SPIRITUAL DEVIATIONS

What Is Man? A Reformed Response

Is man a two-part or a three-part being? Is man a simple dichotomy, possessing only a body and soul, or is man a more complex tripartite being with a body, soul, and spirit? In recent years this debate over the constituent parts of man has intensified, primarily because a few prominent and loyal Calvinists have made it an issue. In the face of widespread acceptance of the tripartite (threefold) nature of man across the full spectrum of Bible-believing theologians ranging from Dispensationalists to Pentecostals and Charismatics, these few authors have sounded a clarion call in defense of their view of the twofold nature of man. According to their point of view, man is composed simply of a body and a soul; that is, man is a dichotomy of the material and the immaterial, the substantial and the insubstantial, rather than a threefold body, soul, and spirit. The trichotomist, however, sees the human spirit as the means to contact God who is Spirit, the soul as the means to contact the psychological world, and the body as the means to contact the physical world.

To distinguish the parts of man is not a mere academic exercise over insignificant terminology, nor is it a pointless polemic among theologians. Whether man is of two parts only—soul and body, or of three—spirit, soul, and body—has enormous implications for both interpretation of Scripture and the believer's Christian walk. For example, if soul and spirit are synonymous, then verses such as John 3:6, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," can also be interpreted "That which is born of the Spirit is soul." Other verses, such as, "the mind set on the spirit is life" (Rom. 8:6), are brought into sharp focus by the tripartite view but are confusingly vague to a dichotomous view. Given all of the above, it is absolutely vital that believers have an accurate understanding of their created beings, not only in order to rightly interpret Scripture but also to walk more faithfully with the Lord.

Theologians of the dichotomous persuasion seem to find themselves on the defensive, trying to refute remarkably clear and simple statements in the Bible which portray man as tripartite in nature. Compounding their dilemma is the large number of highly respected teachers of Scripture, from the earliest church fathers until now, who have embraced the tripartite position. Yet to the Calvinist theologian, only the dichotomist view is traditional and orthodox. In this article I will address five arguments that have been advanced against a tripartite view of man: scriptural accuracy, historical tradition, heretical tendencies, the devaluation of the soul, and the influence of Eastern mysticism. I will refute each argument with Scripture as well as church history. I also hope to impress the reader with the seriousness of having the proper view of the parts of man's created being, for these are the God-given means through which we relate to the physical world, to one another, and to God our Creator. Finally, the cultural and racial bias implied in these arguments requires a response.

I have selected three sources by two prominent Calvinist theologians as representative of the arguments against a tripartite view of man: *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* by J. I. Packer (*Concise* hereafter), *The Soul's Quest for God* by R. C. Sproul (*Quest* hereafter), and a taped message from his Ligonier Ministries tape series entitled "Body and Soul" (*Soul* hereafter).

Is a Tripartite View of Man Scripturally Accurate?

Concise admits that "biblical usage leads us to say that we *have* and *are* both souls and spirits" yet the book contradicts itself by continuing, "But it is a mistake to think that soul and spirit are two different things; a 'trichotomous' view of man as body, soul, and spirit is incorrect" and "out of step with biblical teaching" (74). By citing only two of the scriptural references used to support the view of man as tripartite, *Quest* strongly implies that only "two texts are generally cited to support this view" (166), and that "biblical Christianity flatly rejects" such a thought (169). Actually, most Bible scholars who hold a tripartite view of man draw on many references which uphold the distinction between soul and spirit. We will consider some of the more important texts below. Each is followed by a brief discussion of it as well as rebuttals to dichotomous misinterpretations.

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23). *Quest* dismisses the idea that this verse conveys "something about the makeup of humanity" and "the constituent parts of man" (167). However, the compound Greek word translated "complete" actually contains the word "part" (*kleros*). To be preserved complete is to be preserved in

every *part*—and Paul lists three. *Wholly* denotes the entire person, and the apostle describes such a person as spirit, soul, and body. The interjection of the conjunction *and* between each of these three parts amplifies the sense of distinctiveness. Rather than simply listing "spirit, soul, and body," as we typically do in English, Paul makes a point of distinguishing "spirit *and* soul *and* body." If spirit and soul were synonymous, no such distinction between them would be necessary. We universally accept Paul's distinction of soul and body and would never confuse the two. The text compels us to likewise accept the distinctiveness of soul and spirit for the sake of logical consistency. No one would ever submit to the knife of a surgeon who confused the parts of his body; the results could be deadly. Similarly, failing to accurately distinguish between the intangible parts of his being can be fatal to our quest for genuine spirituality in Christ.

Soul dismisses 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as simply a Pauline benediction. It asserts that Paul had no intent to "didactically and pedagogically in that text…set forth a clearly-defined exposition of the constituent nature of our humanity," and that we should not "build a doctrine of man on the basis of that" verse. Is *Soul* implying that the prayers and benedictions in the Epistles are neither revelatory nor inspired or that sound doctrine cannot be drawn from them? On the contrary, the prayers and blessings in the Bible are full of sound teaching. In fact, the early church fathers often used the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14 to assert the coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the Trinity. Biblical insight would suffer great loss if scholars summarily dismissed from doctrinal consideration the prayers and blessings contained in Scripture.

Soul goes on to engage in word play by first categorizing 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as an inference, and then informing us that we must "distinguish between '*possible*' inferences and '*necessary*' inferences." *Soul* stipulates that our theology must acquiesce to the thought in this text only if it is a necessary inference. This raises two questions: first, how can we discriminate between types of inferences? And second, who is qualified to conclusively determine whether the writer intended a "possible" or "necessary" inference? Since so much effort is expended to explain away the simple thought of this verse, namely that man is threefold, it is no wonder that *Soul* concludes with, "I hope I have done something other than just confuse you today."

"For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). *Quest* suggests that this verse "may be a figurative and hyperbolic way of saying that God's Word can make distinctions we cannot make" (168). *Quest* also dismisses the distinctions here as "*functional* distinctions, not essential or substantial distinctions" (168). However, scholars generally agree that this allegory refers to the Old Testament priest dividing up the offering and its inward parts. No attempt at hyperbole is indicated here. The writer tells us plainly that the Word of God is like a priest's sharp knife. The word *dividing* indicates that while soul and spirit are close and to some extent connected, there is enough distinction between the two that they can, and should, be divided, one being labeled "soul" and the other "spirit." While 1 Thessalonians 5:23 conveys a *positive* assertion about God's intention with our tripartite being, Hebrews 4:12 implies some *negative* impetus, a need for soul and spirit to be not merely distinguished but even divided. Significantly, in speaking of the heart, this verse uses the verb *discern* rather than the more drastic *dividing*, and thus does not essentially separate it from the soul and the spirit. While the heart is *functionally* distinct here, it is not *essentially* divided as are the soul and the spirit. Also of significance is the sequence, showing us that the primary function of the Word and the corresponding primary need of the seeking believer, is to divide the soul from the spirit; the discerning of the heart's thoughts and intentions will spontaneously follow.

"And Jehovah 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, ASV). As we will see later, most Jews viewed man as a tripartite being based upon this verse. The "breath of life" is understood to be the human spirit, as evidenced in Proverbs 20:27 where the "spirit" of man is the same Hebrew word rendered "breath" in Genesis 2:7. The soul is the culmination of the creation of the spirit and the body; thus the declaration that man became a "living soul." When God breathed into the human body, that breath became the human spirit. The addition of the human spirit to the body resulted in man's soul.

"And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has exulted in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47). Mary clearly distinguished between her spirit and her soul here. *Quest* dismisses this passage as an example of "synonymous parallelism whereby the second verse repeats the same thought as the first verse, though employing different words" (127). Nevertheless, the conjunction *and* in this verse provides some distinction between the two clauses. An example of authentic synonymous parallelism would omit the conjunction, as in Jeremiah's lamentation, "Hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry" (Lam. 3:56, ASV). The interjection of *and* between these two phrases would reflect a distinction; its absence indicates actual synonymy between the terms in apposition.

A further distinction is introduced through the use of different verb tenses. "My soul magnifies" is in the simple present tense while "my spirit has exulted" is present perfect. The spirit must first exult before the soul can magnify. There simply is no grammatical justification for dismissing these

phrases as synonymous. Rather, they underscore a difference between the soul and the spirit that is both functional and essential.

While neither *Concise, Soul,* nor *Quest* mention other verses, there are several more which reveal the tripartite nature of man. Again, the identity of the *body* as a separate part is not in dispute. What is being questioned is whether or not the soul and spirit are synonymous. We will now consider more Scripture which clarifies this distinction.

"But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually. But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one" (1 Cor. 2:14-15). English translators have long struggled with these verses because every ancient language, dating back to Hebrew and beyond, has separate adjectives for people characterized by the spirit and for those described and known by the soul. Only English lacks an adjectival form of "soul." In this semantic instance, the English language continues the thought of the Middle Ages, where soul and spirit were confused and the distinction between the two was completely blurred. Therefore, English translators often correctly translate *pneumatic* as "spiritual" but mistakenly translate *psychikos* as "natural." For this reason, the nineteenth-century Bible scholar G. H. Pember invented the word "soulish" for the translation of this text. Other adjectives for *psychikos* have been proposed such as "soulical," but "soulish" seems to have gained the widest acceptance.

The Greek language therefore employs the adjectival forms of the nouns *spirit* and *soul* to convey a definite distinction between the two. A person whose daily walk is soul-centered, governed by his mental, emotional, and volitional impulses, is thus described as soulish and unable to discern the things of the Spirit. Such a person is often veiled and deceived by his own theological reflections and religious sentiments, mistaking them for genuine spirituality. It is possible for someone to be full of religious fervor, yet be deceived into confusing a strong soul for spirituality. Andrew Murray once warned that the greatest danger which the church or individual has to dread is the "inordinate activity of the soul, with its power of mind and will" (229).

A proper believer should be spiritual, that is, known and characterized by the human spirit regenerated with the divine life and nature. Such a believer is "born of God" and "born anew," having the spirit, which is the very dwelling place of God, as the controlling factor. Just as the Holy of Holies (where God Himself was located) was the center of the tripartite temple, so the regenerated spirit of man, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is the focus and controlling factor of the believer's new being. Such a believer is "spiritual" and knows "the things of the Spirit…because they are discerned spiritually" (1 Cor. 2:14-15).

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace….But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:6, 10). The mind is the leading part of the soul. Where the mind is set determines whether it is life or death to the believer. The mind is pivotally positioned between the body and the human spirit. If the believer sets his mind on his regenerated spirit, the divine life rules from his spirit, saturates his mind with the life element of Christ, and even makes his mind life and peace. This is a compelling example of how a tripartite view of the regenerated man elevates the soul rather than depreciates it.

Does Historical Tradition Support a Tripartite View of Man?

Central to the argument against a tripartite view of man is the notion that the "historic church" has rejected this stance while embracing dichotomy. *Soul* says, "And so historically, the church has traditionally confessed that our humanity is made up of two aspects or two substances, body and soul," and that what "was also rejected by orthodox Christianity" was the "basic schema of body, soul, and spirit." Further, *Soul* declares, "Through the vast majority of church history, substantial dichotomy and duality reigned without great controversy." *Quest* claims that the tripartite view of man poses "a danger that has caused the church historically to shy away from it" (169).

First, I find myself skeptical when theologians proclaim that the "historic church" happens to line up with their side of an argument, as if somehow the historic church has remained static and uniform in its understanding of Scripture. A close study of church history shows several distinct phases with varying degrees of enlightenment: an early period of grappling with major issues; a subsequent decline into apostasy followed by a millennium of superstition; and then a time of attempted reformation; and finally the past few centuries in which scriptural truths and practices have been and continue to be gradually recovered, from the first glimmers of the Reformation's light until today. The "historic" church's understanding of major biblical issues has often been found either entirely erroneous or at least partial and inconsistent. The Bible's revelation of truth is complete and perfect, but our apprehension of it is fragmented and faulty. This is why so many respected Bible teachers have faithfully looked to the Lord for more light to break forth from the Word rather than merely reaffirming the discoveries of the past centuries. Such scholars realize that a doctrinal stance based primarily on church history is a precarious one.

Second, one may well ask which "historic church" is being

referred to. Is it the historic church of the early centuries before the entire New Testament had been canonized, when the believers struggled with Jewish and Hellenic influences? The centuries of incorporating pagan customs? The thousand years of Rome's preeminence? The first centuries of Reformation theology when light on the Bible's most basic themes was just dawning? And who represents the historic church of the past 150 years? To definitively characterize the "historic church" is a daunting task. For this reason, while an appeal to the historical church as one's theological ally and point of reference sounds reassuringly authoritative, it actually can be an argument of limited and questionable validity.

However, since the opponents of a tripartite view of man ally themselves with the historic church, let us examine a side of history overlooked by them. As mentioned earlier, the Jews of antiquity evidently believed that man is tripartite. Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, says of Genesis 2:7 "that God took dust from the ground, and formed man, and inserted in him a spirit and a soul" (25). William Whiston notes in the 1867 edition of Josephus: "We may observe here that Josephus supposed man to be compounded of spirit, soul, and body, *with St Paul* (1 Thess. v. 23) *and the rest of the ancients*" (25, emphasis added). Jewish tradition as well as Pauline Scripture considered man as a tripartition. *The Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* tells us that "Paul had distinguished, or had accepted a distinction, between 'pneumatic' and 'psychic' persons (1 Cor. 2:13-15)…and he appeared further to characterize the human person as constituted of 'spirit and soul and body' (1 Thess. 5:23)" (866). This source also affirms that a tripartite view of man is "related to a long tradition of the interpretation of Genesis 2:7" and observes that the early church fathers were more absorbed in discussing the soul's origin and immortality than debating the tripartite nature of man (866). It seems that the early fifth-century church writers were pitched into a dichotomous camp by overreacting to a heresy of Apollinarius, who happened also to embrace a tripartite view of man. It is for this very reason—the overreactions to heresies that typified the first post-apostolic centuries—that we should not resort to post-apostolic literature as our ultimate authority.

We should note, however, that the past two centuries also produced numerous biblical scholars of various theological persuasions[1] who held to a tripartite view of man: G. H. Pember, Andrew Murray, C. I. Scofield Jessie Penn-Lewis, H. G. Moule, A. R. Fausset, Lester Sumrall, Madame Guyon, F. B. Meyer, Henry Alford, Mary McDonough, Evan Roberts, F. F. Bruce, Watchman Nee, and Witness Lee, as well as numerous others. In short, it is both erroneous and presumptuous to claim that the historic church has regarded the tripartite view of man as "dangerous."

Does a Tripartite View of Man Spawn Heresies?

Soul warns us, "The point I want you to see is every time that I know of in Church history where trichotomy raises its head, it functions as a vehicle to carry some serious distortion of Christian doctrine." But the audience is provided with only the fifth-century example of Apollinarius, whose tripartite view of man—the view most commonly held at this time—was inconsequential and unrelated to his heretical Christological teaching. *Quest* sounds the alarm concerning the tripartite view of man: "There is, however, a *serious danger* that *lurks* behind it, a *danger* that has caused the church historically to *shy away* from it" (169, emphasis added). Speaking of the biblical terms used for the parts of man, *Quest* admonishes us, "It is a dangerous business to read too much into this language" (167). While alarmist language is invoked to incite suspicion about what "lurks" behind the tripartite teaching, the fact is that, apart from the unrelated heresy of Apollinarius, readers are given no specific "dangers" to be on guard against. In fact, *Quest* cites Augustus Strong as its authority for stating that the early church rejected a tripartite view of man because of Apollinarius' heresy (169). But an examination of this reference shows that Strong never says this. Strong states only that a dichotomous view could be used today to help refute Apollinarius's heretical teaching that Christ's soul was human although His spirit was not (487). *The Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* goes so far as to say that Apollinarius did not even hold an orthodox view of the tripartite nature of man, that he mutated it by equating the intellect with the human spirit (867).

In fact, to invoke Apollinarius's heresy against the tripartite nature of man is to proffer a straw man. For most of his life, Apollinarius was considered orthodox in all his views (including man's tripartite nature) and was a strong ally of Athanasius during the Nicene Council. He fell into heresy only in his later years during the debate over the nature of Christ, affirming the humanness of His body and soul but denying that His spirit was also human. He diminished the humanity of Christ by denying the third part of His humanity. It is a strenuous leap of imagination to ascribe his heresy to his tripartite view of man. *Quest* and *Soul* thus leave us with false alarms. Not only so, *Quest* subverts its own argument when it admits, "There is no horrible evil in viewing our human nature in trichotomous or tripartite terms. Many sound and orthodox Christians have adopted such a view" (169). On one hand, *Quest* and *Soul* use such words as "danger" and "serious distortion," yet on the other hand, it would appear that they try to avoid offending many believers who hold to a view of the tripartite nature of man. If a tripartite view of man is such a serious distortion of the truth, then they should be willing to condemn it wherever it manifests itself, without concern for who may or may not be offended

by such condemnation. If a tripartite view of man does not contain a "horrible evil," then they should reduce their rhetoric for the sake of receiving fellow believers in the manner described in Romans 14. In sum, church history and even *Quest* itself do not wholeheartedly support the notion that the tripartite position breeds heresy.

Does a Tripartite View of Man Diminish the Value of the Soul?

Concise argues that the tripartite position "leads to a crippling anti-intellectualism whereby spiritual insight and theological thought are separated to the impoverishing of both" (74-75). *Quest* follows this attack of the tripartite view by noting, "Far more important than the theological discussion between dichotomy and trichotomy is the importance of the life of the soul….What remains to be seen is how valuable we regard the soul to be" (171). *Quest* then continues with a six-page homage to the value of the soul. The mistake made by both *Quest* and *Concise* is the assumption that in distinguishing a third part in man's nature (the spirit), the importance of the soul with its intellect is somehow diminished. The opposite is true. A tripartite view of man greatly enhances the importance, worth, and function of the soul.

A proper understanding of God's work in man's tripartite being actually enhances the value of the soul by establishing its transformation as the goal of God's work in the believer's daily life. Before regeneration, the human spirit is deadened due to sin (Eph. 2:1), and the soul's thoughts are largely dominated and enslaved by the desires of the flesh (v. 3). But John 1:12, 3:3, and 3:6 tell us that at the moment of belief a new birth takes place by the Holy Spirit's generating of His divine life into the human spirit. Then, throughout the believer's life, the Holy Spirit seeks to grow and expand from the believer's spirit into the mind, will, and emotion of the soul, transforming it into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23). This gives the believer a precious hope for his soul. The mind that once ran wild with vanity (4:17) now can be daily renewed and transformed until the believer has "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). When believers permit Christ to "make His home" within the mind, emotion, and will (Eph. 3:17), their soul undergoes a spiritual metabolic transformation "into the same image" as Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). This indicates that the soul's value is incalculable to the believer who understands both his tripartite makeup and God's plan to organically sanctify and preserve his whole spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23).

Quest and *Soul* misconstrue this fundamental notion, illustrating a lack of understanding of trichotomistic beliefs. *Soul* reverses the order of God's indwelling work, stating that trichotomists believe that a spiritual Christian "has the Holy Spirit not only in his soul, but also in his human spirit, and when the Holy Spirit penetrates the human spirit, as well as residing or dwelling in the soul, then you have the triumphant Christian life." But a proper tripartite view states that the Spirit penetrates the soul *after* first regenerating the spirit. In addition, concerning "carnal Christians" *Soul* claims that trichotomists teach that "the Holy Spirit is in their lives. But the Holy Spirit is in their souls, but not in their spirits." *Soul* has set up a straw man and mounted an attack against it. Trichotomists universally teach that the Holy Spirit is in each believer, that is, the believer's spirit. It is from the spirit that the Holy Spirit reaches the soul and transforms it, causing the progressive dispositional change of the soul into the image of Christ. Trichotomists teach that every believer is regenerated in the spirit, yet *Soul* accuses them of teaching that "those who are regenerate, [are] people who have the Holy Spirit in their souls, but not in their spirits. And the people who don't have it in their spirits can live a life of utter godlessness and still be saved." Such statements display a startling lack of familiarity with the trichotomist's position.

Is Watchman Nee Especially to Blame?

Another disturbing argument used in both *Quest* and *Soul* is that the widespread acceptance of the tripartite nature of man is due to the popularity of Watchman Nee, who allegedly was influenced by "Oriental mysticism." *Soul* proclaims that a "serious distortion of Christian doctrine" can be seen

> in the teaching of Watchman Nee, which teaching has had a tremendous influence in twentieth-century evangelicalism because it is so heavily devotional, and it is appealing to people who want to be more spiritual. But mixed in with Watchman Nee's theology is a dose, a heavy dose of biblical Christianity that is then stirred up and mixed together with elements of thought borrowed from Oriental mysticism.

We are never told which specific "elements" were "borrowed from Oriental mysticism," nor are we told precisely what Oriental mysticism is. *Quest* mirrors this insinuation: "A similar danger lurks in the teaching of Watchman Nee….Nee's work represents a synthesis between biblical teaching and oriental dualism. The dualism comes through in his view of trichotomy" (170). I find these vague incriminations distasteful because they seem to be overly evocative of reactions rooted in ignorance and racism. Having studied both Nee's writing and his life's history for twenty-seven years, I cannot find a trace of "Oriental mysticism" either in his written ministry or his biographical data. Not only have I extensively read his works and biographies, but I also have personally interviewed several of his close co-workers, relatives, and friends. The comments

in *Quest* and *Soul* reveal either an ignorance of or a total disregard for the facts concerning Nee's life and work. For example, Nee was raised a third-generation Methodist whose grandfather was the first Chinese Congregationalist pastor in his entire province. Not only was he raised in a denomination of Western origin; he was also raised in English-speaking schools administered by Westerners, and he graduated from an English-language college. In addition, he devoted his entire adult life from the age of seventeen to studying the Bible as well as the great Christian classics of the Western world and church history. He gave no time or attention to "oriental dualism." Indeed, he never stepped foot in a pagan temple until well into his adult years, and then only to acquaint himself with an adversary of the gospel. In his classic book *The Spiritual Man,* Nee even credits two centuries of British and American Bible scholars for having revealed to him the tripartite nature of man. These facts concerning Nee are no secret and are readily accessible. It would appear that because of his Asian origin and name, *Quest* and *Soul* seem to assume that his teaching is tainted. That is unfair and unreasonable.

The Significance of Being Tripartite

The issue of dichotomy versus a tripartite view of man carries an importance that surpasses the question of scriptural accuracy. Ephesians 3:11 tells us that in eternity past God had a purpose, and then to carry out this purpose, in time He made a plan (called God's economy, *oikonomia,* in Ephesians 1:10). According to His plan, the Trinity determined, "Let Us make man in Our image," and what He created was a three-part man with a spirit, soul, and body (Gen. 1:26; 2:7). God fashioned man to match His plan. According to His economy, His administration, God has from the beginning intended to dispense Himself into man as life. Man was therefore made with a spirit to contact, receive, and contain God as life. In this spirit we can worship God who is Spirit (John 4:24). If we walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4) and set our mind on the spirit (v. 6), the Divine Spirit will renew our mind (12:2) and transform our soul (2 Cor. 3:17-18). Our soul—the vessel containing and expressing our personality—is the means for us to relate to others. Through the transformed soul, Christ can be magnified (Phil. 1:20). Even our physical bodies can receive the benefit of this ongoing organic salvation of the soul (Rom. 8:11), and in the next age our soulish body will be raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). Therefore, God's saving work encompasses all three parts of our being. To understand our tripartite nature is fundamental to knowing and experiencing God's way of dispositionally saving us in His life (Rom. 5:10). It is very significant, therefore, that Paul's prayer, in view of man's tripartite need and the Lord's second coming, encompasses our whole "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thes. 5:23).

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Notes

[1]For a fine discussion of the difference between soulish and spiritual, see G. H. Pember's *Earth's Earliest Ages* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975). Andrew Murray's classic work, *The Spirit of Christ,* draws a clear distinction between the three parts of man. See in particular pages 124, 155, 159, 193, and 227-228. The original Scofield Study Bible contains a convincing footnote to 1 Thessalonians 5:23. For a compelling discrimination between soulish and spiritual, see Jessie Penn-Lewis's *Soul and Spirit* (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1992). The comments by A. R. Fausset in *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* are especially enlightening. See pages 289, 331-332, 469, and 538 (Vol. 3. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997). For a view of the tripartite nature of man from a Pentecostal perspective, see Lester Sumrall's *Spirit, Soul and Body* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1995). Alford's classic work clearly sets forth his position that man is tripartite (*Alford's Greek Testament,* 1875. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980). McDonough's small book, *God's Plan of Redemption,* contains many charts which illustrate God's organic salvation of the tripartite man (Shoals: Old Paths Tract Society, Inc., n.d.). Watchman Nee's classic bestseller, *The Spiritual Man,* provides the definitive delineation of the three-part man (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee.* Vols. 12-14. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1992). Witness Lee's voluminous commentaries, *Life-study of the New Testament* and *Life-study of the Old Testament,* contain extensive explanations of the verses mentioned in this article.

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