

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly: and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23).

In this verse we are brought to the consideration of the very difficult and complicated problem of the Biblical psychology of Man. It is a subject upon which Biblical expositors have greatly differed. Do the Apostle Paul's words here imply that Man is a trichotomy, that is, tripartite in nature, having three separate centres of operation, spirit, soul, and body? or are his words consistent with the view that he is a dichotomy, that is, a being with a twofold nature, a spirit-soul, and body?

The Body.

Let us start with Man's Body. There is no difference between expositors that the Bible teaches that Man possesses a Body, that is, the material organism in which he lives, and with which he makes contact with the material world by means of its five senses, sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Man's "body" then may be taken as the seat of sense-consciousness in relation to the world of time and natural phenomena.

In Scripture the word "body" is used:

(1) for the organism in which Man lives, "the lamp of the body is the eye" (Matt.6:22); also "the body of our humiliation" (Phil.3:21), i.e. our not fully redeemed body, see Romans 8:23, we are "waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" at our Lord's return;

(2) for slaves who are to be sold, see Rev.18:13, margin;

(3) as descriptive of dead personas now raised to life, see Matt.27:52; see also 1 Corinth.15:44.

In fallen man the "body" is called the "body of sin" (Rom.6:6), inasmuch as it is infected with a sinful bias inherited from Adam, from which bias it is to be "redeemed" at the Return of our Lord if He comes while the possessor is alive (Rom.8:23).

The word "body" is also used in Scripture in a metaphorical sense in the expression "the body of Christ" as denoting the Church; for in this organism (not a mere organisation) the Spirit of God dwells and operates (1 Cor.3:16; 12:12,13; Eph.1:22,23; Col.1:18).

The material constitution of the "body" is referred to by the Apostle Paul when he calls it an "earthen vessel" (2 Cor.5:2), and in the next chapter he speaks of "the earthly house of our bodily frame" being "dissolved" at death (2 Cor.5:1, R.V. marg.), a "house" in which, at present, we "groan," for we "long to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven" (2 Cor.5:2), that is, our new "spiritual body" (1 Cor.15:44); this "being clothed upon" taking place at our Lord's Return. But the Apostle expresses the possibility of our being "found naked" by dying before He returns, i.e., of our existing in an "unclothed" state, separate from the "body" which has "dissolved" by decay (2 Cor.5:4). The Apostle also refers to the body as "our outward man" in contrast to the "inward man" (2 Cor.4:16), i.e. our spiritual nature.

By "synecdoche" (a figure of speech in which a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part) the "body" may stand for the whole person (Matt.5:29; Jas.3:6). In Romans 12:1 we are exhorted to "present" our "bodies" with their faculties to God as a "living sacrifice," in contrast to the bodies of slain animals which in O.T. times the Hebrew worshipper presented to God upon the altar.

A person can have conscious existence apart from the body, see Luke 16:19-31, also 2 Cor.12:2-4; Rev.6:9,10; 20:4.

It is important to note that in Scripture the term "resurrection" always applies to the body of a man, not his spirit or soul, and it implies life in a new body (John 5:28, 29; Dan.12:2; Rev.20:13), this applying both to the resurrection of the just and the unjust; hence it is of the body of man that "sleep" is predicated in the grave (1 Thes. 4:13; Matt.27:52).

The Spirit and Soul.

We come now to a consideration of the terms "spirit" and "soul." It is here that differences between expositors persist. Do these two terms speak of one entity—the "immaterial part of man" viewed from two aspects, the first being man's immaterial nature as it looks upward to God, and is susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, the second being the same immaterial nature as it looks through the body to the material world, as Dichotomists urge? Or do these terms speak of two different centres of activity, which, though closely related, are distinguished in Scripture, as Trichotomists believe? At first sight it must be admitted that the passage heading this paper seems to favour the latter view, for the Apostle speaks of three terms distinguished by the double use of the word "and."

Now writers of Scripture, though inspired of God, when speaking of man and his desires, emotions, and relations with man and God, naturally had to make use of terms which were current when they wrote in order that they might be able to be understood. They did not invent a new vocabulary for the purpose; but under the Spirit's control utilized the terms existing in the languages which they spoke, and amplified their meanings, often correcting the existing pagan ideas about man's psychology. They did not possess the

knowledge of man's anatomy and physiology which we have to-day, but used the anatomical and physiological terms then current to convey spiritual truths. For example, noting the fact that under deep emotion a man's heart beats more rapidly, and his cheek becomes suffused with blood, they took the "heart" to be a seat of emotion, and spoke of it as such, a very natural use of language. We still do this to-day though we are aware of the heart's real function. Take again the word "bowels," they were certainly aware of the main function of this part of man's anatomy, as Scripture indicates clearly, yet Jeremiah could write of God's "bowels" being "troubled" because of His son Ephraim's misdeeds, a plain anthropomorphism; the reason being that a person often feels emotion in that region because the centre of his sympathetic nervous system lies behind the abdomen. So the Bible is not written in strict scientific language, but in that of the common people that it might be readily understood. But its statements are nevertheless reliable.

The use in Scripture of the terms "spirit" and "soul" is a case in point. Though the pagan use of these terms enshrined much error, the writers of Scripture, under the control of the Spirit, made use of them to teach divine truth, truth which the natural man was unable to discover for himself. And as will be seen they display a remarkable consistency in their use of the terms though they came from many different levels of life.

In our English translations the word "spirit" is the equivalent of the Hebrew ruach, and the Greek pneuma; while our word "soul" is the equivalent of the Hebrew nephesh, and the Greek psyche.

It is rather significant that both the Hebrew O.T. ruach with its N.T. Greek pneuma, and also the O.T. nephesh with its N.T. equivalent psyche, primarily speak of air in motion, thus they are both used for "breath," though sometimes ruach and pneuma are also used for the wind. The two pairs of words are therefore closely related.

Perhaps our best procedure at this point will be to give an analysis of the use of the two terms "spirit" and "soul" as found in Scripture (the analysis is based upon that of Messrs. Hogg and Vine in their Commentary on the Thessalonian Epistles), we shall then be able to draw conclusions, and differentiate the terms. In the following analysis the N.T. passages will mainly be referred to, since our study has to do with these two terms as they appear in the Apostle's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, and their use elsewhere in the N.T.

SPIRIT, Heb. ruach, Gr. pneuma; primarily air in motion, breath, wind; hence viewless and powerful activity. This compound idea characterises "spirit" in its N.T. usage, which may be analysed as follows:

1. The immaterial, invisible, part of man; "And her spirit returned, and she rose up" (Luke 8:55), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59), "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 5:5), "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead" (Jas. 2:26), "and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7, LXX).
2. The disembodied man; "But they were terrified ... and supposed that they beheld a spirit"; "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having" (Luke 24:37, 39). "And to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23); "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection ... nor spirit": "what if a spirit hath spoken to him?" (Acts 23:8, 9).
3. The inner faculty of man by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires; "For who among men knoweth the things of the man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11), "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3), "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41), "Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves" (Mark 2:8), "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:47), "the child waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80); see also Acts 17:16; 20:22; 1 Cor. 5:3, 4; 14:14, 15; 2 Cor. 7:1; cf. Gen. 26:35, marg.; Isa. 26:9; Ezek. 13:3; Dan. 7:15.
4. Man's purpose, or aim: "Stand fast in one spirit" (Phil. 1:27); "That ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23); "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10); cf. Ezra 1:5; Psa. 78:8; Dan. 5:12.
5. Man's character: "He shall go before His face in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), "Who was declared to be the Son of God ... according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4); cf. Num. 14:24.
6. Man's moral qualities and activities: e.g. servility, "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Rom. 8:15); timidity, "For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness" (2 Tim. 1:7); of liberty as a son, "ye received the spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8:15); meekness, "Shall I come unto you with ... a spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. 4:21); "a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Pet. 3:4).
7. For spiritual significance: "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63); "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ... in the spirit, not in the letter" (Rom. 2:29); "Ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6).
8. For the Holy Spirit of God: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness" (Matt. 4:1), and many other references; The essential nature of God: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

9. By metonymy for those who claim to be Spirit controlled: "That ye be not quickly shaken from your mind ... either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us" (2 Thes. 2:2); "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world ... every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist" (1 John 4:1-3).

10. For angels: "But of the angels ... are they not all ministering spirits ...?" (Heb. 1:13,14).

11. For the breath: "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth" (2 Thes. 2:8, R.V.); "And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet" (Rev. 11:11, R.V.); "And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast" (Rev. 13:15); Cf. Job 12:10; Ezek. 37:8; Hab. 2:19.

12. For the wind: "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (John 3:8, but the R.V. margin is perhaps to be preferred here, "The Spirit breatheth where He wills"); cf. Amos 4:13, "He ... createth the wind," LXX; pneuma.

SOUL, Heb. nephesh, Gr. psuche, the breath, then that which breathes, the individual person, the living creature. Its N.T. usage may be analysed as follows:

1. The immaterial, invisible part of man: "And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28); "Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades" (Acts 2:27); cf. "O LORD my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again" (1 Kings 17:21, LXX, psuche).

2. The disembodied man: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades" (Acts 2:27), quoted from Psalm 16:10.

3. The inner faculty of man by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29); "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46); "Yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul" (Luke 2:35); "Confirming the souls of the disciples" (Acts 14:22); cf. "My soul longeth ... for the courts of the LORD" (Psa. 84:2), also Psa. 139:14; cf. Isaiah 26:9, "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early," the two terms being here almost synonymous.

4. Man's will and purpose: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37); "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32); "Doing the will of God from the soul" (Eph. 6:6, R.V. margin); "Stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27, R.V.); "That ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls" (Heb. 12:3, R.V.); cf. "And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Num. 21:4), see also Deut. 10:13, "To serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

5. The seat of the appetite: "And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone" (Rev. 18:14); cf. "He satisfieth the longing soul" (Psa. 107:9, the spiritual appetite), see also Prov. 6:30, "To satisfy his soul when he is hungry," "And his soul hath appetite" (Isa. 29:8).

6. For the natural life of the body: "For they are dead that sought for the young child's life" (Matt. 2:20, here "life" is psuche in the Greek); "The Son of Man came ... to give His life [Gr. psuche] a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28); "Be not anxious for your life [Gr. psuche]" (Luke 12:22); "Make ye no ado, for his life [Gr. psuche] is in him" (Acts 20:10); "And they loved not their life [Gr. psuche] even unto death" (Rev. 12:11); cf. "For the life [Heb. nephesh, Gr. psuche LXX] is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11), so also Esth. 8:11.

7. For the seat of the personality: "For whosoever would save his life [Gr. psuche] shall lose it" (Luke 9:24), but this "life" is explained in the next verse as being "his own self." "Which we have as an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19); "of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39); cf. "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed" (Isa. 53:10) with "Who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6).

8. For individual persons: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41); "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil" (Rom. 2:9); "he that converteth a sinner ... shall save a soul from death" (Jas. 5:20); "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water" (1 Pet. 3:20), also 2 Pet. 2:14; cf. "And the souls that they had gotten in Haran" (Gen. 12:5), also Gen. 14:21 "Give me the persons [Heb. nephesh, Gr. psuche, LXX.]; also Lev. 4:2; "They traded the persons [Heb. nephesh, Gr. psuche, LXX] of men ... for merchandise" (Ezek. 27:13); "the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4), and many other cases.

9. For a dead body: "He shall not come near to a dead body [Heb. nephesh, Gr. psuche, LXX]" (Num. 6:6).

10. For an animate creature, human or otherwise: "The first man became a living soul" (1 Cor. 15:45; see also Rev. 16:3); God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living

creature [Heb. nephesh] after its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth after its kind" (Gen.1:24); "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" (Gen. 2:7).

11. The equivalent of the personal pronoun for emphasis and effect: "How long dost Thou hold us [Gr. 'our soul'] in suspense?" (John 10:24, R.V.); cf. Gen12:13; "Let me [lit. 'my soul'] die the death of the righteous" (Num.23:10), said Balaam; Job "justified himself [lit. 'his soul'] rather than God" (Job. 32:2).

The Common Characteristics of Spirit and Soul.

Dichotomists, in their effort to identify "spirit" with "soul," stress the first four descriptions of "spirit" and "soul." In these characteristics the two terms certainly overlap, which is not surprising, remembering that their primary meanings are "air in motion," and from this "invisible activity." Nevertheless a study of the foregoing analyses show that in not a few characteristics they differ, hence they are not strictly synonymous. Yet they are closely related, and for this reason have many characteristics in common. When our Lord was tempted by the Pharisees, who sought from Him a "sign from heaven," He "sighed deeply in His spirit" (Mark 8:12), for He was truly man. Here the actual "sighing" was a bodily act, but was the result of an inner feeling, which produced the "sigh." But such language does not confound body and spirit, but expresses their relationship and interaction.

So also there is the closest interaction between man's "spirit" and "soul"; and if we take his "spirit" to be that inner faculty by which he pre-eminently perceives, reflects, feels, and discriminates in the things of God—"for who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor.2:11); and if we take the "soul" to answer to the more emotional side of man—"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord" (Psa.84:2), or again, "I will say to my soul, Soul ... take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19), and again, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:46,47), the point where the reflective side of a man passes into his emotional side cannot be precisely defined.

The Differences between Spirit and Soul.

But let us now look at the differences in the foregoing analyses between "spirit" and "soul." In Man the term "soul" is often used to express the natural life of a person while he lives in the body down here, "For they are dead that sought for the young child's life [Gr. psuche]" (Matt.2:20); "Be not anxious for your life [Gr. psuche] what ye shall eat ... for the life [Gr. psuche] is more than the food" (Luke 12:22); "And Paul ... said, make ye no ado; for his life [Gr. psuche] is in him" (Acts 20:10); but this is never predicated of his "spirit."

Again "soul" is used to express the self-conscious personality, or behaviour, of man in this life: "For whosoever would save his life [Gr. psuche] for My sake, the same shall lose it [in the estimate of the world]; but whosoever shall lose his life [Gr. psuche] for My sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose [forfeit] his own self" (Luke 9:24,25), which last phrase in the parallel passage in Matthew is "and forfeit his life [Gr. psuche]" (Matt.10:39). The meaning here is clearly that if a man "saves" his life (or, soul) for self-pleasure or self-interests, then in God's sight he will "lose" or forfeit it; but if he "loses" or "wastes" it as the ungodly would term it for Christ's sake and that of the Gospel, he really "saves" it in God's estimation. There is no real profit if a man were to "gain the whole world" and then "forfeit his life (or, soul)," that is, "forfeit his own self" (Luke 9:25, R.V.). In such a sense we may look upon the human "soul" as a centre of self-consciousness. But nowhere in Scripture do we find the word "spirit" used in this sense.

By a natural extension of the last meaning for the "soul" we find this term used again and again in Scripture for the person himself: "the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek.18:4); "The ark ... wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved through water" (1 Pet.3:20). But the term "spirit" is never used in Scripture in this sense, but rather with a person's existence after death.

The Apostle Paul draws a clear distinction between "spirit" and "soul" when speaking of the resurrection of the body of the believer: "It is sown a natural [lit 'soulish'] body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor.15:44), here man's mortal body is spoken of as being in some sense dominated by his "soul," but his resurrection body will be dominated rather by his "spirit"; here "soul" and "spirit" cannot possibly be synonymous.

Man's created Constitution before the Fall.

The creation of Man differed from that of the beasts. God said:

"Let the earth bring forth the living creature [Heb. nephesh] after its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth after its kind" (Gen.1:24).

The creation of the beast therefore took place in one act. But with Man his creation seems to have taken place in two stages:—

"The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives; and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7).

Thus Man became a "living soul" in a far higher sense than the beast.¹ This surely is the explanation of God's statement in preceding chapter—

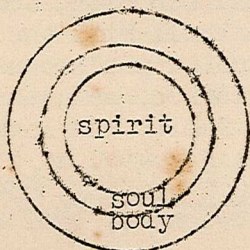
"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen.1:26).

The words "in our image" probably express man's likeness to God in self-consciousness, self-determination, reason, and creative capacity, and the words "after our likeness" express man's capacity for communion with his Maker in a moral and responsive sense through possession of a conscience, also with his fellow-man. As such God said, "Let them have dominion" over the rest of His creation. It is not stated explicitly here that God gave Man a "spirit," yet this may possibly be implied when God "breathed" into him "the breath of lives" (lit. Heb.), not only animal life but also spiritual life; but this is stated expressly elsewhere:

"Thus saith the LORD, which stretched forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech.12:1).

Now it was by this gift of a "spirit" to Man that he was able to hold communion with God his Creator. In this sense God is ideally "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num.16:22; 27:15). We may therefore take the human "spirit" to be the centre of man's God-consciousness.

In agreement with this some expositors have represented Man by three concentric circles, the inner circle being the "spirit," the central and highest part of his being, the next circle the "soul," and the outer circle the "body."



Thus the "spirit" is the seat of God-consciousness, the faculty by which Man can have communion with God; the "soul" the centre of self-consciousness, the seat of Man's emotions toward God and his fellow-man, his likes and dislikes; and the "body" with its five senses the seat of sense-consciousness, by which he has contact with the material world.

The Effect of the Fall.

At the close of God's creation of Man we read that God "saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen.1:31), Man being the climax of His creative work. God placed Man in the garden of Eden, and said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen.2:16,17). Here was a simple test whether Adam would be content, as a moral being having a free will, to render trustful obedience to his Creator. As we shall see it was a "covenant" of works. We all know the story of Adam and Eve's fall. Eve was "beguiled" by Satan, and fell. But Adam not so, he fell with his eyes open (1 Tim.2:14), thus he "transgressed

1. The student is warned not to depend upon certain statements and questions which occur in the book of Ecclesiastes as being inspired revelations from God on the matter of the psychology of man and the beasts. As is well known this book was written from a peculiar standpoint, namely, the human reasonings of one (Solomon) who had backslidden from God, and was therefore living "under the sun," i.e. out of touch with God in heaven above. It is an accurate account of such reasonings, and is written therefore for our instruction, and so finds its place in the Canon of the O.T. For example the writer says, "Be not righteous over much," nor "over much wicked" (Eccl.7:16,17), this cannot be a divine command, but is the advice of worldly-wise person speaking as a cynic. So when he says, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea they all have one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccl.3:19,20); such statements leave God's revelation out of sight, and are only relatively, not ultimately, true. So when the writer asks, "Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?" (Eccl.3:21, R.V.), we are not to argue that God has given a spirit equally to man and beast, and that at death they depart in opposite directions; the writer was merely asking a question from the standpoint of a backslider "under the sun," and as such he did not know the answer. The key verse of this book occurs at its commencement, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity; what profit hath a man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun?" (Eccl. 1:2,3), and his answer is, "There was no profit under the sun" (Eccl.2:11). Speaking to Christians, however, Paul could say, "My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor.15:58).

the covenant" (Hos.6:7), i.e. God's covenant of obedience, and in a spiritual sense he "died." For death has been defined as the "falling out, by an organism, of correspondence with its normal environment," e.g. a blind man is "dead" to light, a paralysed man is "dead" to sensation. When God created Adam it was with the desire that he should find his communion, or normal environment, with Himself, that he might find all his joy and aspirations satisfied in this environment. But Adam deliberately disobeyed, and so that very day he "fell out" of this "environment" and spiritually "died." This break of communion with God displayed itself in the fact that he and his wife "hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen.3:8). Restoration of communion with God was, we know, only effected by Adam and his wife being willing to be clothed by God with the skins of slain animals, slain evidently in sacrifice (for at that time no animal food was eaten by man). This sacrifice of course prefigured the one Sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross, by which alone is it possible for sinful man to approach a Holy God and have communion with Him. Such also was Abel's offering—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous" (Heb.11:4), i.e. in the sight of God.

But Adam's transgression has left a terrible entail upon his posterity—"As through one man Sin [as an infection of nature] entered into the world, and death through Sin [the infection]; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Rom.5:12). So Adam begat a posterity "after his kind," a posterity infected with a Sin principle, which inevitably expresses itself in acts of sinful self-expression against God.

This Sin-infection has ruined man with respect to his "spirit, soul, and body." He is born into this world with a "spirit" so marred and deranged that it no longer serves as a way of approach to, or means of communion with, God. But fallen man is not wholly devoid of a "spirit" so as to be on a level with the brute beasts in possessing merely a "soul" and "body." Some expositors see in man's conscience evidence of his possession of a "spirit," though in a defective degree, as not establishing communion with God. Be this as it may, the fact remains that fallen man lacks a capacity to "know" God, for his "spirit" in its deranged state does not function as a "ladder up to God." As a result fallen man is necessarily cast back upon himself, and is therefore "soulish" or "natural" as our versions express it; he is self-centred, and with a downward tendency. Thus the Apostle Paul has written:

"The natural [Gr. psuchikos, 'soulish'] man receiveth not the things of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually [Gr. pneumatikōs] discerned" (1 Cor.2:14).

Just as it is impossible for a man born blind to appreciate and understand the colours of the spectrum, as he lacks the faculty of sight, so it is impossible for the self-centred "soulish" unregenerate man to appreciate divine things, he lacks a faculty for the purpose for his "spirit" is marred, and does not function for that purpose. The unregenerate "soulish" man may even be deeply religious, enjoying greatly aesthetic musical services, but with no real knowledge of God. And because of the sanctions of society he may restrain himself, and live an outwardly respectable life; yet he is essentially "soulish" or self-centred. On the other hand he may degenerate and become brutish. Jude foretells that "mockers" will in the last days "walk after their own ungodly desires," being "sensual [Gr. psuchikoi, 'soulish'], having not the Spirit" (Jude 19), they may go so far as to become "like creatures without reason, in those things are they corrupted" (Jude 10). Thus the Fall has affected man in all his parts, "spirit and soul and body." And so, as history shows, as a result of the Fall the general tendency of man is downward away from God. There is no "evolution upward," but a moral declension despite great advances in material knowledge.

The Necessity of the New Birth.

This brings us to a consideration of our Lord's well known words to Nicodemus, as reported by the Apostle John:—

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew [~~or~~ 'from above'], he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

The "kingdom of God" here means the spiritual reign of God in the heart of the believer, a reign in which communion between him and the Father is restored through the New Birth. Nicodemus, however, misunderstood our Lord's words, imagining that He was speaking of a second birth from his parents, and asked,

"How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4).

It is important to note what Nicodemus has asked here. He did not ask, "what must a man do?" or "by what means may a man," be "born anew"? He does ask this question later in verse 9, as we shall see. His question is rather, "How is it possible for a man to be born again when he is old?" In other words he misunderstood the nature of the New Birth of which our Lord spoke. And our Lord's answer was framed to remove this misunderstanding, and this rules out any reference here to a rite as being a possible means of the New Birth as being foreign to our Lord's immediate purpose. Our Lord replied:—

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and

that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The Spirit breatheth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and wither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-8, R.V. margin).

The phrase "born of water and the Spirit" has been variously interpreted. It certainly cannot, as some have thought, refer to Christian baptism, for the simple reason that Christian baptism was not instituted until after our Lord had risen from the dead, and was about to ascend, see Matthew 28:19,20, and our Lord's words were designed to have an immediate application to Nicodemus, and a possible response, that very night. The simplest explanation, and possibly the best, is to translate, "Except a man be born of water even the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," for the Greek conjunction kai, used here, can have the meaning of "even" when it joins two nouns which are known to be synonymous in their signification, and elsewhere in the Gospel of John the word "water" is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in His cleansing and regenerating power, e.g. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake He of the Spirit" (John 7:37-39). Furthermore the same use of the word "water" as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in action appears in the O.T., as Nicodemus should have been aware as "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10), e.g. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa.44:3), also: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ... I will put My Spirit within you" (Ezek.36:25,27). Nicodemus should have been well conversant with these passages. So when our Lord rebuked him by saying, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew," our Lord's rebuke was just. Furthermore, in stressing the absolute need for sinners like Nicodemus to be "born anew," "born of the Spirit," our Lord contrasted a man being "born of the flesh," of mere human parentage, and his being "born of the Spirit," the latter being a partaking of "the divine nature" (2 Pet.1:4), accompanied by divine aspirations.

What then happens at the New Birth?

"As many as received Him [the Lord Jesus], to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born ... of God" (John 1:12,13).

So when a sinner receives the Lord Jesus by faith he becomes a child of God by spiritual generation, the Holy Spirit indwells him making his human spirit the seat of His operations, restoring it to its right function of being the centre of God-consciousness and fellowship with the Father, a fellowship which becomes deeper and deeper as the believer grows in grace. As a child of God he is no longer a "natural [Gr. psuchikos, 'soulish'] man," but "spiritual" [Gr. pneumatikos], for the "ladder up to God" is restored.

It is God's desire that he shall become more and more under the control of the Holy Spirit, and become really "spiritual." But, alas, though "born anew" through the Spirit of God, he may remain a "babe in Christ," and lead a "carnal" life (1 Cor.3:1); but this would be to come far short of his spiritual privileges which are his "in Christ." He is to remember that though he is "born anew," "born of the Spirit," the old Adamic sinful infection of nature, which the Apostle calls "the flesh" [Gr. sarx], remains in him, though, through the enablement of the Spirit there is no need for him to give way to it (Gal.5:16,17). If he does give way to it by sinning, communion with his Father is broken, and can only be restored by repentant confession. It is God's desire that he should not be "carnal" [Gr. sarkinos] but "spiritual" [Gr. pneumatikos]. And this explains the Apostle's prayer:

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly [Gr. holoteleis, through and through]; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire [Gr. holoklēros, complete and sound in every part] at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it" (1 Thes.5:23,24).

So the believer's sanctification starts at the New Birth, when he receives a new nature, the "divine nature" (2 Pet.1:4), and his human "spirit" is restored and becomes the seat of the Holy Spirit's operation; but His operation extends outwards to affect his "soul" with all its emotions and aspirations, purifying these that they may glorify God, and it extends outward yet to include his "body" with its faculties, which are now to be used for God's glory. But it is only complete at the Lord's return when his "body" now infected with the Adamic nature will be fully "redeemed" (Romans 8:23), for at our Lord's return his body will either be "changed" (if he is alive then), or raised again (if he is then "asleep" in the grave), a body which will be no more "soulish" but "spiritual" (1 Cor.15:44).

First man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (2 Cor.15:46).

So everyone descended from the first Adam became a "living soul" dwelling in a "soulish body," but the last Adam, Christ, "became a life-giving spirit," and so ultimately every one who shares in His life will dwell in a "spiritual body" at His return.

Trichotomists therefore seem to be right in distinguishing between man's "spirit and soul and body."