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THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN  
BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

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For many years people have wondered what happens to the life of a man when his body dies. What Plato and the American Indian were inclined to believe about immortality, Darwin and other evolutionists attempted to discount through science. It was science versus philosophy on this issue and never the two would meet. Or wouldn't they?

In recent years the battle in favor of afterlife has been removed from the closet of the philosopher and brought to the home-court laboratory of the scientist. People like Ralph Moody and Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, both M.D.'s, have been researching and writing about what patients who are near death or have been clinically dead say about death. The general public and people in our congregations are showing great interest in these "scientifically

documented" books. (They are so interested, it took me three tries at the local library before I found even one of the books on the shelf). The typical death experience, as compiled by Ralph Moody, seems very convincing.

A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor... (he) feels himself moving very rapidly through a long tunnel. He suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body, but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator...

He notices that he still has a "body", but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind... He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before - a being of light - appears before him. .. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to the earth, that the time for his death has not yet come.

It is refreshing in a way to see scientists who dare to challenge the solid gold theories of the evolutionist. On the other hand, I don't immediately break out in goosebumps over this new evidence. Though seeing may be believing, you cannot always be sure of your eyesight.

Certainty about whether man has a soul which survives independent of the body and how that immortal soul is related to the body is neither a philosophical nor a scientific question at all. It is a theological question to which God alone can provide the answers. For this reason, most of our time will be spent in God's Word to see how God distinguishes between body and soul, between the material and the immaterial part of man. This will be the first part of the paper.

The second part of the paper will deal with an additional question, namely whether the immaterial part of man is once more divided into two substances, soul and spirit, or whether it is but one substance.

I  
BODY AND SOUL

There is little question about what the body is. It is a complex physical organism which occupies space just like the world around us. Since it can be measured, touched, seen, and observed, since it is composed of the common building blocks of the universe, and has chemical reactions going on in it which can be demonstrated in the lab and observed in other living creatures as well, it seems to occupy a nice place in the logical scheme of things. Being entirely composed of matter, it needs only to consume matter to remain intact. Given the right input of complex chemicals along with some simple elements like oxygen, you have a functioning body.

What science now observes about the complexity and composition of the body, God long ago explained very simply. "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground." Gn 2,7. And as to what the body needed for survival, that God also determined. "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything." Gn.9,3

The body is subject to death and decay. To the scientist this aspect of the body is purely physical. After all, death is viewed as the natural state

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of every living thing, mother nature's way of maintaining a balance. When the proper chemical reactions cease to take place, then the organism is upset to the point that it quits functioning altogether. But in doing so it leaves behind the building blocks of future organisms.

This may all sound very logical and convincing, but it does not tell the whole truth about death. It fails to tell of the very important relationship of love between the created man and the Creature, which when broken by sin led to the creature's demise. Therefore death is never a purely physical matter, not even in the rest of creation which suffers along because of the fall. The ceasing of bodily functions is a moral judgment of God for man's disobedience. It is a judgment of mortality and decay which have been the lot of the human and animal body ever since. "For dust you are, and to dust you will return." (Gn 3,19), "As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more." (Ps. 103,15,16)

Very quickly it becomes clear that there is much more to the creature than meets the eye. Though the body appears to be purely physical and measurable; there is something strangely abstract and immeasurable about it. A dead body greatly resembles a living body physically. But when a body no longer functions as a living, breathing organism, though nothing has apparently changed, everything has changed. The "life" has gone out of it. So strange and unnatural it is in that condition, that a corpse was to be considered "unclean" in the Old Testament times.

God's Word has a great deal to tell us about that "life" in every creature. Though you cannot see it or put your finger on it, there is a very real, God-given life-principle in every living thing. When that life is removed forcibly through injury or natural means, death occurs. It is in this sense that every creature, both human and animal, is spoken of as having something

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besides a body, namely breath or spirit. "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.... when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth."(Ps104; 24,29,30)

But to this point there have been no distinguishing characteristics presented which would show that human life is any different from animal life. Yet God took special care in creating the crown of his creation, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being," (Gn 2,7). Could it be that man has no more than simple animal life? The unbelieving evolutionist is content to stop here. To quote from Herman Preus, A Theology to Live By, "Stopping here would indeed seem to explain the bestial behavior of 20th-century man, leading the world into chaos by way of hate, murder, and suicide. For says Luther, "if you consider the animal life about which Moses is speaking here, there is no difference between man and the donkey."<sup>2</sup>

Luther considered it bestial behavior to stop with such a view of man. Ah, good God, what do we poor human beings mean by strutting about while we do not know what our soul or our body is! Holy Scriptures impugn the view of Aristotle, who denies an immortal soul and says that soul and body are of the same substance. Christ clearly states, "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul." The soul is of a substance different from that of the body; and yet there is an intimate union and connection, for the soul loves the body very much. They part from each other reluctantly.<sup>3</sup>

There is little doubt that man has a great deal in common with the animals. In the early stages of growth the human embryo is very similar to other embryos. In the same way man's body is alive by the same principles of breathing, blood flow, and brain activity.

But when all the observation is complete, and all the physical similarities between the life of the animal and the life of man have been covered, there remains a large difference between the two which defies explanation on

the basis of all that can be observed or understood. No other animal even comes near the reasoning ability of a person. No other animal ever made a conscious effort to attend a worship service for the purpose of praising God. No other animal has the ability to take abstract ideas and turn them into the reality of air travel or computer technology. No other animal is able to communicate so many ideas and expand vocabulary as necessary. Perhaps most important and amazing of all, about no other animal did God ever say, "In the image of God he created him." (Gn 1,27) And to no animal did God promise to restore that image and grant immortality. Let Luther speak for a moment on man's special place in the world of the Creator.

The difference which God made in the original creation of man and of cattle likewise shows man's immortality. And though all the other works of God fill us with wonder and are truly magnificent, yet that man is the most excellent creature is evident from the fact that in creating him God had recourse to his deep counsel and proceeded in a new manner. For God does not leave it to the earth to bring forth man as it brought forth the beasts and the trees. But God himself forms man in His own image to be a participator of God and one designed to enjoy God's rest. Hence Adam, before he is formed by the Lord, is a mere lifeless lump of earth, lying on the ground; God takes that lump of earth into His hand and out of it forms a most beautiful creature - a creature partaking of immortality.

The question now arises, "Where is the cutoff point between what is strictly called the animal life of man and what is called his immortal soul?" How easy the whole matter would become if God had used a different word when speaking of the immortal soul of man than when speaking purely of the animal life which man has in common with every beast. In fact there are those who feel that God did make a distinction in vocabulary. G. T. Shedd in his Dogmatic Theology says that God described man with three terms - body, soul (nephesh in Hebrew, psyche in Greek), and spirit (ruach in Hebrew, pneuma in Greek), but that God described the animal in only two ways, as having only psyche (soul) and body. Shedd reaches this conclusion.

Man is composed of a rational soul, and animal soul, and a body. The brute is composed of an animal soul and a body. An animal soul has intelligence in its lower forms, but not reason, or the power of intuitive perception in mathematics, morals, and religion.

He finds support for this view in the difference between the animal creation and God's special creation of man.

A living soul is attributed to Adam, but it is inbreathed by God. A living soul is attributed to the lower animals, but it is merely created, not inbreathed by God. The death of an animal is the death of both the body and the incomplex animal soul; not the separation of the latter from the former, and the continued life of the latter. The death of a man is the separation of the complex rational-animal soul from the body, or the departure of the pneuma-psyche from the soma.

His conclusion about the soul of man being different by virtue of God's special care in creation is absolutely correct, but he came by it in the wrong way. For the Bible does not have the subtle difference in terms which he implies. (If it did, this paper would be easy). Rather animals, too, are spoken of as having bodies, souls, and sometimes as having spirits. Think of the passage from Psalm 104 again, "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all, the earth is full of your creatures...

when you take away their breath (spirit - ruach), they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit (ruach), they are created." Genesis

6, 17 says, "I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath (ruach) of life in it." The words are used too many ways to find in them a neat division.

If the difference is not to be found in the words themselves (and it is not), then it must be found in their usage and the extent of what they describe in each instance. When soul (nephesh or psyche) or spirit (ruach or pneuma) is used in reference to a human being you just have to know that it is describing much more than when used for an animal. For, though similarities exist between man and beast, great differences also exist



and they cannot be overlooked. Man's soul is capable of greater emotion, greater knowledge, reason, and will, is redeemable and perhaps best of all is immortal.

In many expressions regarding man's emotions, the particular emotion is ascribed to the soul. We speak of a person falling in love. The Word of God speaks of a person's soul loving, "His heart (nephesh) was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob." (Gn. 34,3) We say, "I'm happy in the Lord!" Psalm 35,9 says, "Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord and delight in his salvation."

Jesus himself speaks of his soul as the center of feeling, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."

The special intellect of man is a part of his special kind of soul.

Proverbs 2,10 says, "For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul."

The soul of man is the object of God's saving work. "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11,28) Because the soul of man is redeemed, it can be involved in praise. "Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name." (Ps. 103,1)

Yes, man's soul is his "inmost being", and so much is this really the essence of man's whole life that in 159 instances in the Old and New Testaments the words nephesh and psyche are translated 'life.' And in several other instances it stands for the whole person, as in Deut 27,25, for example,

"Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person." (nephesh)

In both the Old and New Testaments, then, man is spoken of, not only as having a soul, but "being" a soul. In this material earthly existence the soul asserts its presence by means of the body. Here on earth we are a soul

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in a body. But when death, the wages of sin, comes, the body succumbs, yet the soul continues to exist, not as an unidentifiable phantom or apparition, but as the person he always was, only without the body.

This is the final identifying mark of man's soul. It is immortal. It can exist without the body, though the reverse is not true. This immortality of the soul is presented again and again in the New Testament. For example, when Jesus told grieving Martha that her brother Lazarus would live again, Martha thought that Jesus was talking about the resurrection on the last day. She replied, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus corrected her saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." Without the certainty of the immortality of the soul, Jesus' last words there become a lie. The body is mortal, the soul is immortal says Jesus in Matthew 10, 28. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both the soul and body in hell." When the soul does live on after the demise of the body, it does not change or become only half a person. The parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus speaks of the souls of these men as the same person who existed previously. They are fully aware of their presence in eternity and even recall their past life. When Jesus promised eternal happiness to the believing thief on the cross, he promised it immediately. That is impossible to understand outside the framework of the immortality of the soul. Yet Jesus did not say, "Your soul will be with me", but "Today, you will be with me in paradise." In eternity the soul is a whole person, only without flesh for a time. I Peter 3, 18, 19 exhibits the same truth. Jesus, after being made alive "went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built."

It is interesting to note in this passage once again, that the spirits of the dead are equated with the entire individual who had lived before the flood, though most certainly the body had long since been decomposed. For their previous unbelief they continued to exist in hell, only without bodies.

Some claim that the doctrine of immortality of the soul is presented in the New Testament as a new truth, which in the time before Christ no one knew or believed. They also claim that the Old Testament word of the Lord had nothing to say on the subject. This claim is simply not true. When Elijah prayed for the widow's son, he prayed, "O Lord my God, let this boy's life (naphshah) return to him!" (I Kings 17,21b) And in Ecclesiastes, perhaps the clearest of all passages dealing with immortality of the soul in the Old Testament, God writes, "The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." (Eccl 12,7)

In the light of all this evidence from the Word of God, it is unbiblical to view the soul as just a manifestation and function of the physical body. The soul is a separate creation of God, which during earthly life is intimately connected to the body. The body cannot exist without the soul, yet the soul can and does exist without the body as it awaits the glorious day of resurrection.

To summarize what has been presented thus far, let me quote from our beloved professor H. Vogel.

We believe that man has an immortal soul which is not material, not subject to growth and development, not subject to physical injury or disease, will not deteriorate and cannot die. It has no weight or extension, is not limited by time and space in the same manner as the body, but during the lifetime of the individual on earth is intimately connected with the body. In fact, it is the soul which gives life to the body. When the soul is separated from the body, the body dies, that is, it ceases to function as it should and begins to disintegrate. It is by virtue of the indwelling of the soul that man is not only a living being, but also a rational creature. The soul enables man to premeditate his actions and then to carry them out, to plan a course of action and to follow it through to its

successful conclusion. The soul enables man to communicate his thoughts to other human beings by the spoken or written word. It enables him to experience a great number of different emotions and to react to any of these. The soul in man makes of man not only the crown of creation, God's most complex creature, but enables him to occupy that position in this world which God had intended for man, "to subdue the earth and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."<sup>6</sup>

To know for certain that God created us with both body and soul has some

very practical applications to daily life. For one thing, this knowledge

will lead us to view the "experiences" of the dying with an open mind. We

ought not immediately discount these experiences as impossible, imagined,

or purely physical. It is not beyond the realm of possibility, that at death

we will be aware of the separation taking place in just such a way, I find

such a prospect very exciting.

On the other hand, if these experiences are purely physical and have a

logical medical explanation, that's fine. My certainty that I will live for-

ever with God will not be shattered. For, by telling me that I have a soul,

my Creator and Savior God assures me that I am special over all the animals,

with an inner being that can know and serve him now, and will always do so

even when this flesh deserts me. "For I am convinced that neither death

nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor

any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will

be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our

Lord." (Ro 8,38,39)

## SOUL AND SPIRIT

The time has come for the second question covered in this paper. Is the

immaterial part of man, the soul, once more divided resulting in a three-

part man, a trichotomy, or are soul and spirit essentially synonyms, pre-

senting the human being in two parts, a dichotomy?

There are different opinions on the matter among theologians. Luther felt strongly both ways, i.e. he felt there was a difference, but not really. He calls the spirit, "the highest, deepest, and noblest part of man. By it he is enabled to lay hold on things incomprehensible, invisible, and eternal. It is, in brief, the dwelling place of faith and the Word of God." About the soul, he says, "The second part, the soul, is the same spirit, so far as its nature is concerned, but viewed as performing a different function, namely, giving life to the body and working through the body."<sup>7</sup>

Luther's view is really that man is a dichotomy, and that position was followed by the other Lutheran dogmaticians, beginning with Johann Gerhard, who said, "there are but two parts of man,.. The term spirit is sometimes put exegetically for the soul itself, since the soul is a spirit." But there is a strictly three-part view of man, too. Here is how it would be applied to the world of living things. "When a plant dies its material organization is dissolved and the principle of vegetable life which it contained disappears. When a brute dies its body returns to dust and the psyche, or principle of animal life by which it was animated, passes away. When a man dies his body returns to the earth, his psyche ceases to exist, his pneuma alone remains until reunited with the body at the resurrection. To the psyche which we have in common with the brutes, belong understanding, feeling, and sensibility, or the power of sense-perceptions. To the pneuma, which is peculiar to man, belong reason, will and conscience. To the soma belongs what is purely material."<sup>7</sup> Though this description was quoted from Hodge, Systematic Theology, it is not his personal view. You will notice, however, that this position comes very close to that of G.T. Shedd (presented earlier in this paper), though he believes man's psyche too will live on.

God's Word contains some passages, which at first glance might seem to lend support to a three-part view of the human being. There is I Thess. 5, 23, for example, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is the opening line of Mary's Magnificat. "My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Hebrews 4, 12 asserts, "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Finally, in I Corinthians 15, 44 Paul compares the natural body (soma psychikon) of this life with the spiritual body (soma pneumatikon) of the coming life. There we have four passages. When you have listed them you have about exhausted the ones in which there is an apparent distinction between soul and spirit. Remaining are 869 other occurrences of the words in God's Word, where they are translated soul and spirit. It is in considering all these other passages that the evidence in favor of soul and spirit being essentially interchangeable begins to mount.

If it is man's spirit alone which lives on into eternity and if therefore it is that spirit which distinguishes him from the animal, then the first step in proving a trichotomy of man should be to prove that the term spirit is used for man alone. Yet we already noted one passage in which animals have spirits, "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." (Ps 104, 30). Another is Ecclesiastes 3, 21. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (By the way I did not quote the NIV in this instance, and it might be interesting to discuss their translation at this point, "Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit

of the animal goes down into the earth?") Regardless of the translation, however, the conclusion that spirit is applied to animals too is valid.

It is not surprising that this is so, for the essential similarity of the terms stems way back to the root meaning of each. Both Koehler-Baumgartner and Ernst Meier point out in their respective lexicons that nepheshr (soul) is derived from the verb naphash which means to exhale, to breathe out, and in the niphal "to catch a breath". The root meaning for ruach (spirit) is practically the same. Its first sense is "breath" or "wind", from there it comes to mean the "breath of life" which man has in common with all the animals, and finally it can mean "man's rational soul, the spiritual part of man", which no animal shares with man. Note that if there is a difference, it lies in the fact that nepheshr always refers to wind passing in and out through the nostrils, therefore always being connected to life, whereas ruach can mean wind in a more general sense, as for example the "four winds" of the earth.

With this root meaning in mind it is easy to find passages where the two are translated similarly. "His breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from his mouth" (Job 41,21) is a translation of nepheshr. But in 2 Samuel 22,16, "The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of

the earth laid bare at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of breath from his nostrils", breath is a translation of ruach.

But is it as easy to find passages in which the characteristics of the soul of man - its immortality, emotions, intellect, will, etc. - are equally applied to man's spirit? The answer is yes. A person's soul can be grieved, "My soul is in anguish" (Ps 6,3), or a person's spirit can be saddened. "Why is your spirit so sad?", Jezebel says to Ahab in I Kings 21,5. In one place we are told "Jesus was troubled in spirit" and in another that "his

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soul was extremely sorrowful."

The separation of the material body from the immaterial inner being of man at death can be described with either word. Psalm 31,5 says, "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (also Jesus' dying words on the cross), but in Genesis 35,18 Rachel's death occurred "as her soul was in departing."

The battle which is going on inside the Christian between the Old Adam and the New Man I Peter 2,11 describes as follows. "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul." But the Apostle Paul describes this same battle as a war between the flesh and the spirit, and Jesus says to his disciples in Gethsemane, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

Finally, both soul and spirit are spoken of as being immortal. In Rev.6,9 John writes, "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they

had maintained." Likewise, Jesus says to the disciples in Matthew 10,28, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

On the other hand Ecclesiastes 12,7 proclaims, "The spirit returns to God who gave it." And the souls to whom Jesus proclaimed his victory at his descent into hell were called "the spirits in prison."

Essentially soul and spirit are the same substance, and yet that there are two different words here cannot be denied. And I suppose it is safe to say that two different words never mean exactly the same thing, otherwise there would have been no need for the two words. Concerning the possible distinction let me begin by reading the conclusions of Prof. H. Vogel.

What then is the distinction between these terms? It is difficult to define this difference between soul and spirit exactly. It would appear that "spirit" refers to the spiritual "substance" as such, as opposed to matter. When the emphasis is on the immateriality of something, we would expect it to be called spirit rather than soul.



"Soul" on the other hand seems to imply that this spiritual "substance" is, or ought to be, joined to some other substance, such as a material body. Consider that the angels are called spirits, but never souls. Persons, however, are often referred to as "souls", but never as spirits.

Prof. Vogel continues:

In a general way one could say that the term "spirit" seems to indicate an activity of the "soul" whereas "soul" seems to point to receptivity of some action. The difference is one largely of emphasis or point of view, but not an essential distinction. We conclude therefore that man consists of two parts, the one is the body, the other is sometimes called "soul" and sometimes "spirit."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps Luther says it most succinctly of all.

(The spirit is) the highest, deepest, and noblest part of man. By it he is enabled to lay hold on things incomprehensible, invisible, and eternal. It is, in brief, the dwelling place of faith and the Word of God.

The second part, the soul, is the same spirit, so far as its nature is concerned, but viewed as performing a different function, namely, giving life to the body and working through the body.<sup>9</sup>

But what about the four passages in which the words occur side by side?

After one sees that the major portion of Scripture essentially interchanges soul and spirit, I believe these passages fall into place too. The opening line of Mary's Magnificat is easy to explain, when you know soul and spirit are synonymous and when you know that Hebrew poetry (and Mary's prayer was just that) often employed synonymous parallelism. If we were to assume that Mary meant two distinct substances when she spoke of spirit and soul, then we might also conclude that "the Lord" her soul praised and the "God my Savior" her spirit praised were two different Gods. Not so. The many names of God simply point out different characteristics of but one God. So spirit and soul simply point out different aspects of the same immortal part of man.

Likewise, we ought not immediately accuse the Apostle Paul of teaching trichotomy just because he wrote, "May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless." Paul loved to repeat things for emphasis, especially when

he was speaking of the magnificent mercy of God or its benefits in life.

For example, Paul greets the Thessalonian christians with a prayer. "We

always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, etc."

Paul did only one thing for them - he prayed for them. But he emphasized his point by describing the prayer in three ways. In the same way, in order to emphasize the need for God to control their entire life, he fervently prays,

"May your whole spirit, soul and body be blameless!" There is no new doctrine

here of mankind's composition. Man's makeup was clearly established in the beginning when God took the dust, the material, and breathed life

into man, the immaterial.

The same argument of Paul's use of emphasis can be applied to the writer

of Hebrews 4, 12. "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit." The

emphasis is not on a distinction of soul and spirit, but on the tremendous power of God's Word, which searches the inner being of man. That inner being

happens to go by the terms soul and spirit. It also happens to be called "heart" as the rest of the verse says, "it judges the thoughts and attitudes

of the heart." If you were to be totally literal, you might conclude

that man has four parts here - body, soul, spirit, and heart. But no, the

point of the passage is summed up in the following verse. "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare

before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Our conclusion should

be that just as a real sword can tear up the visible body and show you its

secrets, so the Word of God can tear up the immaterial part of man - call

it soul, call it spirit, or call it heart - and reveal all its secrets.

Perhaps the most difficult to explain of the four passages is I Cor. 15, 44.

"It is sown a natural (soul-ish) body and is raised a spiritual body."

One might get the impression that in this life the soul exists with the body, but will not be present in the hereafter, and that the spirit which is now suppressed will be released to join a glorified body in eternity. This might be a plausible explanation, except that it contradicts everything else already stated in Scripture, including those statements of Paul which conclude that the Christian is even now a "spiritual" being, in that he is led by the Spirit.

Charles Hodge presents a very good resolution of the apparent problem.

The general meaning of the Apostle is plain. We have now gross, perishable, and dishonorable, or unsightly bodies. Hereafter we are to have glorious bodies, adapted to a higher state of existence. The only question is, why does he call the one psychical, and the other pneumatic? Because the word psyche, although often used for the soul as rational and immortal, is also used for the lower form of life which belongs to irrational animals. Our future bodies are not to be adapted to those principles of our nature which we have in common with the brutes, but to those which are peculiar to us as men, created in the image of God. The same individual human soul has certain susceptibilities and powers which adapt it to the present state of existence, and to the earthly house in which it now dwells. It has animal appetites and necessities. It can hunger and thirst. It needs sleep and rest. But the same soul has higher powers. The earthly body is suited to its earthly state, the heavenly body to its heavenly state. There are not two substances, soul and spirit; there is but one and the same substance with different susceptibilities and powers.<sup>10</sup>

Something else should be added here. The word spirit is not always used to mean the soul of man, but rather the activity of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate person. So a spiritual body is not a body in which the spirit has replaced the soul, but a body which the Holy Spirit has recreated in perfect holiness to serve God forever. George Stoeckhardt makes the same point in his comments on this passage. "The adjective "spiritual" derived from Spirit, is not used here in the sense of any human part of man, but rather as something that is created in man immediately by the Spirit of God."<sup>11</sup>

When all is said and done, one might wonder what value there is in considering a subject like this. Does it really make any difference whether

we are composed of two parts or three parts? The answer is "yes"! It has much to do with your hope of salvation. There are those who feel that when you are dead you are dead, and only a vague, undefined spirit of yours lives on, a spirit that will never undergo punishment or bliss. But that is not your hope. You know that God redeemed you a lost and condemned creature. God redeemed you for heaven, totally! You will not be only two-thirds or one-half or one-third of yourself in heaven with God. You will be you! "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

...the same individual human soul has certain essential differences and powers which adapt it to the present state of existence and to the earthly house in which it now dwells. It has a certain vitality and necessities. It can hunger and thirst. It needs sleep and rest. But the same soul has higher powers, the earthly body is suited to its earthly state; the heavenly body to its heavenly state. There are not two substances, soul and earthly form, but one and the same substance with different susceptibilities and powers.

Something else which is essential to the existence of the soul is the intellect. The intellect is the power which enables the soul to know and understand. It is the power which enables the soul to love and desire. It is the power which enables the soul to will. It is the power which enables the soul to be holy. It is the power which enables the soul to be happy. It is the power which enables the soul to be saved. It is the power which enables the soul to be glorified. It is the power which enables the soul to be united with God. It is the power which enables the soul to be one with God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the presence of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the kingdom of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the city of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the house of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the family of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the church of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the world of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the universe of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the creation of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the redemption of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the resurrection of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the glorification of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal life of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal happiness of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal glory of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal love of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal joy of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal peace of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal rest of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal bliss of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal glory of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal love of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal joy of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal peace of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal rest of God. It is the power which enables the soul to be in the eternal bliss of God.

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