

ARTICLE V.

THE TRIPARTITE NATURE OF MAN.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL WHITTLESSEY HOWLAND, D. D.

THE truth in reference to the nature of man is most important, because of its bearing on so many important doctrines. The doctrines of sin,—its nature, its origin, its transmission,—conversion, sanctification, the person of Christ, the atonement, the resurrection, the future life, and many others, are modified by the doctrine as to the nature of man. Unless the latter is both correctly and clearly stated, not only will erroneous views be held on these other points, but the practical activity of the church may be seriously affected, so close is the connection between truth and life.

The earlier Christian fathers, as Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Origen, and others, held a tripartite view as to man's nature, as the most natural interpretation of Scripture. But when Apollinaris based a dangerous heresy on this doctrine, and the Latin Church, which became dominant, definitely and with authority adopted the doctrine of the bipartite nature of man, the older view was neglected or rejected. In modern times it has been taken up again in a tentative sort of way, or with an attempt to harmonize it with the other theory. But I have nowhere seen an altogether satisfactory treatment of the subject, and therefore venture to attempt a brief statement of it.

It is now pretty generally conceded that man shares his lower nature with the animals, and therefore in our induction of facts we may make use of some facts of the animal

kingdom. The principal distinction between living things and those without life is, that the living are organized. An organized thing is one which is made up of organs, i. e. parts which have functions to perform for the good of the whole. It is difficult to conceive of an organism without an organizer, something which makes the unity of the whole by making the functions or actions of the several parts subservient to the good of the whole. Every plant has its plan, which it carries out, only slightly modified by varying circumstances. That which carries the plan is not the matter of which it is composed, but the organizer, an immaterial something which gives the plant individuality and plan, and unity and reciprocal activity of its parts.

Joseph Cook says: "As the plan of your eagle, your lion, your man, your oak, is steadily adhered to from the first to the last, we may say that plan belongs to something that is not in flux, that came in when the plan threw its first shuttle, and goes out unimpaired even after the shuttle ceases to move. That invisible somewhat, some scholar in Germany calls a spiritual body." This immaterial organizer, or user of matter, is found in the plant, animal, and man, varying in its capacities according to its position, but having always the same general characteristics. We cannot explain away the evidence for the existence of such an agent, by the illustration of corals and madrepores, where we have colonies of individuals working together and producing a beautiful form, such as Neptune's cup, for example. The coral mites do not form an organism. They work together because only by so doing can they do anything. They first form the stem of the madrepores, because only by mutual help can they rise above the slime of the bottom. When they get above that, they branch out, because they can thus better get their needed supplies from the surrounding salt water; and yet they are dependent for a foundation on those that have gone before them, and so

the cup is formed. But there is no more of organism here than in the case of a crystal.

It is evident that the organizer of a plant is divisible; because, when a plant is divided, the same plan and the same individuality is found in each part. The facts of grafting show that what is divisible is also unitable, and the same is illustrated in seed-bearing. Materialistic evolutionists are very unwilling to admit any evidence in favor of anything immaterial; but they find themselves in great perplexity, and often land themselves in absurdity, in their attempts to account for heredity.

To suppose, as Weismann does, that germs from every minute portion of the parent are found in every little seed or particle that is capable of reproducing, so that all the peculiarities of the parent are transmitted to the minutest details, would tax the credulity of any one not pre-determined to the opinion. But when we admit the transmission of a portion of the immaterial organizer, we have a sufficient explanation to account for the facts.

If we admit the existence of spirits separate from matter, such as angels, we need not be loath to admit the existence of other immaterial beings, when facts demand that we do so. This *organizer* in man is called the *body*, though in popular usage the material clothing of the organizer is often called the body. It may be considered to be the same in man as in animals and plants, though more highly organized; and, having become the servant of higher agencies, it may seem to have higher qualities.

Having admitted that the appearance of life in the progress of evolution was due to the introduction of an immaterial substance, we will the more easily admit the introduction of another substance in the process, i. e. the animal *soul*, or agent of sensation and consciousness. That this animal soul is not a mere result of the process of evolution is seen by the fact that the lowest forms of animal

soul do not appear as a result of high organization of plant life. The lowest animals are almost as low in the scale of organization as the lowest plants. The materialists fail to show any facts that imply a development of animal soul from organization. The animal soul shows all stages of progress and development, but is itself radically different from the organizer of the plant, although in some respects related to it, and capable of association with it.

Mr. Wallace, who has been regarded as one of the highest authorities on evolution, has maintained that "there are at least three stages in the development of the organic world, when some new cause or power must necessarily have come into action." "The change from inorganic to organic, when the earliest vegetable cell, or the living protoplasm out of which it arose, first appeared"; "next, the introduction of sensation or consciousness, constituting the fundamental distinction between the animal and vegetable kingdoms"; "third, the existence in man of a number of his most characteristic and noblest faculties, those which raise him furthest above the brutes, and open up possibilities of almost indefinite advancement." These three new introductions in the progress of evolution mark the first appearances respectively of the three parts of which, as the Bible teaches, man is constituted. They are the immaterial organizer, or *body*, shared with plants and animals; the animal *soul*, shared with animals only; and the rational *spirit*. In the story of Genesis the last two of these are marked by the use of the word "*create*."

The facts of heredity in animals and man show, that, like the body, the animal soul is divisible and unitable.

Mental characteristics are transmitted, and it sometimes seems as if spiritual qualities were also. But it can be shown that the latter are due to spiritual activity following lines of least resistance, and dependent on inheritance of mere mental qualities. If we may judge from the higher

animals, we conclude that this animal soul has memory, and intelligence, and can draw conclusions from premises, although it cannot form concepts. Its knowledge is derived through the senses, and is prudential, and its principle of action is care for self.

The difference between this animal soul and the spirit which is found in man is marked and radical. The spirit is a rational being, its knowledge is intuitional, it sees causes and things as they are: it knows God and self, and the relations between the two, therefore duty. It has self-consciousness and conscience. It alone can form concepts, and control thought by will. It alone perceives the true, the beautiful, and the good, and experiences love, joy, and peace. Materialists are naturally anxious to show the beginning of rationality in animals, but Mr. C. Lloyd Morgan, one of the best authorities on evolution, said, not long since, that "he does not find the perception of relations or the exercise of the faculty of reason in any animal except man." It is just this rational nature which distinguishes man from the animal. It is inconceivable that it should be developed out of anything in the animal, or that it should be produced by adding qualities to the animal soul. The spirit in man has not only individuality but personality, and is indivisible, it is the gift of God, and is the image of God, and by it man became the son of God.

We find thus in man three substances, all immaterial, all working together as the man, and yet differing from each other radically, showing that they could not be developed the one from the other. The first two, the body and the soul, are evidently transmitted by inheritance, while the third, the spirit, is the gift of God. We might confirm this statement by yet other facts of experience, but it may be well to compare it with Scripture. The passage 1 Thess. v. 23 speaks as if the three—body, soul, and spirit—were in some sense coördinate, or at least as if they were the es-

sential constituents of the person, each being of importance; so that the person would not be perfect if either one were lacking, and all are to be kept until the judgment-day. Therefore "body" cannot mean the mere physical frame, which turns to dust. Paul is fond of speaking of man as composed of spirit and flesh, which are in conflict with each other. By the term "flesh" he evidently designates the inherited part of man, the body and soul, that which seeks to rule according to self-interest, and comes into conflict with the conscience. He contrasts the law of the mind (*nous*, or rational nature) with the law in the members (Rom. vii. 23).

In speaking of death and the resurrection, he says, "It is sown a soul-body (*psuchikos*), and raised a spirit-body (*pneumatikos*)," of which the explanation seems to be that the body as laid in the grave is called a "soul-body," because it is still joined with the soul, although separated from the spirit; but in the resurrection the spirit has come and rejoined it, and, dominating it, makes it a "spirit-body." The use of the two terms leads Paul off into a little digression, contrasting the spiritual with the unspiritual, which he before described in chap. ii. 14. The "soul-man," he says, cannot understand spiritual things. This same peculiar word is used by Jude in speaking of a class of wicked persons who do not have the Spirit, and also by James (iii. 15) in giving a gradation of evils. "Earthly" is evidently one who is controlled by the bodily appetites, *psuchikos* must be one controlled by the animal soul as against the higher nature and conscience, and might therefore be called "selfish"; "devilish" carries its own meaning. When the spirit in man becomes evil, so that evil is its good, and secures control, then the man is devilish. The appetites might be attributed to the animal soul, inasmuch as they do not appear in plants which have body. But, although they do not appear in the plants, which have

no consciousness and therefore cannot manifest them, they belong to the organizer, and are often restrained in the animal by the dictates of prudence or selfishness.

The same threefold gradation is found in the description of temptation, e.g. "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16). These three correspond to the temptation in the body, soul, and spirit respectively, and were illustrated in the temptation of Eve, when she saw that the fruit was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. The temptation that comes to the spirit is pride, such as overtook Satan and his angels, a desire to be as God. The same three temptations came to Jesus Christ.

The distinction that is referred to in Heb. iv. 12 between soul and spirit must be between the spiritual man and the soul-man before described. In many passages in the New Testament the word "soul" is translated *life*. This seems due to a Hebraic use of the word. We read that the soul is in the blood (Lev. xvii. 11). The close association of the soul with the life, the soul being the source of the life, led to the use of the one word for the other. The same connection led to the use of the word "soul" for the self, sometimes the whole inner man, and sometimes the deepest self, without any idea of selfishness. These usages passed over into the Greek of the New Testament, and in many cases add expressiveness, as "he laid down his soul for us" (1 John iii. 16). The same can hardly be said of Acts ii. 27, 31; neither the word "life" nor the word "self" will answer in this place. Therefore it must be taken literally, which accords with what we said before, that at death the soul and body go into the grave, awaiting the return of the spirit, which goes to God (Ecc. xii. 7). This was true of both David and Jesus Christ.

Although this was the ordinary usage of the Old Testament, there are several passages which mark the distinc-

tion we have noted. In Job xii. 10 we read that "in the hand of the Lord is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all mankind." The expression "dead soul," which is quite frequent, although translated "dead body," very likely carries a literal meaning as well; certainly the literal meaning is correct. The Hebrew word *ruach*, meaning breath as well as spirit, is not strictly limited to man. In the passage Ecc. iii. 19-21, it is translated with both meanings. We might paraphrase it as follows: "Man and beast have all one way of breathing, and one way of dying, and what evidence is there that in man's breath there is a spirit which goes to heaven, while the animal has nothing of the kind, and its life simply returns to the earth?" The writer does not assert that there is no difference, but simply calls attention to the resemblance.

Another (*n'shamah*) is also used in the Old Testament to describe the spirit of man, especially with reference to its being a gift of God. In Prov. xx. 27 it plainly refers to the rational nature, and is called "candle of the Lord"; and its searching "all the innermost part of the belly" corresponds to Paul's statement, that the spirit of man alone knows the things of man (1 Cor. ii. 11). In Isa. xlii. 5 and lvii. 16, it is used as parallel to "spirit" (*ruach*), and also in Job xxxii. 8. In Deut. xx. 16; Josh. x. 40; xi. 11, 14; 1 Kings xv. 29; Ps. cl. 6, this word is used of man as distinct from animals. Only in Gen. vii. 22 could it be made applicable to animals also; but even here it does not necessarily include them, and therefore, it being the only instance, it is better not to include them. This usage of this word bears on the account of man's creation (Gen. ii. 7), where it is said that God breathed into man's nostrils the "breath" (*n'shamah*) of life. This is equivalent to saying that he put into him a rational spirit, as is asserted of every man (Ecc. xii. 7). In this account the words "formed of the dust of the ground" well describe the process of

development of the lower nature under divine control. The animals are spoken of as formed out of the ground (Gen. ii. 19). The word in both these passages expresses forming by a process like a potter, and is very appropriate to the process of development.

In Gen. i. 26, 27 the words "make" and "create" are both used: the former applied to animals (ver. 25, etc.), and describing a formation from what was already in existence; and the latter only used when something new was brought into existence, e.g. ver. 21, where a summary of animal creation is given. The two words are used together again in the third account of man's creation (v. 1, 2).

Thus the Bible account of man's origin exactly harmonizes with what science teaches. As the animal nature transmitted from persons in whom it has been strong is relatively abnormally strong in the offspring, yielding to it, which is sin, becomes practically certain. This is how "the many were made sinners" (Rom. v. 19). But the character is not fixed in infants, except by a series of such yieldings up to five or ten years of age. For this reason, if they die in infancy or early childhood, the spirit, not having completed a fixed choice of evil, naturally goes to and remains with God; and there, under the influence of God's love,—not only as manifest to the angels, or even as revealed to the inhabitants of other worlds so as to be successful in keeping them from sin (Eph. iii. 10; Col. i. 20), but with still greater power, because they belong to the redeemed race,—their responsive love is made sure, and their spirits in the last day reunite with their awakened souls and bodies without any liability to sin or even temptation.

The salvation of adults is not by any magic power, but the Holy Spirit as a rational being acts upon our spirits like other rational beings, only more effectively and wisely, and in many cases coöperating with other rational beings,

as perhaps angels, certainly with human friends: and because the choice for evil has been made in partial ignorance and under undue pressure, He is able to enable our spirits to rise above the effects of the controlling choice and to make a new choice. This enabling of the Holy Spirit may continue for some time before a final choice is made; and we must believe that every adult human being experiences it, although the pressure or degree of persuasion must vary with the circumstances of each individual. When the spirit has been reinstated as the ruling power, it is not at first all-controlling. But the companionship of the Holy Spirit and the other good beings strengthens it, and this carries forward the work of sanctification, until the renewed spirit attains to a more perfect or comparatively complete supremacy. This is apparently never quite perfect in this life (1 John i. 8). The statement in 1 John iii. 6, 9 is, that he who abideth in God, or has been begotten of him, cannot be a sinner. It is not speaking of particular transgressions. If the spirit has once been reinstated, there will never again be a reversal of character, nor can there be again a choice against God. A loyal man cannot be a traitor, and one born of God cannot be a sinner as to his controlling purpose.

For a full discussion of the person of Christ we need to first consider the Trinity of spirit and of Deity; but the positions taken above require us to hold that, because he was in all things like us, he must have received a body and soul from his mother, and the Divine Logos in him must have been equivalent to a human spirit, in self-consciousness, experience, etc. Some hold that there was a Divine spirit in him, and also a human spirit; but this would destroy his likeness to us. The reason of this supposition is in order to account for the possibility of his suffering. But if the Divine spirit did not suffer, then there was neither a sufficient atonement nor a revelation of God's character.

Others say that the union of the two was such that both suffered. But in that case there is no gain in supposing two spirits, to say nothing of its being contrary to Scripture. The case is fully met by holding that the Divine Logos, uniting with the inherited soul and body, and taking them as its agents of activity in that connection, was so limited in its activity in that individual as to be equivalent to a human spirit.

We suppose that a human spirit is able to exist and act freely and perfectly like the angels, when freed from the soul and body by death; but while united with them, its activity seems to be limited by them, so that injury even to the physical frame, which is fashioned by them, hinders or prevents its activity causing abnormal or partial action, or even total unconsciousness. Similarly the Divine spirit united to a human body and soul could act only under those limitations, at least in that connection, and all its activities would, as a consequence, partake of human limitations, and be equivalent to any human spirit. This is not the Apollinarian error, for the reality of the humanity is secured by the kenosis (Phil. ii. 7) brought about in this way, while the essential Divine nature is not denied, but rather revealed in the eternal character, holy and loving. This also agrees with the Scripture which says (Rom. i. 3, 4), that by "the spirit of holiness" in him he was the Son of God, but by the flesh, i. e. his soul and body (see above), he was "the seed of David."

By his death, the spirit, leaving the soul and body in the grave (Acts ii. 27), was freed from its self-imposed limitations, which fact Jesus offers as a proof of his divinity (John x. 18); and then at the resurrection he again assumed the limitations, and continues with them, on the right hand of the Father, still real man although glorified, until the judgment, when he lays them aside as no more needed for the mediatorial work (1 Cor. xv. 28).

When he ascended, the material covering of his body was apparently dissipated, forming the cloud which received him out of sight. Although Jesus was then freed from the limitations of the "flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39), which cannot ascend to heaven (1 Cor. xv. 50), he still retains the inherited immaterial soul and body, and is by them limited, so as to be really separate from the Father as when on earth, and is therefore spoken of as on his right hand. But when his mediatorial work is done, he lays aside these limitations; and the discarded soul and body, not of themselves constituting a person, have no reason for continued existence, but "perish" like the soul and the body of the beasts (Ps. xlix. 12), which probably means, reunite with the common soul and body from which they were derived, or individualized by the act of beginning a new individual existence.

The mere fact of death, or separation from spirit, does not cause this loss of individual existence, because there is reason for their continuance, in order that in the resurrection the man may be complete, and they are kept for this purpose (1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Peter iv. 19). Although this lower part of man does not have personality, yet it has individuality; and a considerable part of the activity of the man in life being dependent on this, it may be spoken of as the man, even when separated by death from the spirit which has the personality (John v. 28).

The spirits of the good are in heaven (Heb. xii. 23), becoming strengthened in holiness by communion with Christ and all holy spirits, until, in the resurrection, they are reunited with the body and the soul through which most of the temptations of the present life come, but then completely subservient, so as no longer to be agents of temptation. The "souls" seen under the altar (Rev. vi. 9) are not the spirits which are in heaven and would not call for vengeance (Acts vii. 60), but are the literal souls, uncon-

scious, but figuratively calling for vengeance, like Cæsar's wounds. It is these souls of martyrs that are raised to life at a special resurrection at the beginning of the millennium (Rev. xx. 4, 6). In them the lower nature has been so subdued as to warrant an earlier reunion without risk of sin, even as in Enoch and Elijah a separation was not needed.

We see from the above considerations, which might be confirmed by a multitude of scriptural allusions, that there is scarcely a more important subject in theology than the Tripartite nature of man.