of them. Actually the soul does not receive the objective stimulus. The soul, which stands at the end of the receiving process, does not, e.g., receive a light ray, but rather an interpretation of the stimulus — an image of redness.

There is a very close relationship between the brain and the soul. Anything received by the former is also received by the latter. The soul is in this way flooded with sensations. Sensations simply stream in. They cannot be shut out.

All sensations received by the brain and by the soul are not received into the consciousness. One need not actively, consciously, volitionally, be aware of a sensation in order to receive it. Much is included in the field of vision which is not "noticed" as such. But the stimulus is received by the soul nevertheless. That is plain from the fact that one can recall some things of which he was not consciously aware at the time of occurrence. It is probably true in general to say that the stronger the consciousness of a particular occurrence, the more we concentrate our attention upon it, the deeper impression it will make on the power of sensation. That, needless to say, has obvious implications for education.

That which is received by the soul by way of sensation includes the representation of the reality of the outside world — the external, objective world with all that it contains. Belonging to that objective world is also Scripture. Further, it must not be forgotten that that knowledge which we obtain of the outside world is knowledge that is of a creation that is revelatory, and the soul becomes aware of God by means of its awareness of the creation. This is not only true of the regenerated man, but, according to Romans 1:18ff., of the wicked as well.

Further, we ourselves are the objects of our own sensations. We can see our hands and face. We make, then, parts of our body the objects of our senses. But there is also an aspect of sensation which plays a role in self awareness. There is a direct reflection of the self in the consciousness by means of which a person is aware of himself as a thinking and willing creature and is conscious of what he does and what happens to him not only in his body but also in his soul.

This knowledge of self is not spiritual but psychological. There is a spiritual knowledge of self which comes through the work of the Spirit by means of self-examination. Involved in this spiritual knowledge of self, from a negative point of view, is the self-deception of which man in his sin is capable. In this power of self-deception man becomes guilty of self-justification and fails to see himself as he ought. Because man has a conscience, however, in his consciousness he nevertheless retains the sense of guilt which oppresses him and which guides him to the despair of hopelessness. Positively, for the child of God, there is the cross of Jesus Christ. When he knows

himself in the light of Scripture and the enlightening power of the Spirit, although this knowledge leads to the consciousness of himself as a sinner, he flees with the burden of his sin and guilt to the cross of Jesus Christ.

By means of this inner sensory system, of which we spoke earlier, a man obtains the knowledge of his inner state. He knows in what psychical, psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual state he finds himself. Sensation is, therefore, the fundamental power of the human soul, on which depends all the other activity of the intellect and will.

He is, if I may use a few examples, conscious of his hunger and need for food. He can tell when he is sad. He is able to obey the command of Scripture to examine himself whether he is in the faith. All these imply a power of man to know his inward states. He cannot only know these, but he is able to recognize them as well. And, if they speak to him of a need, he is able to do something about the satisfaction of that need.

Perception

The second power of the soul which needs discussion is the power of perception which can be defined as: "That function of the intellect whereby it distinguishes, combines, separates, arranges in time and space, and thus interprets the various sensations the soul receives in itself, and that on the background and in the light of a mass of other perceptions which are called apperceptions."

There are various functions implied in perception. 1) Belonging to sensation is the power of the soul to receive various stimuli from the outside world which we call "memory". Through perception the soul has the power to distinguish between the various stimuli and to interpret them correctly (in the light of apperception). 2) The soul, through its power of perception, combines the various sensations in such a way that they are no longer *individual* sensations but form images of objects in the external world. There are individual sensations of smell, taste, touch, sight of a cooked piece of meat that the soul receives from a particular object, but because of the power of perception, the soul is able to construct the image of a roast beef. 3) Through the power of perception the intellect arranges sensations and their interpretations in relation to factors of space and time. 4) The intellect fits the sensations and their interpretations into the whole mass of apperception. Everything is thus not only identified but also understood. All of this makes the power of perception a great and marvelous power of the soul.

Presentation

The third power of the soul is the power of presentation which is defined as: "That power of the soul according to which it is able to retain, recall, and recognize former perceptions." That is, presentation is the power of apperception and the power to make use of the entire mass of apperception. It is absolutely essential for all thought.

Implied in this one power of presentation are three separate powers. 1) The power to retain in the soul an image of sensation and perception. 2) The power to recall these images into consciousness. 3) The power to recognize these images which are called into consciousness. All three are important; without them all knowledge would be impossible. Apart from this power each sensation would disappear as soon as the stimulus disappeared. One does not in his thinking have to start from scratch. In this way thinking and judgment would be impossible. Presentation is an

important power of the human soul.

This is not to say that the brain, a part of the body, does not play a role in all these powers of the soul. It might be well to interrupt our discussion to emphasize this. The brain no doubt plays a role in sensation, perception, and presentation, but nevertheless all these things remain emphatically powers of the soul. There is indeed a certain physiological function involved in all these powers. Paul, in I Corinthians 15:44, speaks of a soul-body or a psychical body, which is translated in the AV as "natural body." He means to say that the earthly body is also psychical. Our bodies are soul-like. That means more than that our bodies are perfectly adapted to a living union with the soul. It means that too, but it means also that our bodies have a soul-like character to them. As was mentioned earlier, it is difficult to explain how stimuli can make the jump from the physical brain to the soul. Part of the explanation is that our bodies have that psychical character.

That is why in all the functions of the faculty of the intellect there is a certain role which the body plays. Physical weariness has an effect on the functioning of the soul (as it functions through the body). Depression can be the result of physical ailments of some sort — thyroid deficiency or overwork. Brain damage too can have an effect on the functioning of the soul. It has this effect because the body is psychical in character. The soul, though it cannot be identified with the body, nevertheless functions through bodily organs. Aphasia could be mentioned in this connection. One who suffers from aphasia has difficulty making the connection between the spoken or written word and the thought in the soul. He cannot think of the word. The bodily organs necessary for producing speech are functioning correctly and the soul is functioning, but the aphasiac cannot make the connection between the word and the thought. There is an impairment in the link between the physical brain and the soul.

But to return to our subject, the powers of presentation vary in people. They not only vary from individual to individual, but they vary also in people as they develop from childhood to adulthood. In some, the powers of presentation are very strong, in others they are very weak. Some people have amazing powers of retention, what we sometimes call photographic memories, while in others the powers of presentation are relatively weak. God has created man so that the powers of presentation are strongest in the child and become weaker with the passing of the years. In childhood, sensations and perceptions make the deepest impressions upon the mind, while as the individual grows older these powers become less strong. This is not meant to deny that the child is weaker in the selection and interpretation of the data collected.

It is because of this that the importance of covenant instruction cannot be overemphasized. There is no substitute for covenant instruction from infancy on. What a child learns when he is young he retains all his life and what he does not learn when he is young he has great difficulty retaining.

Nevertheless, although the powers of presentation vary from individual to individual and vary according to the age of the individual, they can be developed. It is one of the sorriest features of modern-day education that the powers of the memory are no longer developed as once they were.

Presentation, therefore, consists of memory as well as selection and interpretation on the basis of experience. Memory can be divided into passive memory and active memory. Passive memory is the ability to retain sensations and perceptions in the soul. Active memory is the ability to bring things stored in the memory into the consciousness. While it is indeed true that our powers of both passive memory and active memory function effectively, it must be underscored that, all other

things being equal, the perceptions and sensations recalled by active memory are faithful representations of reality. And so, lastly, through the power of presentation the faculty of intellect is able to *recall* the image into consciousness and to recognize it. A person can call to mind a visual image of his grandmother, though she may have been dead for twenty years, and recognize it as being the image of that particular person.

Although generally speaking it is true that nothing received by the soul is ever completely obliterated, it is certainly possible (and the experience of every individual will confirm this) that it is not always easy to recall the things which are retained in the soul.

It is also possible for a person to block sensations from his consciousness. This is what Freud called repression. Several points ought to be noticed in this connection. 1) Under certain circumstances this can have serious consequences for the life of a person. It can result in mental difficulties which plague him till he is in serious trouble. Amnesia is perhaps in part at least brought on deliberately. It is a willful blocking of sensation from the consciousness. 2) The individual child of God is called upon to refuse certain sensations entrance into his consciousness. Evil thoughts, e.g., are sin and must be suppressed. Further, if a brother sins against us and confesses that sin and we forgive him, we must not allow that past sin of his to come any more into our consciousness. 3) This act of repression is what the ungodly continually do with the knowledge of God. That is the idea of Romans 1:18 where the wicked are described as suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. This is involved in the process of hardening. In that process the conscience becomes seared with a hot iron till the person reaches the point where he is beyond hope of salvation. The point is that there is not only a psychological but a spiritual aspect to this matter of presentation.

So then, by way of summary, presentation includes three elements. It includes passive memory, the ability to retain sensations and perceptions not only but also judgments, propositions, arguments, and thoughts. The soul can, in other words, retain all its own intellectual and volitional activities. It includes also active memory — the ability to bring to the consciousness all the data stored in the soul. And it includes the ability to recognize them. In the soul, these memories of sensations, perceptions, etc., remain faithful representations of reality. This is probably the greatest wonder involved in presentation.

Imagination

The power of imagination also belongs to the power of presentation. Imagination is basically the power to recall perceptions. But by the gift of imagination one is able to bring to consciousness that which is relatively independent of reality. Imagination is not an independent, creative power, but is dependent upon perception. Nevertheless, the power of imagination enables one to bring to consciousness various sensations and perceptions in combinations which are relatively independent of any previous knowledge of reality. Imagination also varies from one individual to another, and yet is essential to all productive and original work. Imagination is wrong when it is used deliberately to distort and deny reality, but imagination is also a wonderful gift of God when it can be put to good use, be an aid in learning, and enable us to know reality better. It is in this way that the body of knowledge is advanced. Thus imagination is a sort of creative power in that, from the data of sensation and perception, one can originate a new thought. By deduction he can reach a conclusion apart from empirical observation. Apart from imagination there would be no art — music, painting, sculpture, architecture, all of which require imagination. Without

imagination life would be drab and colorless and the advance of knowledge would be impossible. Imagination too should be cultivated. Preachers and teachers certainly should cultivate it assiduously. It takes imagination to exegete, to make sermons which are more than stilted, wooden, lifeless dissertations. The same is true of effective pastoral work. Imagination is necessary to empathize with people in their various troubles and to put oneself in their place. Also teachers, in the preparation of their classroom work, need imagination.

Individuals with little imagination are colorless, and should work at the development of imagination. There are a number of ways in which that can be done. An enjoyable way is to read voraciously - especially good classical literature, good novels in particular, which are the fruit of imagination. Another way is to rewrite class notes, restating them in one's own words. Yet another way is to make a determined effort, when studying a particular subject in school, to see the forest, rather than to keep looking at the trees. One must try to see the whole picture. That, incidentally, marks the difference between a politician and a statesman. The former sees only the trees. A statesman, such as Winston Churchill, could see things in their broad historical context and in the wide sweep of history. A statesman can see events of the present in the broad perspective of the past and of the future.

A question concerning the moral and ethical implications involved in imagination arises from the fact that some have held that the use of imagination is sinful. They argue that it is fundamentally a lie. When their children play in an imaginary world, they prohibit these children from doing this, telling them that it is wrong to do because it is really a distortion of reality. Sometimes that line of thinking is carried over into the field of writing fiction as well. The claim is that writing and reading materials dealing with an imaginary world with imaginary figures and happenings is wrong.

In dealing with this matter of moral and ethical implications of imagination we ought to distinguish between several uses of imagination. 1) Imagination is involved in the simple creation of unreal things in the mind. Included in this are such things as the imaginary world in which a child plays and also the imagination required in writing fictional material. 2) Imagination is involved in all creative work. 3) Imagination is involved in all original thinking. Imagination is required in experimentation in the natural sciences, in invention, and in anything worthwhile that a man does in the field of knowledge.

None of these things can as such be wrong. But it is precisely imagination which is used and can be used for the purpose of understanding reality better, interpreting reality, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge. If all that were desired was an exact duplication of reality, one would more likely photograph a scene. But painting is intended to be interpretative and therefore requires the use of imagination and involves at least in part a distortion of reality. The same can be said of any work of art. It is however possible to use imagination to deceive others and to deceive oneself. Both are equally evil and fraught with dangers. It can also be used to live in an illusory world. Thus imagination as all other gifts of God can be used in the service of God as well as in the service of sin.

Dreams

When one is awake, his powers of presentation are stimulated by sensation and perception, and are controlled to a considerable extent by the will. During sleep, presentation occurs without the

control of the will and without stimulation by sensation and perception for the most part. It is for this reason that one's dreams can consist of strange incidents and strange combinations, having little correspondence to reality. Contrary to Freudian psychologists, dreams have no significance other than the fact that they often are primarily matters which occupied our consciousness during our waking hours. It should also be mentioned that in our dreams presentation may be weak or strong. Of many dreams we have no recollection. Sometimes we can recall them when we awaken, sometimes they are so vivid that they wake us, but most dreams are soon forgotten.

When dreams in the old dispensation were revelatory, God controlled the presentation. But He did so in such a way that those who had these dreams *knew* that the dreams were revelatory. This was obviously the case with the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh.

Inadvertent Error

The lie never results from incorrect sensation or perception, not even when the lie concerns God Himself. Always, according to Scripture, the lie is rooted in a deliberate attempt on the part of sinful man to distort or deny reality and to call that distortion the truth. There is, therefore, never any excuse for a lie.

It is possible, of course, to be guilty of inadvertent error. This might even involve a perversion of the truth, but, because it is not deliberate, intentional, or conscious, it is not a lie. When a distortion of the truth results from a person's inability to distinguish between presentation which corresponds to reality and presentation that does not correspond to reality, that distortion cannot be called a lie. Such inadvertent distortion of the truth may result from incorrect sensation, incorrect perception, incomplete apperception, faulty reasoning and judgment, or failure to distinguish between perception and imagination. That, incidentally, is one of the difficulties facing parents in bringing up their young children. They must by all means not discourage the exercise of the imagination. But, at the same time, they must not let a child continue to fail to distinguish between perception and imagination to the point where the child can no longer himself distinguish between the truth and the lie. It is very difficult to know how to treat specific incidents of a child's distortion of reality. Sometimes little children will tell stories which are not true with no deliberate attempt to tell a lie. A parent should probably in that case tell the child that it is all right to tell such stories, but that they must not tell them as if they were the truth.

There is another form of distortion of reality which may cause problems for an adult. Suppose that there were something that one is trying to forget, to push out of his consciousness, because it is a very unpleasant or perhaps embarrassing experience. There are certain sensations and perceptions that stimulate the memory so that we recall those things we are trying hard to forget. To protect oneself one often resorts to distorting sensation and perception. This can be dangerous. It is not wrong to want to forget certain things, but we must forget them only when we have completely "settled" them before our own consciousness and before God. If we do not do this we can eventually bring trouble upon ourselves for such perversion of reality, and such effort to forget can often lead to mental problems. It is important to remember that the child of God is called upon always to bring all his failures, his shortcomings, his sins, his guilt, his problems, to the foot of the cross of Calvary and to the throne of grace, there to find forgiveness and pardon and the healing of life's wounds. It is in the way of repentance and forgiveness that there is pardon and mental and spiritual well-being.

Development Of The Memory

The powers of memory can be developed. It is true that the power to recall is in direct proportion to the strength of the original sensation and perception. And the strength of the sensation and perception is determined by attention and concentration. Concentration therefore becomes a key to memory. The problem is that crowding into our consciousness are all kinds of sensations which disrupt our concentration. The secret is to learn to shut out all other sensations and perceptions so that our consciousness is focused on only one thing. The more we can accomplish this, the stronger will be the perceptions and the longer will be the retention of them.

It is also true that memory is stronger of things which we ourselves enjoy or desire. It is for this reason that the will plays a major role in the memory, and this is a clear example of the interaction between the mind and the will.

Association with earlier experience is a powerful aid to memory, and it must not be forgotten that, therefore, the more one learns the easier it is to learn more.

The world itself is concerned with memory, and many modern means for memory development have been suggested, most of which are valueless. It is true that the memory can be developed, but this development is possible only in the way of constant efforts in the field of memorization.

We must remember too, as we have said already, that memory is strongest in children and that God has so ordained the development of the child that in his early years he is able to retain the most.

From all of these considerations it is evident that the whole exercise of the memory has important ethical implications. It is well that the memory be trained and exercised in the education of covenant children. In some circles memorization is considered detrimental to the well-being of a child. But this is not true. Children, from their infancy on, ought to be trained to memorize. The memory itself can be so exercised that it becomes increasingly proficient in memorizing – as failure to exercise the memory leads to a certain atrophy of this important power. The training and exercise of the memory is a recognition of the great gift God has given in memory and a thankful development of the gift.

But various ethical implications are also obviously involved in the use of memory. The things retained in the memory have subtle but real influences on our entire lives. Even if we are not, at any given moment, conscious of the things in our memories, they are there for better or for worse. If, for example, from childhood on little regard is given to the Scriptures, but all the emphasis in the home is placed on worldly wisdom, pleasure seeking, ungodly music, sinful reading, these are the memories which will control and direct a person in his or her life in years to come. They will be so determinative that they will act as the guides to a person in his thinking, willing and conduct as he reacts to the circumstances of life in which God has placed him. But if, on the other hand, his memory is filled, from infancy, with spiritual songs, Scripture verses, warnings from Scripture against sin and the folly of the ungodly, peaceful and loving conduct towards others, etc., these are the memories that will automatically, as it were, come to consciousness in the experiences of life and his reaction to temptation, sorrow, pain and suffering. The memory is important.

The Power of Thought

The last power of the soul to which we call attention in connection with our discussion of the faculty of the intellect is the power of thought. In general, we may define thought as, "That power of the soul by which it is capable of forming concepts, combining them into judgments or propositions, and deducing from these other judgments or propositions."

In general, this power of thought is based on sensation, perception, and presentation (both active and passive memory). In particular, there are three elements in the definition: 1) formation of concepts. Formation of concepts makes use of a power of the mind which is sometimes called abstraction. While we cannot go into detail here concerning the powers of abstraction, we may briefly note that it is the ability to form concepts of the mind by means of abstracting from individual creatures their common characteristics. Without the ability to form concepts, human thought would be impossible.

2) The power of thought includes also the power to combine these concepts into judgments or propositions. This includes the power of the soul to relate concepts in such a way that that relationship corresponds to reality.

3) Finally, the power of thought includes the power to deduce from these concepts and the relationships in which they stand to each other judgments and propositions as conclusions. The process of combining concepts to form judgments and using these to reach conclusions is what we generally mean by the power of reasoning. It is this power of reasoning that enables man to know reality, to know creation, to know truth, and to know reality not simply as it is in itself, but to know it as a revelation of God.

Intuition

The power of intuition is really a form or aspect of reasoning. It differs from what we usually think of when we think of reasoning, however, in that it makes possible a jump to a conclusion without the laborious process of wading through the premises. By intuition one can see the conclusion without seeing all the premises which lead to the conclusion. Adam in Paradise, before the fall, possessed powers of reasoning which were higher than ours, but, more particularly, he possessed the power of intuition which was far greater than that which we also possess in varying degrees. Adam formed concepts immediately, without means. He could know the essence of a creature without the intervening processes of abstraction, reasoning, etc. Adam possessed the ability to see the creative, revelatory Word of God in a creature. And he could see the relationship among the concepts he formed which made it possible for him to see the relationship of each creature to each other creature and ultimately in relationship to God.

Yet intuition includes reasoning. Intuition is the ability to go from premises to conclusions without laboriously pursuing and consciously identifying intervening premises and their bearing on the argument. Perhaps an example from math will illustrate this. Some people can only work multiplication by putting the two numbers to be multiplied in a proper position in relation to each other and then tediously working through the problem bit by bit. Others are able to see two numbers and immediately know the product of multiplying one by the other. What is true in the relationships numbers have to each other, is also true in the relationship thoughts have to each other. Some can see those relationships immediately; others must examine them closely and

reason them out. Intuition is the former. But the relationships are there and so reason is implied in intuition and the latter is not irrational. In fact, generally speaking, women are more intuitive than men; but intuition is the superior power.

That power which Adam possessed before the fall was almost completely lost through sin. Our Canons, e.g., speak of "glimmerings" of natural light which still remain in man. The result is that now the formation of concepts takes place only through the laborious process of abstraction and reasoning; and these concepts are never means by which we can know the essential nature of things. Our powers of intuition are extremely weak compared to what Adam possessed.

Regeneration does not restore those original powers, at least not in this life. The believer does, however, receive the Scriptures through which, by the operation of the Spirit, his eyes are spiritually opened. The result is that he receives through Scripture a general idea of the concept of God's purpose in revelation. He cannot see the specific Word of God in a lion, for example, but from the Scripture he knows that the central idea in that particular creature of God is Christ who is the Lion of Judah's tribe. Through the Scriptures, the child of God can see Christ and the work of grace in all that God does — though not in the specific sense that Adam could do that. From Scripture the child of God can also obtain some idea of the abstract concepts of justice, mercy, love, beauty, truth, etc. The believer receives all these concepts from Scripture by faith.

The point to remember is that the true essence of things can only be seen by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In heaven we will have all the powers which Adam possessed and more besides, and in greater measure, for we will be able to perceive and understand the spiritual and heavenly creation. That will be even more blessed than that which Adam possessed. We will be able to see Christ as the essence of all things.

POWERS OF THE WILL

DEFINITIONS

As we have already said, a general definition of the will is, "the power of the soul to determine itself in its activities, and that in connection with and in relation to the world outside of itself and in relation to God." However, it is also possible to define the will in a narrower sense as, "that power of the soul whereby through a conscious, internal self-determination in regard to different possibilities, it initiates or rejects a proposed course of action."

The will also includes various powers. In the first place it includes the power of sensation, perception and presentation, not of the outside world, but from the data in the mind. Sensation is of course a power of the faculty of the intellect, but as it belongs to the faculty of the will, it is the power of the will to receive sensations from the mind, upon which sensations the will acts. In the second place, the will also includes the power of emotions and feeling. To this we shall return a bit later. And in the third place the will includes the power of choice. This is the chief power of the will and concerning this we must say a bit more presently.

RELATION OF MIND AND WILL

We must be reminded of the fact that the will and the mind function in the closest possible relationship to each other. There is no possibility of the will functioning apart from the mind, nor is there any possibility of the mind functioning independently of the will. The will receives all the

"material" upon which it acts from the mind. In that sense of the word the will in the deepest sense is totally dependent upon the mind. Even as far as the actions of the individual are concerned, whether they be desires or emotions, inclinations or wants, whatever raw materials, so to speak, the mind receives, the will can operate only upon what it receives through the mind. The will has no sensory powers of its own, no powers of sensation which are independent of the mind. It is utterly dependent upon that which the mind presents to it.

In connection with this, it must also be remembered that consciousness is a power of the mind, not of the will. The mind is conscious of all the creation about it but is also conscious of its own activity and of the activity in the world so that the activity of the world is reflected in the mind, i.e., in the consciousness. However, the will, as it initiates or rejects action, can do this only by directing also the mind. There is probably only one instance where this is not true and that is in the case of a man whose passions have had such complete control over his conduct that he does things without reason. He is governed by passions of such a powerful sort that his activity is no longer directed entirely by the mind. But this also is sinful, for no one may ever allow his emotions to control so completely his life and to direct it so utterly that his activity is independent of the mind. Often the courts of our land consider this to be sufficient reason to excuse a crime committed. If a man commits a crime in a towering rage so that he is blind to reason and understanding, he is declared sometimes to be temporarily insane and excusable before the law. But this is contrary to the teachings of Scripture. The child of God may never allow his emotions so completely to govern his mind and his conduct that he acts independently of conscious thought.

Even as the mind and will function together, so does the will always function in everything which a man does. This is even true of the deepest ingrained habits of a man. Although these habits are so deeply ingrained in man's nature that he does things almost without thought, still the will functions in them all. And this is because man is always, even in his habits, accountable before God for all that he does.

To illustrate the relationship between the mind and the will we may use the example of eating food. This is, of course, a physical activity, but it involves the faculties of mind and will. There is first of all a bodily need that we call physical hunger. The mind becomes involved because there is a sensation of need and an interpretation of the need through the power of perception. But the will is also involved because there is a desire to have the need satisfied. Involved in this awareness of a need and the feeling of discomfort is also the emotions. The mind becomes further involved in finding a means to satisfy that need. The individual must make use of his memory, his imagination, and the circumstances of life in which he finds himself and of which he becomes conscious. Since that need must be satisfied within a given set of circumstances (availability of food, e.g.), there will also be a formation of concepts and judgments. And the will becomes involved in the matter of making a choice from the various options available, whether to buy food, to eat food available, to tolerate hunger, or to go out and steal. This is a simplified explanation of the complex activity of the soul involved in eating; and the matter of eating is simple compared to other activities which involve the working of the human soul. The more complex the functioning of the whole man is, the more complex becomes the work of the faculties of intellect and will.

THE WILL'S POWER OF CHOICE

A few remarks are still necessary concerning the idea of the will in the narrow sense of the word. In the final analysis the whole doctrine of the accountability of man is determined by this aspect of the functioning of the will. All the activities of the whole man, including the activities of the mind, have their origin in the power of the will to determine and instigate a kind of activity. No matter how much something becomes a habit, the will still plays a role. It does not matter either whether a man commits a crime under the heat of passion or in the full consciousness of what he is doing, the will still instigates the action. Even drugs cannot take away from the fact that actions are instigated by a choice of the will. Brain damage will certainly have some effect on the degree of accountability, but it is impossible for us to determine that degree. Only God knows to what extent the will of such a man is active in instigating a particular action.

FREEDOM OF THE WILL

In connection with our understanding of the operation of the will, the question arises whether the will is free. In order to understand this we must understand carefully what is meant by freedom.

From a formal point of view, the will is free in a twofold sense. It is free, in the first place, in the sense that it determines itself in relationship to its objects. That is, the will functions without coercion. It functions as a will. It functions without external force of any kind being exerted upon it which violates its nature as a will. It is precisely because of this that man remains accountable before God for what he does. In the second place, the will is also free in the sense that it is free to act in harmony with its own nature. The meaning is not that the will is free to act in harmony with its own nature from an ethical point of view, although that also is true. But the idea is that the will is free to act in harmony with its own nature as a creature. Indeed, the will is genuinely free when it does act in harmony with its nature as creature. This was the case with the will of Adam in Paradise. And it was to this point that the temptation of Satan addressed itself. When Satan tempted our first parents, the fundamental question at issue was the question of Adam's creatureliness. When Satan came to Eve and called Eve's attention to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he involved Eve in a discussion concerning the tree. Eve told Satan that God had said they might not eat of that tree, and the day they would eat of it they would die. When Satan proposed to Eve: "Thou shalt be as God," Satan was saying to Eve, in effect, "This is all nice; this is all good that you operate within the scope of this freedom of your creatureliness. But if you will do what I say, I will increase the bounds of your freedom beyond anything you know now. You may think you are free now, and in a certain sense of the word you are. But if you will only do what I say, you will be able to extend the bounds of that freedom which you have to embrace the freedom of God Himself. Then you will not any more be free only as a puny little man created by God, but you will acquire for yourself the freedom that belongs to God Himself. You will be as God, and you will be able to determine for yourself what is good and what is evil." Eve listened to this lie of Satan and the result was that man fell into sin.

So man is free to act in harmony with his nature as creature, and his creatureliness constitutes also the limitations of his freedom. When he aspires to be something else than creature, he does not attain to freedom, but loses the very freedom with which he has been endowed. A fish is created free to swim in the water, but if that fish aspires to gain the freedom of a bird and fly in the air, that fish does not acquire a greater freedom than it had before, but rather it dies. And it dies because the law of God is broken, a law which defines specifically the place in God's creation which that creature, according to God's purpose, must occupy. To break that law is to break and

violate the purpose for which the creature was created. If the creature violates the purpose for which it was created, it has no reason any longer to exist in God's creation. It dies, because that is the punishment for violation of God's law.

The same is true of man. Man's will is free in the sense that he is free to act in harmony with his nature. He is created as a rational and moral creature and his place in God's creation is defined by that and by God's law, which is in perfect harmony with his nature. That law is, to love the Lord his God with all his heart. Within the perimeters of that law he finds freedom, for he acts then in harmony with his nature. Man's will is free to act in harmony with his nature and in obedience to the law of God. His freedom can never be any less than that, but also it cannot be greater than that. He is and always remains a creature. When he aspires to be something other than creature, he not only cannot attain to a freedom greater than his, the freedom of God, but he loses what freedom he has and dies.

A man may be hindered in what he desires to accomplish by circumstances in his life. But this does not affect the functioning of the will. Circumstances may alter the choice of the will, but the fact is that he remains free in these determinations.

Nevertheless, the will is not free in certain senses of the word. The will is not free, in the first place, to determine what is good and what is evil. The prerogative of determining what is good and evil belongs only to God Who is the Creator. Because man is creature and totally dependent upon God, it lies out of his realm to determine for himself what is good and what is evil. The sin of man as he listened to Satan is exactly that he continues to decide for himself what is good and what is evil. His decision is, of course, always the opposite of God's law. His greatest efforts are directed towards doing what is in violation of God's law and escaping the inevitable consequences.

In the second place, and in close connection with this, man's will is bound also in his total dependence upon God and upon God's counsel. There is here, of course, a very difficult problem, which involves the relationship between man and his moral acts and the sovereign determination of God. At the very center of all man's moral deeds stands his will. But we know from Scripture that God's will is the sole power that directs man in every respect. The Scriptures are very clear on this point and very strong. Even the king's heart is in the hands of the Lord as rivers of water and He turns it whithersoever He wills (Prov. 21:1). God's will is so determinative that all the deeds of man that he performs are in their smallest details within the scope and under the control of God's sovereign determination, the determination of His counsel. That is an absolute determination and man never does one thing in all his activities that is outside of or a departure from the counsel of God. Nevertheless, man remains accountable before God as a rational and moral creature and as one responsible for what he does. It is at the point where God's will touches the will of man that we have a mystery which the Scriptures do not make clear to us. God operates sovereignly in such a way that the will of man always functions as man's will. It not only functions as man's own will but God never violates man's will in the sovereign execution of His counsel. God does not override man's will or force man into action contrary to man's nature. God does not violate the creatureliness of man and does not coerce man's will. In all man does he functions in harmony with his own nature. Scripture does not argue the point of the relation between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, nor does Scripture attempt to explain it to our satisfaction. Scripture simply assumes both to be true, and implies thereby that the relation is completely obvious given

the relation between God the Creator and man a creature.

Man always chooses in harmony with his own nature. This is true also of man from a moral ethical point of view. If his nature is holy, his will is also holy. But if his nature is corrupt, as it was since the fall, then his will is also in the bondage and slavery of sin. The Arminian position is from every conceivable point of view a totally untenable position. This is true because it is possible, according to Arminianism, for the nature to be corrupted and the will to remain uncorrupted, so that the will retains the power to choose for God or against Him. But the Scriptures teach that man as totally depraved possesses also a depraved will. Because this will is depraved, the will can only choose the evil. The depraved sinner is unable even to will the good. His bondage and depravity are complete. Only through the regenerating power of grace is the will restored so that the child of God is once again able to choose the good.

Finally, the will is led by the intellect. Apart from the intellect the will is blind. It is dependent upon the intellect for all that it receives, for all that upon which it can act.

The will is therefore incited into action by presentations in the consciousness. It is precisely at this point also that there arises the possibility of temptation. For temptation genuinely to be temptation, that which is contrary to the law of God must be presented through the intellect to the will as being desirable. It is then that temptation becomes real; and when the will fastens upon that which is presented as desirable, and incites to action, then the purpose of temptation has been accomplished. And so the will and the intellect function in a close reciprocal relationship.

Thus it is that as the Psalmist expresses it, man is truly fearfully and wonderfully made.

Chapter VI: SOME IMPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY

FOR EDUCATION

Especially in the line of the covenant God saves children. Children as well as adults are included in the covenant of grace. And while the spiritual development of a person is, in the wisdom of God, parallel with the psychological and physical development, nevertheless the same Word of God which is the food for the souls of elect and regenerated adults serves also as food for the spiritual children of God's covenant. And the spiritual life of the child of God's covenant is in all respects identical with that of an adult, though of course in the way of a child.

We cannot enter in detail into this whole matter of the psychology of the child. Numerous books have been written on this subject, also from a distinctively Christian point of view. We can call attention only to some significant points that are directly related to the principles of psychology itself.

THE CHILD AND HIS MEMORY

One of the outstanding differences between a child and an adult is the difference of memory and reasoning. God has so created man that his memory is strongest in childhood. This must, however, be properly understood. Generally speaking, an adult can memorize a given passage more quickly than a child, probably because his powers of concentration are greater. But once having memorized a passage, a child will retain it in his memory much longer than an adult. Once learned, it is in a child's memory all his life. An adult must review a passage again and again before it is firmly fixed.

As he grows older, his powers of memory decrease, but there is a corresponding increase in the powers of reasoning. This too has implications for education. God has ordained that the period of childhood is the period in which one accumulates knowledge, while the period of adulthood is the period of reflection and development of thought. It is because of this that children must be encouraged to memorize as much as possible, especially in connection with spiritual things, the Scriptures and the truths of Scripture. It is sometimes alleged that a child should not be required to memorize that which he does not fully comprehend. But this is a mistake. Even though a child does not always understand very well what he is memorizing, he should be encouraged and taught to memorize those things that will stand him in good stead in later years. In those years will come the time of understanding, comprehension, reflection, and development of these truths. But if he has not acquired them and does not hold them in his memory, his development in an understanding and comprehension of the truth will necessarily be curtailed.

In connection with the training of the memory in a child, it is also important to teach children and young people to reason. Many people grow to adulthood and never learn to think. This is a sad situation especially in the church. Covenant children must learn to think so that they are able to do their own thinking and not simply accept the word of any one whom they hear. This is implied in John's admonition to "Try the spirits whether they be of God (I John 4:1). Especially as we near the end of the ages and the return of Christ, one sign of whose coming is the rise of false prophets, God's people must learn to think for themselves so that they are able to test every man's teachings

with God's Word. It is altogether too common in our day for people to allow others to do their thinking for them, and they are easily manipulated into wrong positions as a result.

This teaching of the use of reason involves many other things, two of which I mention here. In the first place, a child or young person must be taught to think logically. It is not at all amiss that children be given elementary logic, especially in high school. But logic is, after all, learning how to see things in their relationships to other things. This is a crucial part of understanding God's world. At the same time, this elementary logic includes especially weighing everything in the light of God's Word, for that Word tells us the most fundamental relationship in which all things stand to God. Education can be a powerful tool in teaching covenant youth how to weigh everything in the light of God's Word, so that the educated man of God has the spiritual ability to test the spirits.

The second necessity in teaching reasoning is the teaching of thinking abstractly. I have earlier referred to this need, and will not repeat here what has been said. Abstract thinking can only be learned by example and practice. It is, however, the key to all successful reasoning, and there is no better place to begin learning abstract concepts than from the Scriptures themselves. What do the Scriptures mean by goodness, righteousness, justice, holiness, as well as ungodliness, immodesty, etc.? (See also below.)

DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

The time in a person's life when the transition is made from childhood to adulthood, during the years approximately of 13 or 14 to 18 or 19, the child undergoes a remarkable change. He is beginning to make the things he has learned as a child his own. What he was been taught moves from his head to his heart as it were — especially in connection with spiritual instruction in the truths of God's Word. He comes to conviction with respect to that which he has learned. This too is in the wisdom of God. While he is still under authority he receives what he has been taught on the basis of the authority of his parents, ministers, teachers, and office bearers in the church. If he is asked why he believes a certain thing, he will answer: "Because my father said so." But as he develops into adulthood, he can no longer do this. The things that he has learned must become his own personal faith and conviction.

Because of this, he passes through a stage of questioning. This is normal. The parent, teacher, and pastor must not panic when the child entertains notions that seem to be heretical. The child is in the throes of arriving at psychological independence and he will often defend heretical positions in order to exert his own independence. He no longer wants to believe things because others have said that they are true, but he wants to believe them because he is convinced of them in his own soul.

Dealing with the child at this stage requires a great deal of patience on the part of those who instruct him. Often a little patient attention goes a long way, certainly much further than flat rejection of the child's ideas. The truth must, of course, still be taught. There are professors, even in Christian colleges, who refuse to disclose their own views to their students on the basis that such disclosure would hinder the development of the student's "ideological self-identity." This is wrong. Students must certainly learn to make the truth their own, but they are still under authority and still need the guidance of those whom God has appointed to occupy positions of authority over them. At bottom, however, stands the authority of the Scriptures. Every child must be made

to see this. It is not finally a question of what a parent or a teacher or a minister says; it is not even a question of what a child himself comes to believe is the truth; the Scriptures stand as the sole authority over all our faith and life. It is to the Scriptures, therefore, that a child must constantly be pointed. And he must be taught that he must submit himself in all his life to that divine rule which God has given.

But parents and teachers and ministers must deal with children in the light of the difficulty of this critical stage through which the child is passing. As he is in the process of learning to stand on his own two feet, parents and teachers must not discourage this. They must encourage him to be independent in his thinking, within the confines of the authority of God's Word. If he remains all his life a follower, there is a danger that he will some day follow the wrong leader. A child must be taught to think independently and yet subject all his thinking to the infallible rule of Scripture. This is not always an easy task.

CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT TERMS

In the early years of his life, a child is capable of thinking only in concrete terms. It is, in fact, next to impossible for a child in the first years of his life to think in terms of abstract concepts. (Every "concept" is, in its very nature, abstract. It is abstract because a concept by definition is an idea in the mind of a person. What we mean here is concepts of abstract *things* - concepts that have abstract denotations.) When a child reaches the age at which he can form such abstract concepts, he at first forms them only with great difficulty. Parents and teachers must expend special efforts to teach a child to do this, for it is very important that the child learn to think in terms of concepts of abstract things. There are very many people, apparently, who never learn to do this.

Those who teach young children must bear in mind that the child is unable to grasp abstract concepts because of the way in which his psychological development proceeds. We do not mean by this that young children have no knowledge at all of abstract concepts. They know, e.g., something about love, hate, fear, joy, etc. But they can only describe these things in terms of concrete activities. Someone hates so-and-so with the result that such-and-such happens in their relationships with each other. Because of this kind of thinking in terms of concrete things, the teacher of young children should see that his instruction relates to concrete things. It is usually around the time of early teens that children begin to have the ability to think in terms of abstractions. Before this time, if they were to be asked what love is, they would invariably respond that, "Love is when...."

When a child reaches an age at which he can think more abstractly it is the responsibility of parents and teachers to teach him the importance and necessity of forming such concepts on the basis of Scripture rather than reason. Concrete concepts do not come from Scripture of course. Scripture, e.g., gives no definition of a barn. But it is the abstract concepts of such things as beauty, holiness, love, justice, etc., which in a very real sense derive their content from Scripture. We may not decide what constitutes justice by examining 175 just deeds and determining what they have in common. Rather, we must ask, what does Scripture say justice is. Anything else is pure subjectivism. Even the picking out of 175 just deeds would be a subjective thing. One would be claiming to know what justice was even before he arrived at a definition, for else he would not know what deeds to choose. Educators must stress that in teaching. Scripture is the only objective norm.

ORIGINAL SIN AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is typical of modern psychology to explain behavior in terms of a person's environment. The implication is that the choices of the will are determined by environment. Calvinism, incidentally, is often charged with being deterministic; but Behaviorism, which is the theory undergirding this view, is far more deterministic than Calvinism can ever be. According to Behaviorism, the child is the product of his environment. The choices of his will are determined, with absolute necessity, by this environment. Influences that are brought to bear on the child and for which he is not responsible are said to be determinative as far as his total behavior is concerned. In keeping with this thinking, an individual is not really to be blamed for his misconduct; it is his environment that is at fault. Change the environment, so the call goes, and the individual that the environment produces will be acceptable to society.

With modern advances in genetics, scientists and psychologists are becoming increasingly convinced that the genetic make-up of an individual determines in large measure his conduct. It is not uncommon to ascribe drunkenness to a genetic disposition to this sin; and, increasingly, homosexuality is said to be inevitable in some because of their genes.

There is no question about it, of course, that such conclusions are the direct result of the scientists' commitment to biological evolutionism; nor can there be any question about it that such explanations of human behavior are intended to relieve man of moral responsibility for his sin, and, indeed, to deny sin altogether. But the fact remains that there is some truth in the matter. Surely Scripture teaches original sin; that is, that the corruption of the human nature is passed on from Adam, through generation, to the entire human race. This moral corruption and depravity is deeply imbedded in the nature of man and is carried on from generation to generation through the genes. "Original sin is ... a corruption of the whole nature and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof, and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind" (Confession of Faith, 15).

It is even true that in that depraved nature are tendencies towards particular sins in particular individuals. We even speak of character sins, that is, sins rooted in the unique nature of the individual because of his physical-psychical make-up.

We must insist, however, that from a psychological point of view everything a child does is done volitionally. A man is responsible to God for his every deed, and this is true because he acts volitionally.

At the same time we must remember that other factors are also involved in the degree of one's accountability. Every act is performed volitionally, but in *connection with* all the circumstances of life. The responsibility of a child for a given act, e.g., is not as great as that for a mature adult. It is this difference in degree of accountability, surely, which gives point to Christ's condemnation of Bethsaida and Chorazin: that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for these cities.

In connection with this, we will recall that the will is dependent on the presentation of the intellect. What enters the soul by way of sensation, perception, and presentation, has a profound effect on the activity of the will. For this reason it is important that the child be taught to surround

himself with that which will present to his will the things of God. This is especially true in connection with the psychology of temptation. The child's determination to listen to hard rock music for hours on end, or to watch television programs, cannot help but have an effect on his spiritual life. One is accountable before God for what is the object of his attention.

ATTENTION

It is in connection with this that the whole matter of attention arises. Attention can be defined as the focusing of the consciousness on a given object so that the object exclusively or predominantly occupies the activity of the mind and will. Involved in attention are the following elements.

- 1) A stimulus and the resultant sensation and perception.
- 2) The activities of the mind in all the aspects of thought — formation of concepts, analyzation, presentation, concentration, etc.
- 3) The activity of the will, a commanding of attention or directing of the consciousness to one object in preference to others.
- 4) A maintenance of that focusing of the consciousness on the one object.

Attention has been classified in different ways. Psychologists have spoken of spontaneous versus voluntary attention. Others have distinguished between objectively and subjectively conditioned attention. It might be well to take a brief look at these ideas.

Spontaneous attention is, as the name implies, said to be involuntary, the stimulus being so strong and powerful that it gains the attention without an act of the will. And, further, no voluntary effort is required to sustain the attention.

Voluntary attention, on the other hand, is that which requires a persistent activity of the will.

We must bear in mind, however, that the dividing line between the two is fuzzy. Even spontaneous attention is voluntary to the extent that the will plays a role in *all* the activities of the mind. It may be that there is a voluntary element, though involving a subconscious role of the will, in an apparently spontaneous act of attention. Something may seem to be spontaneous, as, e.g., attention paid to the reading of a good book, but there is nevertheless an act of the will, since the person has determined that that is the kind of book which he enjoys.

Objectively conditioned attention is attention conditioned by circumstances external at the moment of sensation, while subjectively conditioned attention is conditioned by one's apperceptive mass, by his personality, etc.

There is an element of truth in this distinction but again the two do not operate independently. There is always an interplay of the objective and subjective elements involved in attention.

Psychologists point out that interest and disinterest play a role in attention. Generally speaking, modern psychology traces interest and disinterest to emotions that are in turn based on instinct. Attention is therefore made an instinctual response. This notion is important in so-called progressive education. The theory is that education must be adapted to the interests of the child.

And those interests are conditioned by social circumstances and pressures. All this is a denial of the effects of sin and depravity and of moral responsibility. Interest and disinterest do of course play a role in attention. But though interest and disinterest are psychological matters, they cannot be understood apart from an ethical perspective. Scripture insists that the interest of a man must always be in God and in the things of His kingdom. This interest in God must encompass the whole of life and must determine the whole of life. Therefore interest must be and is a matter of the will, and carries with it moral and ethical implications involving the doctrine of sin and regeneration.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EPISTEMOLOGY

There are many theories concerning epistemology that are inimical to the truths of Scripture and the Confessions. While we cannot go into detail in a discussion of this branch of knowledge, it is perhaps well to make at least a few observations concerning the relationship between psychology and the theory of knowing.

Creation And Revelation

In order to understand properly any theory of knowing it is important to begin first of all with God's work of creation. We are told in Scripture that the entire creation was formed by the Word of God. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Not only were all things created by this Word of God, but by this same Word all creatures continue to have their existence, are directed in the course of history, and serve the purpose for which God created them. Hence, the very essence of every creature is the Word which God spoke. As the essence of every creature, that Word of God defines: 1) The particular and unique way that creature serves to reveal God Himself, for all creation is revelatory. 2) The particular and unique place which that creature occupies in relationship to all the other creatures in the cosmos as the cosmos was created by God as an organic unity. 3) The particular way in which that creature serves the purpose of God in relationship to the whole of the creation and in relationship to God Himself Who does all things for His glory.

This creation is objective reality because it is revelation. This objective reality is, therefore, ordered, patterned, intelligible, and rational. It is rational in the sense that it is perfectly adapted to serve the highest purpose that God has determined for it.

Man is himself a part of that creation, himself a word of God. But he is a special word of God so that, created in the image of God, he is able to know the Word of God in himself and in the creation about him. There is a correspondence between the Word of God in creation and the Word of God in man that enables him to know correctly that creation. And, knowing that creation, he can know God who is revealed in it. He can "read" God's thoughts in the creation by "reading" God's Word in God's book. And reading God's thoughts in the book of creation, he can know the truth concerning God that God was pleased to reveal.

Essentially this Word of God in creation is Christ. The Scriptures make this plain in different places. In John 1:1-3, 14, we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." In Colossians 1:15-17 we read: "(Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." In Hebrews 1:1-3 this same truth is taught: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, have in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The Consequences of The Fall

Nevertheless, what we have said of this word of God and man's ability to know that word was true only of Adam in Paradise. All we have said does not take into account the fact of sin. Sin has devastating results for our ability to know the Word of God. This is true for two reasons. In the first place, when man fell he lost the image of God so that the true knowledge of God which he possessed was changed into the lie. The true knowledge of God is, from the moment of the fall on, a spiritual impossibility. Paul writes in I Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." On the other hand, the word of God in creation was dimmed by the word of the curse. The whole of the creation now speaks only of God's curse upon it. The result of both these consequences of sin is that man can no longer truly know the essence of things, and can no longer have any true and saving knowledge of God.

The Knowledge of The Wicked

This brings up an interesting and important question. Is it possible for the natural man, apart from God's work of regeneration, to come to any true knowledge of God? It has often been maintained, especially under the influence of the theory of common grace (see, e.g., W. Masselink's book: *General Revelation and Common Grace*), that the natural man is still able not only to come to some knowledge of God but also to search after God, long for Him, seek deliverance from the troubles which sin brings about, and with this knowledge of God develop some kind of natural theology. The argument is that common grace diminished somewhat the terrible consequences of the fall. If it had not been for common grace, man would have, after the fall, become a brute beast. Man's humanity or manhood was preserved because of common grace, his rationality was kept intact, and the result of it is that some knowledge of God is still possible for him. This has been the consistent teaching of many Reformed and Presbyterian theologians since the end of the nineteenth century till today.

This view is often based upon an interesting and significant passage in Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 1:18ff.: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,

even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

However, this view is not only contrary to the whole of Scripture, but it also rests upon a misinterpretation of Romans 1:18ff. In the first place, there is no evidence at all in Scripture that the result of sin was that man lost his rationality. It cannot be proved from Scripture that man, apart from common grace, would have become a beast unable even to know the creation about him. Even after the fall man remained man. It is true that the fall had devastating consequences for man, but the fact nevertheless remains that man is still man even after he fell. It is also true that he lost completely the image of God, but he remains man and bears instead the image of Satan. It is also true that even his powers of knowing were sadly and tremendously decreased by the effects of the fall upon him so that our Confessions speak of the fact that after the fall man retained only "glimmerings of natural light" or a few remains of the excellent gifts with which he had been endowed (Canons of Dordt III and IV, 4; Confession of Faith, Article 14). What powers of intellect he still possesses, therefore, are only glimmerings and remnants of the powers which he possessed prior to the fall. But because he retains them, he remains a man. With these powers he continues to retain the ability to see the creation from a formal point of view. He can analyze the creation, determine the parts of which it is made, see somewhat the relationships in which the various parts stand to each other, and even see that in all these things God is made known. We have no way of understanding what Adam's powers of intellect were prior to the fall; but we do know that what man has retained after the fall are such feeble powers that they are in relationship to his individual powers as the flickering light of a guttering candle is to the sun in the heavens.

Romans 1 therefore teaches that indeed the creature still retains some knowledge of God. Verses 19 and 20 of that chapter emphasize very strongly that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. These things of God which the unregenerate are able to know and understand are the things of God's eternal power and Godhead. They know these things through the creation because God has Himself shown these things unto them. The result is that they know that God is God and that He alone must be served.

But it must never be forgotten that after all the theme of Romans 1:18ff. is found in the first part of verse 18: "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." The point is that God reveals His wrath upon the wicked. He reveals His wrath upon them because, though the wicked know Him, they nevertheless suppress the truth in unrighteousness. In their suppression of the truth, as the apostle goes on to explain, they deliberately, consciously, and willfully distort and corrupt that knowledge of God which they possess and serve idols: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (vs. 21-25).

This spiritual suppression of the truth is the blindness of the wicked which makes it impossible for them to know the things of God. To understand this, we must remember that man's depravity is

not merely an inability to do good, but it is an active, deliberate, conscious and perpetual hatred of God which manifests itself in all a man does. when he is confronted by the truth, of God he hates it and is determined never to confess it. In his hatred he suppresses it; that is, he makes every effort to drive it from his consciousness. The easiest way to do this is by means of substituting for it another idea that is false. Paul speaks of the fact that wicked man **changes** the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man.

A clear example of this is the theory of evolutionism. The doctrine of creation is clearly taught, not only in Scripture, but also in the creation itself. Man hates that doctrine because it makes God the Creator of all. He suppresses that truth, but does so by substituting for it the horrendous and wicked doctrine of evolutionism. He does this in spite of the fact that there is no proof for his theory, that even men from his own ranks admit that the doctrine is without support, and that the very notion is foolishness. But he constructs an idol as real as fat-bellied Buddha in his determination to deny God.

Man cannot escape the truth entirely. God never leaves Himself without witness. Thus man is constantly confronted with the necessity of suppressing the truth. When he persists in this and summons every bit of "proof" or his evil contention that he can find—even though he commits intellectual dishonesty in setting up such "proof"—he succeeds in so completely suppressing what he knows to be true that he convinces himself. This is what Scripture calls "hardening." It is the grave danger that every man confronts in his life in the world and his confrontation with truth and with God's moral law. The converted child of God is susceptible to the same danger when he justifies his own sins and tries to defend his own pet ideas even when he knows them to be wrong.

Formal And Material Knowledge

The wicked are able to possess some *formal* knowledge of the creation and of God. But, what we would call the *material* knowledge of the creation and of God they lack entirely.

In order to understand this we must explain a bit of what we mean by the terms "formal" and "material"

Anyone who has given any thought to the theory of knowledge is aware of the fact that the knowledge which we possess of anything is never a knowledge of the thing *qua* thing. That is, we can never know a thing as it exists by itself, as it stands isolated from all other things, and as a distinct and individual unit of creation. We can only know things in relationship to other things. And because this is true, the more relationships in which we know a thing the better we understand the thing itself. Take, e.g., a tree. We can never know a tree as it exists independently of all other creatures in God's creation. We cannot know a tree *qua* tree. The only way we can know the tree is as the tree stands in relationship to all the other creatures of God's creation. When we understand, e.g., the relation between a tree and the soil in which it is planted, the light which shines upon its leaves, the oxygen and carbon dioxide with which it interacts, can we know something of the tree. Even the parts of the tree we understand only as they are connected to the other parts. But even this is not enough. We can know the tree only as it stands in relationship to other trees, as it stands in relationship to the whole world of plants, as it stands in relationship to the fruit which it produces and the use to which that fruit can be put, the relationship in which the tree stands in its uses to animals and to man, the shade which it gives, the lumber which it

provides, the changes which the tree undergoes with the passing of the seasons, etc., can we know the tree. And it is clear that the more relationships we understand the better we know the tree.

Now every creature in God's creation stands in particular relationships with every other creature because God created this creation as a cosmos, i.e., a harmonious and organic whole in which each creature is interrelated and interdependent upon every other creature. These we may call the "formal" aspects of the tree, and the knowledge we possess of the tree in these relationships we may call "formal" knowledge. It does not require regeneration and the saving work of grace to know the tree in these relationships. Because man is a part of the creation and because he retains glimmerings of natural light, he is able to understand these relationships through his studies and is able to explain them. This knowledge which he possesses is a knowledge which differs in no respects from the knowledge which the child of God may have.

But there is one relationship in which every creature stands which is most basic and most fundamental. That is the relationship in which each creature stands to God. This relationship is basic and fundamental because God created all things as the revelation of Himself. In the final analysis, no true knowledge of any thing can be acquired except that knowledge includes the fundamental relationship in which each creature stands to God. It is this relationship which we call the "material" relationship. The true knowledge of anything is acquired only when that fundamental and most basic relationship is understood.

Now, according to Romans 1:18, it is precisely this relationship which the natural man denies. He "suppresses" this knowledge. In a certain sense of the word he possesses it, because without possessing it he could not suppress it, nor could he change this knowledge into the knowledge of corruptible things such as four-footed beasts and creeping things. He possesses this knowledge because by means of it he stands without excuse. In the judgment day when he stands before the judgment seat of Christ he will not be able to plead ignorance when the question is put to him: "Why did you not serve God?" God made Himself known through the things which were made. But because of his depravity which is total and complete all he can do is suppress that knowledge and hold it under in unrighteousness. All he can do and does do is change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man. The word "suppressed" is here the determinative word. It implies in the first place, that he certainly does possess it. It implies in the second place that he will have nothing of it because he hates it in his sin. And it implies in the third place, that insofar as possible, he will not even allow that truth to come to his consciousness. To suppress it means to drive it out of his consciousness, to deny it, to refuse to reckon with it, to change that truth into the lie. It is because of this terrible sin, for which also he goes to hell, that he is unable to know anything as truth. The most fundamental relationship of all, by means of which all things can be known, he denies and corrupts.

It is this true knowledge which is restored through grace. That true knowledge comes, first of all, objectively, through the Scriptures. It is through the Scriptures that God reveals that it is through and in and for the purpose of Christ that He has created all things. Christ is before all things and by Him do all things consist. All things have their goal and purpose in the glory of God through Jesus Christ. Subjectively, he can know this only through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit as that Spirit drives out of his heart and mind the power of sin and the lie and causes to shine in his heart the true light of the truth of God's Word. Thus it is only the believer who has a true knowledge of the creation. Though his knowledge may be lacking in some formal respects,

he possesses a far more profound knowledge than any unbeliever can ever have, because he sees how the entire creation stands related to God through Jesus Christ. In the final analysis, he sees how Christ is the true essence of all things. Christ is the Word of God by Whom all things were made.

Nevertheless, even in this life, he cannot see all these things clearly. This is partly because the creation is still under the curse of sin and partly because the enlightening of his own mind is imperfect and incomplete. It is only in the new creation when he shall be perfectly redeemed in body and soul, that he will be able to see all things as they are redeemed in Christ and as they are completely and totally to the glory of God. Then he will understand how every creature, also in this present creation, served the ultimate purpose of God in the realization of the new heavens and the new earth. Then he will understand how every creature is perfectly united to and related with every other creature, how every creature served God's purpose perfectly, how all things are only for God's glory through the salvation of the church in Jesus Christ.

Faith And Reason

All this brings up the question of the relationship between faith and reason. This question of the relationship between faith and reason has been a question that has caused untold grief in the history of the church throughout the ages. We can probably say, on the one hand, that the history of the church can, from a certain point of view, be characterized as a constant swinging of the pendulum from mysticism to rationalism. Both mysticism and rationalism deny the authority of the Word of God as it is contained in the Scriptures. Rationalism makes man's reason the measure of truth; mysticism makes man's feelings the measure of truth because feelings are interpreted as the inner voice of God revealing His will. From the earliest history of the New Testament church, the pendulum has swung back and forth from a drift into rationalism to a drift into mysticism. Mysticism is always a reaction to rationalism, and rationalism is always a reaction to mysticism. But both have in common this fundamental error that they deny the absolute authority of Scripture. Neither rationalism nor mysticism is acceptable, for neither the mind of man nor the feelings of man can be the final arbiter of truth, since man is still sinful and both his mind and his feelings are corrupted and polluted with sin.

It is particularly with rationalism that we are now concerned. There have been those who have maintained that the relationship between faith and reason is this, that faith is based upon reason. Only that which can be rationally demonstrated can be believed. But then it must also be understood that by "faith" is meant here mere acknowledgement of the truth. It is this fallacy which has really led to the disjunction between faith and reason which has plagued modern rationalistic thought.

Some have maintained that faith in the Scriptural sense is irrational or, at least, supra-rational. This is the position of those who scorn in any sense the functioning of the reasoning powers of man. But it is also, interestingly enough, implied in what is popularly known as "apparent contradiction." While those who hold to this position would never admit this, the fact nevertheless remains that mutually contradictory positions are held on the grounds that they can be reconciled only on a higher spiritual level which man cannot attain. It is in this way, e.g., that the defenders of the free offer of the gospel justify taking a position which stands flatly contradictory to God's sovereign decree of predestination, including both election and reprobation, and of the sovereign character of the operations of grace in the hearts of men. Ultimately, the idea of "apparent

contradiction" leads to agnosticism — also in theology.

Still others claim that all the truth of Scripture can be rationally demonstrated as truth. In this construct the "can be" soon becomes the "must be," and anything contrary to man's reason is discarded.

In close connection with this there are those who define faith as being the acceptance of things which cannot be proved. Those who take this position speak of the fact that, in a certain sense, both regenerated children of God and unregenerated have faith. They often are found to be defenders of such things as creation in six days of twenty-four hours and a young earth. When they are asked to prove this, they insist that their position is based upon suppositions which can only be accepted by faith. While this is true enough, they point to the fact that the evolutionists also accept presuppositions which cannot be empirically proved, and they therefore also build their false philosophy on faith. Thus faith is defined as being the acceptance of propositions which lie beyond the area of proof. This too is a mistake and denies the true role which faith plays in the life of the believer.

In its most basic character faith is the living bond which unites the elect child of God to Christ. This is, e.g., the idea of faith as it is set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 20: "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No; only those who are engrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith." This aspect of faith, while often overlooked, is of the utmost importance for our question. The elect believer is one with Christ, lives out of Him, receives all his life from Him, and continues in abiding communion with Him by means of faith. Christ and the believer have real and living communion by means of this mighty and wonderful power of faith. It is this idea of communion and fellowship which is of importance to us as fellowship is possible only through the objective knowledge of God in Christ revealed in Scripture.

As a living bond, faith is both knowledge and confidence. Again, our Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 21 defines true faith as, "not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence. ..." The word "certain" in the above definition of faith does not mean, "a certain kind of" knowledge, but rather it means a "definite" or "sure" knowledge. It is this aspect of the knowledge of faith which is of importance to us. It is because faith puts us in continuous and abiding communion with Christ that faith is also this "certain knowledge." That knowledge, of course, as the Heidelberg Catechism expresses it, has as its object all that God has revealed in His Word. But God's Word is the infallibly inspired and written record of God's revelation. When faith receives as true all that God has revealed in His Word, then faith appropriates to itself Christ Who is Himself revealed in that Word. Through the knowledge of faith, therefore, the believer enters into abiding communion with Christ and, through Christ, with God.

Implications

Now all of this has many and varied implications, but we are concerned especially here with the relationship between this aspect of faith and epistemology. Because this is the nature of faith, faith gives a knowledge which is more definite and certain, more sure and final than any other kind of knowledge can possibly be. The knowledge, e.g., which is acquired through some kind of empirical observation, or even through some kind of deductive or inductive logic can never be as

certain as the knowledge of faith. This is even clear from history. The knowledge which men acquire through empirical studies, through the discoveries of science, through the exercise of the powers of reason, is knowledge which is constantly changing, constantly being altered, constantly being modified, is never certain and final. But the knowledge of faith is not like that, for it appropriates as its own what God has revealed in Scripture. It is for this reason that the church of all ages has always held to precisely the same truth which, while it has grown richer with the years, nevertheless has remained fundamentally and essentially the same.

In order to understand the implications of this, we must understand that faith is the power whereby the darkness of sin and the lie is vanished from our minds. Perhaps the power of faith comes closest to the powers of intellect which Adam possessed in Paradise before the fall. If, e.g., you had had the opportunity to ask Adam in Paradise: "Prove to me that God exists," Adam would have looked at you with amazement and wonder. He probably would have responded, "Every single part of this creation in which you and I live shouts loudly of God. If you cannot see and hear and know Him through everything that is made, there is no amount of proof which I can possibly muster which will convince you of this truth." This could perhaps be illustrated by some rather earthy examples. Suppose that while I am sitting in my living room alongside my wife, with my arm about her, discussing those things that are of importance to us, someone enters my room and asks me, "Prove to me that your wife exists." To such an individual there certainly is no kind of proof that I can possibly offer which would convince him if he were determined to deny it. The best I could do would be to say, "I know she exists. I am talking with her, I love her, she shares my life with me, she is sitting alongside me here on our couch. If you will not accept that as proof, there is no proof which can possibly be given which will convince you." Or, to take another illustration, if I am standing at a street corner waiting for a bus without an umbrella or a raincoat while torrents of icy cold rain battered me, and someone came to me and asked, "Prove to me that it is raining." I would probably be inclined to hit him in the nose. If he needs proof of the fact that it is raining under those circumstances, it is perfectly obvious that there is no proof which anyone can possibly marshal which will convince him of what is so obviously a fact. It can only be denied by one who is a fool.

So with the knowledge of God. The wicked deny it not for lack of evidence, but because of their hatred of God. Faith changes hatred to love.

This is the essence of faith. There is an element of truth to what one theologian responded to a questioner when, at the time of the "God is dead" controversy, the questioner asked him, "Do you believe that God is truly dead?" To this question the theologian responded, "I know that He is not because I talked with Him yet this morning." This is the knowledge of faith. Because faith places us in living communion with Christ Himself, and through Christ with God, faith is a "certain" knowledge. It is the knowledge of personal experience. By faith I live with Christ. He speaks to me and I speak to Him. He walks with me down the pathway of life, strengthening me, encouraging me, rebuking me when I need it, but always working my salvation and making all things work for my good. Faith experiences this as a living reality. Faith therefore lies beyond proof in the commonly accepted sense of that word. Faith is its own proof. And it is this because faith is that power which is able to banish the darkness of sin and of the lie which has invaded my nature and which makes it impossible for me to know and understand spiritual things. Faith, therefore, is the true way of knowing, knowing not only merely formal truth, but knowing above all material truth, i.e., spiritual realities.

It must be understood that the fundamental question here is not merely a formal epistemological question, but is a profoundly spiritual question. The whole theory of knowledge is not merely philosophical or psychological but is profoundly spiritual. This must never be forgotten. For the unbeliever there is no proof of any kind or of any sort which will convincingly demonstrate that what Scripture says is true. For the believer these things are so obviously true that they need no proof. This is the point of what Jesus teaches in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in Luke 16:19-31. In the last part of that parable Jesus presents the rich man in Hell as requesting Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house to testify to his five brethren "lest they also come into this place of torment." Abraham reminds the rich man that, "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." To this the rich man responds, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." The rich man was apparently not satisfied with Abraham's response and thought to himself that some ghost or apparition would convince these five brethren where the Scriptures had failed. Abraham's response is profound: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The obvious implication is here that the Scriptures are sufficient. If one will not hear the Scriptures there is no proof of any kind which any man can possibly bring to bear upon a subject which will be convincing and which will prove a point. This is true even if one rose from the dead. All the proof, whatever it may be, of every kind, cannot possibly do anything more than the Scriptures themselves do. But these Scriptures are believed by faith and faith becomes the power, therefore, whereby we know these things to be true.

It is in this way that we must understand the relationship between faith and reason. Objectively, all the truth, whether of God or of His world, is eminently reasonable. That is, it is revelation which God has given of Himself, which is adapted to the human understanding and which can be known by man. God has so created man's mind that there is, as we said, contact possible between man and the creation about him. The reason why he will not confess God as God alone and worship Him lies in his sin. Faith therefore as the spiritual power which restores the spiritual capacity for true knowledge, is absolutely and indispensably essential to true knowledge. By means of that power of faith, that which is reasonable, and we may say even rational, can be and is understood. Luther was undoubtedly correct, therefore, when he spoke of reason as the handmaiden of faith.

FORMATION OF CONCEPTS

There is one more subject to which we must turn before we leave this matter, and that is the formation of concepts.

The formation of concepts, as we have observed earlier, implies the various powers of sensation, perception, memory, and various powers of the intellect.

There is, however, a difference between an image and a concept. An image is the direct result of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, etc. One has an image of a definite thing, although one can have an image of something that does not actually exist in reality as, e.g., a fairy. But a concept is a mental image. It is not in the form of a picture, it is not something which has shape, size, or location; it is abstract thinking, the result of abstraction, abstracting the pure essence of a thing.

Abstraction is the result of induction. In the course of the history of philosophy two kinds of

inductions have been proposed. There is first of all induction proper. One compares, e.g., a lot of horses, ignores the individual differences, pays attention to what they all have in common, abstracts these common features and forms a concept. But this is a faulty way of abstracting, for one can never be sure he has a proper notion of horse, not having seen all horses. The other method of induction is called intuitive induction. One horse only is studied and by analysis one finds out what is permanent and what is variable. By abstracting the permanent features and ignoring that which is variable, one forms a concept.

The former of these two theories was proposed by Plato. The function of the intellect, according to Plato, is not to construct ideas but to recall them. Ideas are innate and the intellect need not acquire them. It acquires them by means of recollection, but recollection which is clarified by reason. Aristotle, on the other hand, said that ideas are acquired. The mind is blank at birth and every idea is learned. The mind abstracts them out of things which come to the senses.

Whatever may be the truth of these two positions, there are certain things which must be said. In the first place ideas of material things are not inborn, but are acquired through learning. Plato said that one must have some idea of a horse before he can recognize a horse, but this is not necessarily true. By means of intuitive induction we can learn what the essence of horse is so that from that point on we are always able to recognize a horse. In the second place, however, it must once again be emphasized that our understanding of the true essence of things is very limited; indeed, the true essence of things lies beyond our knowledge. This is true because, as we have said, the curse of God still lies upon this creation and our understanding of it is imperfect. We cannot see things from the viewpoint of God's revelation and purpose in all things. In the third place our ideas of abstract concepts such as goodness, justice, and beauty, come not from meeting good things and just things and beautiful things, but must be formed on the basis of Scripture itself.

There is a relationship between concepts and various powers of the intellect. There is first of all a relationship between concepts and judgments. A judgment is an assertion of something. It may be either negative or positive and it says something about an idea or a concept. Two ideas or concepts, "man" and "mortality," form a judgment in the proposition, "man is mortal." But concepts are prior to judgments. Various judgments are made in the process of abstraction and the formation of concepts. A judgment is the most fundamental way of thinking. A concept affirms that various denotations belong together. This is a judgment. One may think "man," but this thought is not a judgment. It is rather an idea based upon previous judgments.

There is also a relationship between concepts and comprehension. A concept is a unity of several attributes of a thing. The sum of these attributes is a concept. The attributes may be clearly or vaguely distinguished from each other. This will give a correspondingly clear or vague concept. One must strive for clear comprehension in the careful distinction between attributes.

There is also a relationship between concepts and knowledge. This implies three things: 1) we know a concept; 2) we know the relation between this concept and other concepts; 3) but we know objectively existing things by means of these concepts. The latter is knowledge. Plato was wrong when he said we know concepts and then infer reality from them. We know things themselves by means of ideas, not merely ideas apart from the things. Ideas are abstract, the universal means of knowing things. Thus concepts are a necessary part of knowledge.

We must be clear here on the meaning of the word "abstract." It can mean a quality or attribute separated from a thing which possesses it, as, e.g., whiteness, liberty, or beauty. It can also mean a thing separated from its context or its whole, as, e.g., man, horse, or star. Ideas are all abstract in the sense that they are mental concepts which are abstracted from actually existing things. But we speak of concrete and abstract concepts as well. A concept is concrete when it presents its meaning in and with a certain subject that gives it its meaning. Thus the concept "man" is concrete. A concept is abstract when it presents its meaning apart from the subject that has its meaning. This is true of the concept "liberty." Thus a concrete term can always be predicated of a concretely existing thing. An abstract term cannot do this. Plato said that abstractions exist apart from objects. Whiteness exists apart from white things. He was wrong. One can say, "This is a man"; but one cannot say, "This is manness."

It is clear that this has much to do with education and teaching. The successful teacher takes into account the inability of small children to understand abstract concepts and fills his/her instruction with countless illustrations and examples. But at the same time, it is crucial that a teacher also teach students to think abstractly, for such abstract thinking is crucial for understanding the truth. Many people never learn to think abstractly; indeed, this is becoming increasingly common in our day where all the emphasis falls on pragmatic thinking: "if it works its true." But such Biblical concepts as righteousness, grace, peace, holiness and the like are all abstract concepts which must be understood if a child of God is to grow in the knowledge of the God of His salvation.

One can teach abstract concepts by means of concrete realities. One can teach the abstract idea of justice by describing many just and unjust actions on the part of a judge, for example. But the child must be taught to understand that an action is just or unjust because there is an objective standard of justice found in God and revealed to men which must be defined and understood. It is that characteristic which every just act has in common, and which every unjust act lacks. Only when the child gets a hold on such an abstract concept will the child be able to identify any act as just or unjust.

We cannot go into these things any more in detail, but it is evident from all this that the powers of intellect with which man has been endowed, even though only "glimmerings," are nevertheless marvelous and mighty powers.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE WORK OF SALVATION

Depravity

We believe that man is totally depraved. When we say this, we do not mean simply that whatever man does is sinful. The idea of total depravity is rather that man's entire nature is corrupt. The whole of man's nature is thoroughly and completely under the dominion of sin and is bent in the direction of sin. The heart of the unregenerated man is depraved, and his mind, will, emotions, spirit, and body, and, at the center of it all, his person, are all under the dominion of the corrupt heart. Man's will cannot will the good; his emotions are under the dominion of hate; his mind is totally darkened; his body is completely a servant of sin; and the person as the subject of it all is the subject of this totally depraved nature.

Regeneration

Scripture tells us that the heart of the child of God is regenerated. That means that he is given a new heart. Scripture makes clear that this new heart is cleansed from sin; it is without sin; it is pure. John writes: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). Furthermore, according to Scripture, it is *only* the heart that is regenerated, not the mind or the will or the emotions or the body. The spirit or soul of man is not made pure. There comes a time when all this will certainly be true. At the moment of death the child of God goes to glory even though his body goes to the grave. And at this moment of death the child of God with the powers of mind and will is made perfectly holy and free from sin. The final regeneration of his body must await the final resurrection when his body shall be raised in the likeness of the glorified body of Christ.

Scripture also teaches us that, though none of the psychological aspects of man are regenerated, the heart influences the whole of man. From Canons III and IV, Articles 11 and 12, we see that the influence of the regenerated heart extends to the whole of the person and nature. Specifically, that means that the regenerated heart, through the Holy Spirit, influences the mind and will, the emotions and even the body.

Concerning those influences we should note, in the first place, that they are of such a kind that the mind is enlightened and that the will becomes pliable. Sin no longer has dominion, no longer rules, in the regenerated man. Grace is now dominant. But we must note, in the second place, that the whole man is no longer influenced completely by sin. The regenerated child of God still sins and still has a corrupt nature. The power of regeneration which proceeds from the heart influences the nature, but those influences never succeed in a restoration of the nature. Sin, depravity, and corruption remain with the child of God as long as he is on the earth. And, in addition to this, even those good influences from the regenerated heart are corrupted by the depravity of the mind and the will.

As we said earlier, it is probably possible to define the heart as being a microcosm of the entire nature. The heart stands in relation to the nature as an acorn stands in relation to an oak tree. Thus when the heart is regenerated the nature is principally regenerated. Thus it is that this principle of regeneration works mightily within the person, influencing the entire nature and bringing it in subjection to the service of God, while the nature itself continues to remain depraved. We must understand here that we face a profound mystery of the work of grace. Our Canons in III and IV, Article 12 describe the work of regeneration as being "evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable (inexpressible); not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead." The work of regeneration does not result in a man who is partially good and partially bad, or who is somewhat grey, not white with the purity of complete holiness, nor black with the corruption of complete sin. The regenerated child of God is at the same time both regenerated and still corrupt.

Scripture distinguishes, in this connection, between the old and the new man. It is plain from Scripture that we cannot, in distinguishing between the two, follow the distinctions in man which we made from a psychological point of view. We cannot, e.g., say that the heart belongs to the new man and the mind belongs to the old. Rather we say that the new man is the regenerated heart, the person, and the nature in so far as that nature comes under the influence of regeneration. The old man is the person and the nature in so far as they have not been brought under the

influence of the regenerated heart.

Rev. Hoeksema used to say that the regenerated man has one person, but two egos. There is, he said, a reflection of the person in the regenerated consciousness and in the unregenerated consciousness. The ego is, according to that view, the subject of all the activities of the nature which proceed from a regenerated heart. The other is the subject of these activities as they are under the influence of sin. Whether this view actually solves the problem or not, it remains a fact that there is a conflict between the old and new man, although one person is the subject of both sides of the conflict. The nature of this conflict is such that it cuts right across the whole man. It is really a matter of will against will in the same individual, of mind against mind again in the same individual, even of body against body. The will as it has come under the influence of regeneration stands over against the will as it still retains the motions of sin. When Scripture speaks of the renewal of the will it does not mean that the will is perfectly restored in this life. We still sin and we still sin volitionally. When the child of God sins he does so willingly, but there is in him, at the same time, as a result of the principle of regeneration worked in him, a will to do the good and to hate the evil which he does.

It is clear from Romans 6:12-14 that the regenerated man, the new man, has the victory. Sin has no more dominion in him. Sin no longer reigns. Its power in our lives has been broken. That is true also in the experience of the child of God. Though he often walks in sin, he nevertheless hates it and his desire is for the way of the commandments of God. Though he sometimes rationalizes and tries to excuse his actions, the child of God recognizes sin and his will rejects it.

Thus when we speak of the fact that the heart is renewed, the very word "renewed" implies a *complete* work. In that sense it can be applied only to the heart. The mind and the will are not renewed in that sense, since their sanctification is not yet complete. But the mind and will do come under the influence of the regenerated heart so that there is a certain process of renewing the mind and the will.

The life of regeneration implanted in the hearts of God's people is a life which goes beyond that which Adam possessed in Paradise. Though his nature was free from sin, it was certainly a nature which was adapted solely to life on this earth. The life of regeneration, on the other hand, is a heavenly life. The completion of that work of God in us must therefore wait for death and the resurrection of the body. As long as we are in the world we do and must remain, as to body and soul and spirit, of the earth earthy. The renewal brought about by regeneration does not transform our nature. If it did, we would not be able to live in the world. But, on the other hand, the nature which we now possess cannot live in heaven, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The transformation of the nature, then, takes place at the moment of the resurrection.

When the heart is renewed, however, it is made so completely new that it is transformed. And that transformed heart cannot help but have a principal influence on the whole nature. It cannot result in the complete transformation of that nature but it does exercise a dominating influence on the nature. The renewal of the nature is in principle only, and it is a renewal as to the ethical and spiritual aspect of the nature. The final transformation will be a change both as to the substance and as to the spiritual-ethical aspect of the nature of the elect child of God.

It is probably true to say that God cannot renew us completely now because He has willed to prepare and is preparing a better place for us. Therefore there is the battle between the flesh and

the spirit, between the present nature and the regenerated heart, a battle which continues to rage. The battle is in a sense the attempt of the nature and the flesh to stem the tide of regeneration. Sometimes the nature seems to carry the day, winning temporary victories. But always the child of God turns in repentance and confession to the cross, and by the power of the cross strives to live according to the principles of Scripture. The regenerated heart so influences the nature that it turns it in the direction of that which is holy and good.

It can probably be said that the history of the nation of Israel and the history of the church of the new dispensation is a history written large of the spiritual experience of the child of God. Always in the nation of Israel as always in the New Testament church there is the carnal seed which is reprobate and the holy seed which is elect. The carnal seed is analogous to our corrupt nature while the holy seed is analogous to the life of regeneration within us. Never for a moment is it any different in this life. Always in Israel and always in the church both seeds existed side by side, just as in the child of God, as long as he is in this life, both the work of regeneration and the corruption of his nature exist side by side. But even though this was true in Israel as it is also true in the church, there were times in the history of the nation when the elect remnant, even though it may have been a minority, was dominant in the life of the nation. Such was the case in the days of David, of Hezekiah, and of Josiah. When the elect element of the nation was dominant the nation as a whole served the Lord. The sacrifices were made, the ceremonies of the temple were observed, idols were put out of the land, and the nation in its organic unity could be said to live a life which was in keeping with God's commandments.

But there were also times in the history of the nation, as is true with the history of the church, when the reprobate element was in control. This was true for example in the days of Ahab when the church had to survive by going underground. Then idol worship was the dominant religion and the nation as a whole, organically considered, served idols and departed from the worship of Jehovah.

Oftentimes that elect remnant could be delivered only by means of severe chastisement for the elect too were guilty of the sins of the nation. This evil of the nation finally culminated in the captivity. This is also true in the new dispensation.

All of this is analogous to the life of the child of God. Sometimes the corrupt nature of the elect child of God is dominant and his whole life is controlled and directed by the influences of sin. Other times the principle of regeneration is dominant and the child of God, though even then imperfectly, serves the Lord, walks in the way of His commandments, and lives in faith and love. There are also times when, by the chastening hand of the Lord, the child of God, though living for awhile in sin, is brought to repentance. This chastening hand of the Lord purges away the filth of sin and brings the child of God to his knees before the cross.

But it must be remembered that the principle of regeneration always has the victory, for it is the work of God whereby He transforms His people and He will perfect that good work which He has begun.

A parent or a teacher cannot and may not attempt to determine whether a given child is, in fact, regenerated or unregenerated. The Scriptures, therefore, require of us that we look at all the children whom we instruct as true children of God, regenerated elect, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. This does not mean that we "presuppose" the regeneration of all, for we know from

Scripture that not all that are of Israel are truly Israel. But it does mean that we must show every child the ways of God's covenant and require that every child walk in those ways.

At the same time we know that these children are still sinful. That requires that we recognize the enormous capacity for sin present in them and in all God's people. This recognition of sin in each child requires a very specific approach to each child. It requires that we expect sinful conduct although we never condone it. It requires that, recognizing that not all are true children of God, we warn all that disobedience and wicked conduct which goes unconfessed brings God's judgment and wrath down on us because such conduct is not that of a regenerated child of God. It requires that we teach children to confess their sins to God and to those against whom they sinned and that only in this way will they reveal the grace of God in their hearts. It requires a profound understanding of sin on the part of the one teaching, not only in general, but as it operates in human nature everywhere, but also in the individual with his or her own unique physical/psychical make-up. One must know the child!

CONCLUSION

We are, even from a natural viewpoint "fearfully and wonderfully made. How much more is this not true of the regenerated and converted child of God in whom God has worked so wonderfully and mysteriously. Upon parents, the church, and the school falls the task of teaching. It is a noble task, but also a task which can only be done by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit. We are promised this help in Scripture.

Appendix

In his commentary on I John 2:12-14, Herman Hoeksema has some interesting remarks concerning the relation between the physical and spiritual development of a child. We quote him here rather at length, for his remarks are cogent.

There is difference of opinion among interpreters of Holy Scripture whether in these verses John addresses the children, the fathers, the young men of the church from the natural point of view, that is, from the viewpoint of their age, or from the spiritual point of view, that is, the viewpoint of their spiritual development in Christ. In itself, both are possible. It is, of course, possible that the apostle addresses the children, the young men, and the fathers of the church merely from the point of view of their natural development in years. It may seem strange to us, perhaps, that he would write to the children of the church, that is, that he would write to them that they know the Father and that their sins are forgiven them for Christ's sake. But in Scripture this is nothing extraordinary. And therefore, it is possible indeed that we have merely a distinction of age. But it is possible too that the apostle, writing to the congregation in general, addresses them as children, young men, and fathers from the viewpoint of their growth and their spiritual development in the path of grace, so that we have mention here of children, young men, and fathers in Christ. Both these views have been and still are held by commentators of Holy Writ.

[The view that children in the physical sense of the word are being addressed] seems to us the more correct one. In the first place, the entire passage leaves that impression. What is more natural than to assume that while John addresses distinctively the fathers and the young men of the church, he also

addresses the children in the same sense? The entire passage therefore leaves the impression that with the word "children" he addresses the little ones, spiritual, or natural, or both of the church of Christ. Besides, also what is said of these children in distinction from the fathers and the young men leads to the same conclusion. Of the fathers John says that they have known Him that was from the beginning. Of the young men, that they are strong and that they have overcome the evil one. And of the children, simply that their sins are forgiven and that they have known the Father. And, therefore, we believe that in every one of these three expressions,--children, young men, fathers,--John mentions a distinct group of people in the church which he addresses.

Regarding the question whether these terms must be understood in the natural or in the spiritual sense, we would say that it is not necessary to exclude either. On the one hand, it may readily be admitted that the terms must suggest a difference of ages, and that John in them addresses the youngest, the older, and the eldest in the church. On the other hand, it cannot escape our attention that what is said of these three groups implies a spiritual difference and advancement from childhood, youth, to fatherhood in regard to the development of grace in Christ Jesus. And in the third place, it may be remarked that it is the most normal condition that these natural and spiritual stages coincide and are in harmony with each other. It is natural that a child in the physical sense of the word is also a child in grace. It is beautiful when a young man is strong physically but at the same time strong in faith. And there is nothing strange in the assumption that one who has reached a more advanced age is also a father in Christ. And therefore, it is after all this spiritual development which John emphasizes in the words of the text.

John writes to the children, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." He writes this to them, whether in the physical or spiritual sense, or in both senses. We take it emphatically in the spiritual sense of the word. And then I want to emphasize, in the first place, that wherever there is life, there must be development. To be stationary is impossible. In life there is development. In death there is decay. Development is therefore a sign of life. This is true spiritually as well as physically. If our children do not grow, are pale and listless, there is no or little physical or mental development, we begin to worry and send for the physician to examine the child. [But] we do not worry half so much about the lack of spiritual growth as we do about the want of physical development. And yet it is the most natural thing to assume that also this spiritual life may not be and cannot be stationary, but that there must be either development, normal, natural development, or decay. When God comes to instill the principle of the new life, the principle of grace, into our hearts, we are not of a sudden fully grown and perfect. But we are infants, spiritual infants; and that principle of spiritual life must develop. That development and growth must reveal itself in the signs of development. We must increase in knowledge, spiritual knowledge. We must grow stronger in the faith. We must more and more consciously appropriate Christ Jesus. In a word, also spiritually there must be advance on the path of life.

It is just because of the law of development in our life that we pass through different stages, which more or less possess their own characteristics. There are different periods in life, and each of these periods has its own peculiar characteristics. True, these periods are not equally long with every individual. The one passes from childhood into youth sooner than the other, and from the period of youthful power into that of the deeper knowledge of fatherhood more readily than the other. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these periods are there. It is also true that these different periods cannot be distinctly marked off, so that we would be able to say that one day one is a child, and the next day a youth. They overlap, they run into one another. But also this does not alter the fact that these periods do exist, and that each of them possesses its own peculiar traits, that belong to that particular period.

Of a child we do not expect youthful strength, and we do not want him to reveal himself, to act as if he were a father. Nor do we praise a father that still acts as a child. Normal it is, when in each period of our life we reveal those traits that are peculiar to the period itself, and when the development is gradual.

Thus it is in the natural sphere. Characteristic of childhood is its receptivity, in the first place. Physically, as well as mentally, the child must receive. It is his parents that must provide him with the necessary nourishment, with food and drink, with raiment and shelter. He cannot provide for himself. And mentally he must also be nourished, must be fed, instructed, --_opvoeden. And the child is receptive. Physically he easily receives and assimilates the food for his body; and mentally he is as the Dutch have it, in the period

that easily remembers. It is for that same reason fully in harmony with his peculiar characteristics that the child is under authority, that his parents are placed over him to guard and guide and rule over him. And since this is the attitude of the child, it is characteristic of childhood to be dependent and receptive, it follows that also the entire attitude of the child itself must be in harmony with its peculiar characteristics. In the first place, the child must assume the attitude of docility. It must first of all be silent and willing to learn. Some children can continually assume the attitude as if they already had a monopoly of wisdom, and if they were full to overflowing. Some homes, when you enter, the children will do all the talking, and it seems as if they even feel obliged to educate their parents. They are little wise acres. But this is out of harmony with their very age, and with the peculiar characteristics of their period of life. And the unnatural relation of such children is felt immediately by anyone that comes into contact with them. The child must first of all assume an attitude of docility and therefore must mostly listen, not talk.

In the second place,--and this is, no doubt, the most fundamental virtue of a child,--he must be obedient. And obedience is entirely in harmony with his characteristics and with the relation in which God has placed him. Also, here you feel the disharmony as soon as the relation is different. As long as the child is rather small, there is not so much difficulty. But especially when he begins to imagine that he is somebody, perhaps earns a few pennies, you can sometimes meet with the worst relations conceivable, so that the child commands and the parent practically obeys.

However this may be, receptivity and dependence, and therefore docility and obedience, are the proper characteristics of a child in the natural sense of the word.

But the same is true also spiritually. As we have already remarked, it is possible also to speak of spiritual childhood, for the simply reason that also in our spiritual life there is advancement from stage to stage. A child in this sense of the word is a beginner in Christ. Most beautiful and most general this childhood is if it coincides with childhood in the natural sense. If the grace of God has been implanted in the hearts of our children, and if gradually that grace of God comes to development, even as they develop mentally and physically, till they reach the spiritual strength of youth, God works in His most general covenant way. But this is not always the case. It is very possible that we have reached the natural strength of youth long ago, that we have grown into manhood physically and mentally, and that we have even reached an advanced stage of life, before the grace of God is revealed to us, before we are brought into subjection to Christ. And in such a case our spiritual childhood does not coincide with natural childhood, but with natural fatherhood.

This is not the most beautiful, but it is nevertheless possible. Not only that, but frequently it happens. Especially does this seem to be the case with young men in our day. Frequently it seems that they must sow their wild oats in their youth, and that they care little about God and His church; and it is only after they get settled, as they say, and are married, that they come to repentance and turn once more to the say of God's covenant. Of course, it happens just as often that they never return; but with them we are not concerned at present. What I mean to say is, in the first place, that spiritual childhood most generally and most normally coincides with the earliest period of life as to time. And to this we may add, in the second place, that it is possible that God reveals His grace to us in a later period so that we come to spiritual childhood while we have passed the period of youth. And in the third place, it may also be remarked that there are some children of God that never seem to develop beyond their childhood in the Lord, even as you have children in the natural sense who never develop beyond a certain stage, and that act as if they are, say, ten years old, while they are already in their thirties or forties. You can have children in the spiritual sense that have been on the way of grace for years, and that still are like little children. Be that as it may, whether it be in our early years, or whether it be in a more advanced age, as long as we are children in Christ Jesus, we possess the characteristics of children, and we must reveal the attitude of children, and nothing more.

In the first place, also of spiritual children it must be said that they must reveal an eagerness to learn. They must be receptive. They have only advanced to first principles, and they have developed but little as yet. Spiritually they are only just on the way. And therefore they must be receptive and docile. This is entirely in harmony with what John says of them. He writes: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake."

In the first place, it will be noticed immediately that this is the beginning of our conscious spiritual life. What John means to say is: I write you in this, my letter, because I know that you are conscious of the forgiveness of sins. That this is his meaning is plain from the addition: "for his name's sake." That name of Christ had been revealed to them. They had learned to know that name. And in that name they had become conscious of the forgiveness of their sins. This is a very important knowledge. It is the basis of all our knowledge as children of God. But it is nothing very deep. And it is without anything further, characteristic of spiritual childhood. When a Christian first comes to the light, the fact that his sins are forgiven is uppermost in his mind. Characteristic of childhood is obedience. And he notices that he has been disobedient. He begins to know his sins and transgressions. And he realizes that he has done evil in the sight of his God. And even as a normal child cannot rest before he has the satisfaction to know that father and mother have forgiven him, so the spiritual child must know that God has forgiven him his sins. And thus he comes to a knowledge of faith that all his sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ Jesus his Lord. And in Christ he knows God as his Father. Mark, we do not say that the more advanced Christian can speak of this no more. We do not say that the youth and the father in the Lord have passed beyond the stage where their sins trouble them. On the contrary, there is ever a deepening also of this knowledge, of the knowledge of sin, as the Christian advances on the path of life. Nevertheless, this knowledge as such, without anything further, is characteristic of spiritual childhood. It belongs to the beginning of our life that we know the forgiveness of sins, that we know the Father.

Once more I say that the most beautiful way is followed when in principle this knowledge is instilled through the grace of God in earliest childhood. Then this is the result, that the knowledge such a child possesses in principle is gradually developed and strengthened, until it is firm, until he understands and is assured by faith that his sins are forgiven him for the sake of the blood of his Redeemer. And when he then has passed through the stage of his childhood and advanced to adolescence, he is ready to make confession of that faith, and partake of the supper of the Lord...

Also of the age of spiritual youth the apostle makes mention.

Youth is, in the first place, the period of strength. Naturally, if childhood has been normal and the child for years has received physical and mental nourishment, it is but natural that when adolescence is reached, the youth, as it were, overflows with strength. Not as if there were not strength in manhood. Surely, you feel also that the man is strong, and in a sense stronger than the youth. In fact, his strength is more stable. The strength of full manhood is entirely different from that of youth. It is not so overflowing, not so abounding. It is not so constantly looking for an outlet. It is more steady and normal and controlled than the strength of youth. Still more, the youth is conscious of his strength. You can tell by the way he walks. You can notice it in the way he bears his head. You can read it in his eyes. He knows that he is strong. And the only thing he does not know is how much he can do with his strength. He likes exercise. If he goes to school, he tries to exercise his strength by running and wrestling and swimming and athletics of all sorts. And even after he has worked all day in the factory, you may see him exercise his strength in different sports. For the same reason, he is full of ideals, and filled to the brim with courage. He has never met with difficulties which he did not overcome. Life still looks at him with its brightest smile. And hence, he is hopeful and courageous. The youth possesses all kinds of fighting strength.

Thus it is naturally. But thus it is also spiritually. If we have passed through a period of spiritual childhood, we are strong with the strength of youth, and at the same time full of courage. That is true naturally, but also spiritually. We have grown in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and we have reached the stage where we are founded more or less in the knowledge of the truth. Not as if we had already the more steady strength of manhood: but it is the continually active, almost boisterous strength of youth that reveals itself in us. We begin to overflow. We have a grasp of principles. We have tasted the beauty of God's Word. We are strong in the faith that our Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and that the devil will suffer defeat. And it seems as if nothing is spiritually too difficult for us. To sit still and not do anything seems impossible. We must have an outlet for our spiritual energy. We are ready for the spiritual battle. It is mostly in this spirit that the fight actually is fought.

Once more, this does not mean that there is no struggle even in later years; not as if there are not attacks of the devil in the stage of spiritual fatherhood. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in the time of spiritual

youth the battle is fought mostly. There comes a time when in comparison with the period of our youth we say: "The battle is won, and the evil one is overcome." The devil attacks us in various ways, and leaves us no rest. And since, however strong we may stand in youthful strength, sin always remains with us, and the world round about us remains, it stands to reason that the fight is often hard and heavy.

Faith wants to assert itself, and the devil cannot bear the sight of it. Neither will our own sinful heart allow that faith to gain the upper hand. And hence, the fight ensues. It is a battle for nothing less than the faith. And it is in this period, when the people of God are growing and when they begin to militate in real youthful strength against sin and the world and the devil, that they often do not understand themselves. The devil will come and picture to ourselves our own spiritual condition, and make the best of it, in order to drown our faith. He will tell us that we are no good. He will tell us: "Look at your sins. Look how evil you are. You may think that you are a child of God, and you may confess that you belong to the Lord; but that's all your imagination. For then you would surely not be so black with sin and transgression."

And at first he very often succeeds, for the simple reason that faith is not allowed to assert itself. But this does not remain thus. On the contrary, spiritual youth is strong. We become more conscious of the truth and of ourselves, and we learn to understand that just because our faith asserts itself so strongly, we see more and more of our sinful condition. We answer the devil: "I know that I'm sinful, that I'm black with transgression. But Paul was too. And the very fact that I know my sin is sufficient proof that I am in the faith, and that the light is in me."

Yet, this is not all. The devil will come with Scripture. He will say that the Scripture demands that we let our light shine, that we have to live in good works, that our walk must be in heaven, that we be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, [but that we completely fail to do this]. And again it may seem for a time that the devil is right. But also this is overcome. And the youthful Christian answers the devil that Christ is his sanctification and his full redemption, and that although he lies in the midst of death,--outside the Lord,--yet in Him he is justified by faith.

In the meantime the devil does not fail to come with the allurements of the world. He will tell the youthful Christian that it is foolishness to spend his whole day, the only day of the week he has for himself, in the church. He pictures the beauty of his kingdom. And in a practical way he attempts to seduce him from the path of righteousness.

And even here the devil sometimes seems to succeed for a time, but never permanently. On the contrary, faith asserts itself, till it boldly answers the devil that in the riches and pleasures of the world one finds no satisfaction, and that real joy is to be busy in the kingdom of God.

And finally, the devil will sometimes make an attack upon the Word of God. This is the most terrible of all, for the simple reason that it shakes the very basis of our faith. Not upon many of God's people does the devil succeed in making this attack. It is mostly upon those that are more or less intellectually inclined. Then the devil comes to appeal to our reason. He practically says: "You always begin with faith. But set faith aside for a moment, and let us argue. I admit immediately that you are all right, and that you take a very strong spiritual position. It only it were true that you have reason to believe that the Scripture is the Word of God. But there is your trouble. You believe the Word of God. You [ought to] believe that this old book has long been refuted by the wisdom of the world and is [not] actually inspired by God Himself..."

And if faith is not on its guard, the devil will succeed in this temptation for some time. An awful battle may be the result, a battle between faith and reason, for nothing less than the very basis and treasure of our faith. But also this is overcome. We begin to see our principle mistake, to leave the standpoint of faith and to step over upon the devil's rationalistic standpoint. And on that standpoint all is lost. Therefore, faith will finally stand on its own feet and simply witnessing of its own character, it will say: "Yes, but I am absolutely certain without any argument that Scripture is the Word of God. And all of it I appropriate. Devil, you can go." Thus is the period of spiritual youth. And thus the apostle also speaks of it when he says: "I write you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He looks at their spiritual condition from an ideal point of view. He knows that they are strong, and that their faith asserts itself; he knows too that they have a battle to fight, and that they are in the midst of that battle.

And in that assurance he writes that they have already overcome the wicked one. And from their spiritual period of youth and battle and strength, they will advance to that spiritual fatherhood of which it can be said that they know Him who is from the beginning.

The difference between this period and that of spiritual childhood is that in the latter condition many people of God remain as long as they are on earth, while in the former they cannot remain. Through the battle, through the spiritual struggle with the temptations of the devil, sin, and the world, God makes His people stronger and teaches them to fight the enemy. Even as in the case of Israel as a people at the time of the judges, so it is also with the individual child of God. The nations, so we read, the Lord left in the land that [Israel] might become more and more firm in the faith, that they grow in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And just because it is in the very nature of this period of youthful strength and spiritual vigor that it is a period of attack and battle, the child of God does not remain in it, but surely through it passes into the period of spiritual wisdom, that of fatherhood.

And thus John writes to the church: I write and have written unto you, fathers, because you know Him that is from the beginning.

If it is characteristic of childhood to be receptive, of youth to be impetuous and strong, it is surely characteristic of full manhood and fatherhood, of advanced age, to be stable and steadfast, less impetuous and more experienced. If it is in disharmony with childhood to assume authority and power, to teach instead of being taught; if it does not become the strong youth to act the wise-acre and speak of experience and deeper knowledge instead of to fight and overcome the devil, it surely is a pitiable sight to see a man of advanced age acting as a child, or still revealing the foolishness of youth. Of a man we expect wisdom, real, practical knowledge. He is the one that must guide others, guide the children, guide the youth. He is the one that has passed through the experience of many years, and therefore knows what is life. Of him we expect to be able to give counsel and direction.

But if this is true naturally, it is no less true in the sphere of spiritual life. A father in Christ is characterized by spiritual wisdom, acquired by experience as well as through the Word of God. Such a father has passed through spiritual childhood. He knows its tendencies and weaknesses. He knows how such a spiritual child in Christ will naturally reveal himself. He knows too the weaknesses and the imperfection of this period. He has also passed through the age of temptation and battle. He can look back upon the period that the attacks upon his faith were frequent. Nay, even now he is not entirely free from them. But in the light of Scripture he understands the Word of God, understands the tactics of Satan, understands himself much better than in the period of his youthful vigor. He is no more impetuous, but he has increased in knowledge. And in the period of spiritual youth you may sometimes be provoked at a slow action, but the fact remains that he is the wiser, the more experienced, the more deeply Christian.

And this fundamental characteristic of a father in Christ John simply expresses by saying: "Ye know him that is from the beginning." A simple and brief expression, but it nevertheless explains all. With this expression the apostle evidently refers to Christ as the eternal Word come in the flesh, the mystery of salvation, to the incarnation of the Son of God, the eternal godhead of the Savior. And this is proof of advance to the fullest and deepest spiritual knowledge. As a child we know that our sins are forgiven, we are always worried about our obedience; and in the forgiveness of sin we continually rejoice in the knowledge that God is our gracious Father. As a youth we learn to know the battle of the kingdom, and in the midst of temptation we advance in strength. But as a father in Christ we arrive at the stage of spiritual wisdom and at the deeper knowledge of God's covenant. We then spiritually understand that the Word became flesh in order that He might be the Christ; that He is in God; and that we might be perfected in Him. And knowing this, that is, with the knowledge of faith, there is no more wavering and uncertainty, but the more tranquil attitude of quiet and calm wisdom. For in Him who is from the beginning, the Word become flesh, we know that our nature is inseparably united with God, and that even as Christ, so shall we be in the day of judgment...