

The Constitutional Nature of Man:  
*A Study of the Biblical Legitimacy  
of Trichotomy, Dichotomy, and Monism*

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The constitutional nature of man is not an indifferent choice in regards to the different views that are proposed, but stand in close relation to the Christian doctrines of the unity of human nature, the value of the body, and its meaning of the resurrection. The doctrine has often been a confusing subject because of the propensity of theologians to ascribe a number of terms to describe the human body. Therefore, a study of the three views of trichotomy, dichotomy, and monism is essential to understanding the constitutional nature of man.

Trichotomy has long been a minority viewpoint within Christendom. But in the last few centuries, it has become a mainstream and popular view in Protestant circles. Trichotomy comes from the Greek words, “*temno*, cut” and “*trika*, in three.” It espouses that man is a three part being that consists of body, soul, and spirit.

The Greek word for “body” is “σῶμα, soma.” The body is the material part of man. It includes all the necessary organs that make up the physical part of man. The human body is the part that humans have in common with animals in a physiological sense. It is the seat and means of our present life but is not a necessary part of personality. The body is the organ through which the personality gathers its sensations and expresses itself (Erickson, 541). Though occasionally *soma* is used in regards to mankind’s sinful nature, it is normally used in regards to the material part of man.

*For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1Tim. 4:8)*

According to trichotomy, the soul is the immaterial part of man as related to earthly functions. It is in common with animals in regards to the basis for reason, emotion, and social interrelatedness though not as developed (Erickson, 539). It thinks,

feels, and chooses. Because of this, it is primarily related to the psychological or natural experience of the immaterial man.

The spirit is the immaterial part of man as related to God. It is distinctly a part of man's constitutional nature and does not belong to beasts. The spirit strictly refers to the religious nature of man and his God-consciousness (Chafer, 348). It enables humans to perceive spiritual matters and respond to spiritual stimuli (Erickson, 539).

Trichotomist admit that there are clearly many passages that soul and spirit are used interchangeably, but that the distinctions found in the Bible only make sense within the framework of a three part nature of man. In I Thessalonians, Paul seems to refer to the sanctification of man as occurring in three parts.

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Thess. 5:23)*

Jack Weigle states that the spirit of man is made holy at salvation, the soul is made holy as we learn righteousness, and the body is made holy at glorification (12). Also, the writer of Hebrews shows that our carnal desires may seem to be spiritual, but the Word of God can clearly divide between one's own sensual desires (*soulish*) and the spiritual side of him.

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

(Heb. 4:12)

In the book of Luke, Mary seems to make a distinction between her soul which uplifts God and her spirit which rejoices in God.

*And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. (Lk. 1:46-47)*

Her spirit first conceived joy in God, and then communicating with the soul, roused it to give expression to the feeling by means of bodily organs (Bancroft, 189).

The relation between soul and spirit is a subject that trichotomist have several viewpoints on. One is that the soul flows out of the spirit, distinct in substance but the same essence; soul is therefore a result of the fusion of body and spirit and is subject of the personal life whose principle is spirit (Strong, 245). Others hold to a dualism of being with a trichotomy of substance. The far more prevalent view though is that the spirit is quickened at regeneration thereby giving the person a godly presence and influence in opposition to the flesh. The soul would thereby be the arbitrator of such conflicts that war within.

Dichotomy has been the most widely held view throughout most of the history of Christian thought (Erickson, 540). In the first few centuries, there was debate between the eastern and western sections of the church over trichotomy and dichotomy, but after the council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, it was ruled the universal belief of the Christian church.

Dichotomy proposes that man is a two part being which consist of a material part (body) and an immaterial part (soul). The word comes from the Greek words, “*temno*, cut” and “*dika*, in two.” There is basic agreement on the area of the “body” or material part between the two camps. Since all theologians agree that man has a physical and

spiritual or immaterial nature, the question that is foundational for dichotomist is whether the soul and spirit are one or individual (Thiessen, 225).

Throughout the Bible, there are references of the similarity if not equality of soul and spirit. In the book of Job, soul and spirit are used synonymously to describe the sufferings of Job.

*Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. (Job. 7:11)*

Also in Ecclesiastes, spirit is used to refer to both man and best.

*Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (Ecc 3:21)*

Also in John we find that Jesus when speaking of the time surrounding his crucifixion uses both spirit and soul to refer to his inner turmoil.

*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (Jh. 12:27)*

*When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. (Jh. 13:21)*

In his book, *Christian Theology*, Erickson brings out the fact that many of the arguments for dichotomy are against the trichotomous position (540). In Matthew, Jesus states that the totality of a person is expressed as constituting body and soul.

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mat 10:28)*

Also in Isaiah, a soul is attributed to God, himself.

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

(Isa 42:1)

Dichotomists also argue that trichotomist support their position by the passages where a distinction is made between soul and spirit but do not accept other passages where other distinctions are made.

*And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mar. 12:29-30)*

Several insights can be gained from this verse. The first is that although there are four different aspects that we are commanded to love God with, no one would argue that man is composed of four parts. Also, most trichotomists believe that the spirit is the receptor of spiritual truth but here the highest exercise of religion is attributed to the soul of mankind (Strong, 245). Dichotomists object that if one follows the principle that each of the separate references represent a distinct entity you will end up with multi-faceted constitutional nature of man. Dichotomists therefore argue that when the Bible refers to soul and spirit distinctly they are referring to man in his totality.

How the spirit relates to the soul is a subject that dichotomists do not agree completely on. Some argue that spirit is synonymous with soul. The more prevalent view though is that there is a difference between soul and spirit in the area of function but not essence (Houghton, 44). Therefore in passages that trichotomists use they do specify differences but not in regards to substance.

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

(Heb 4:12)

The word pierces to the dividing, not of the spirit from the soul, but of the soul itself and the spirit itself: the soul being the lower portion of man's invisible part and the latter the higher portion which is receptive to the Holy Spirit. Also, the joints and marrow could not be separated having never been in contact with one another (Thiessen, 227).

Dichotomist also reject the notion that after salvation man's empty room (spirit) is now opened. The real state of human nature after the fall of man is that all of him is corrupt and that when salvation occurs mankind is transformed by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God (Machen, 168). Man is a two-storied house, with windows in the upper story looking in two directions-toward earth and toward heaven.

Strong states that passages supporting trichotomy may be better explained upon the view that soul and spirit are not two distinct substances or parts, but that they designate the immaterial principle from different points of view such as in I Thessalonians 5:23 (526). Therefore, the passages presented by trichotomy teach a distinction between soul and spirit, but do not specify the nature of that distinction in man (Houghton, 44).

In conclusion, the immaterial part of man viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism is called soul; viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible to divine influence and indwelling is called spirit.

The spirit is man looking Godward and the soul is man looking earthward. Man's immaterial part while possessing duality of powers has unity of substance (Strong, 246).

For the longest time, Monism was held by the Jehovah Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventist. In recent times though, Monism has had a resurgence in academic circles.

Dichotomy and trichotomy's points of agreement far exceed their differences: they both agree that the human is complex or compound, made up of separable parts. Monism is the true antithesis of these views. It views man as a unit and strives to answer the question of whether Scripture directs its attention to some part of man that is unique in essence or of his uniformity.

While the Bible presents many aspects of man: heart, life, mind, etc..., the Scriptures are primarily concerned with the totality of man (Berkouwer, 198). These terms show different outlooks that come from divine and earthly perspectives. There is not body, soul, or spirit, only self.

It is generally agreed that the Old Testament presents man as a unity. In 223 of the 754 instances in which the King James Version translates *nephesh*, it is translated soul as it refers to the whole person (Grider, 240). Therefore there is no specific doctrine that teaches that man has a body, soul, or spirit. Rather soul in the Old Testament is not opposed to the body but inside it (Orr, 51). Also, in the New Testament the soul-body distinction arises, but it cannot be precisely correlated with the idea of an embodied and disembodied existence (Erickson, 554).

This does not mean that monists deny the reality of a nonphysical part. Hoekema states that while man has a human body, he also has a personality. While he has a brain

which is part of the body without which he cannot think, he also has a mind with which he thinks (217). Man is one person who can be looked at from two sides.

Also in the views of trichotomy and dichotomy, the body is often characterized as evil. The Scriptures never portray an evil part of man as a distinct part, so there is no need to portray the body as evil (Griden, 239). Mankind is not a bifurcate that is constituted by two material opposites: material and immaterial. This is seen when Paul refers to carnality; he associates it with spiritual matters and not the body as a constitutional part of man.

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)*

Also, this is seen when Paul tells the Thessalonians that he prays that their *psyche, soma, and pneuma* would be sanctified (I Thess. 5:23). Paul does not view the body as of lesser worth, but in actuality exhorts the church to present their bodies to God.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom 12:1)*

Paul is not concerned with vilifying the body, but rather in seeing that sin is not the master of the body (Berkouwer, 205). There is therefore no need for the body to be brought into subjection by the Spirit. Thus the body is not an instrument of sin but a member of Christ.

One common objection to Monism, is its practical effects upon the doctrine of the after life. The monistic scholars themselves are not in full agreement at this point. The question arises that since man is a unit how can he be present with the Lord when he dies? Of course the soul is an aspect of humans, but that still does not change the fact that this “unit” is being separated at death if the Bible’s teaching is accurate. This is further expounded upon by Orr when he states that the body is not a prison house but is just as much a part of man’s personality as the soul is (52).

The first answer is that there is no afterlife until the resurrection of the body. There is no possibility of a post-death existence in the disembodied state. This is the view that is held in common by the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. Views such as annihilation and soul sleep spring from an attempt to explain this proposal. Another such view is that there will be temporary bodies given to believers until the resurrection of their bodies.

Both these views cannot be harmonized with the abundance of material that present an afterlife with God before the resurrection.

*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: (Phil. 1:23)*

Paul here implies that at death he will be immediately ushered in to be with Christ. If he had to wait until bodily resurrection, there would be no expectation of an immediate afterlife and would consequently have no reason to have the desire to be with Christ instead of alive on the earth.

*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Lk. 23:42-43)*

In this passage, the thief on the cross asks Christ to remember when he comes into his kingdom which is future. Christ comforts him though with the fact that rather than having to wait for the afterlife in the distant future that today he would be with Him in paradise.

*Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2Co 5:6-8)*

This is one of the most powerful verses in the Bible in regards to an immediate afterlife. Paul here contrasts being “at home in the body: with being “away from the body.” It is therefore a time between the resurrected state because he didn’t refer to being “away from this body” (Hoekema, 221).

The second view is that since man has a spiritual nature, he survives the body in death but is in an imperfect and weakened condition (Orr, 53). Death then is a violent and unnatural separation of parts. This seems to be the commonly accepted view of monists and gives them agreement with a literal interpretation of the Scriptures in regards to the afterlife.

All of the biblical materials cannot be systematized to yield clear insight into the different parts of man. This was never the divine intention. Rather, the Bible’s attention

is on man's relationship with God and not on man, himself (Hoekema, 203). Therefore, the Scriptures give no scientific or psychological teaching on man.

A study of the constitutional nature of man can be a confusing and exhausting subject. Much has been written on the subject, and a plethora of material exists of the topic. Much of the differences between the theories are a matter of terms or semantics. Because of this, it is agreeably difficult to come to a final decision. The best way to make sense of the constitutional nature of man is to begin with a study of the Greek and Hebrew words that cover the subject.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word, *basar*, is used to refer to the body. This word refers to the whole mass of bones, blood, organs, etc., which make up the animal and human worlds (Finger, 117). Because of this, the Old Testament stresses that our bodies place us in solidarity rather than highlighting our individuality. Finger brings out that this is why in the Old Testament one's relatives are called one's flesh.

*Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. (Gen 37:27)*

Also, *basar*, often refers to humankind in their respective weaknesses and frailty. This is done so that mankind's utter dependence on God is prominent.

*With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. (2 Ch. 32:8)*

In the New Testament, Paul developed a consistent teaching regarding the body. He uses the terms *sarx* (flesh) and *soma* (body) in place of the Hebrew word, *basar*.

These terms sometimes overlap. They both can simply mean physical characteristics.

*But God giveth it a body (soma) as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh (sarx) is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. (1Cor. 15:38-39)*

Also, they often times are used to refer to the whole person.

*Always bearing about in the body (soma) the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh (sarx). (2Cor. 4:10-11)*

Lastly, these two terms can often both be used to indicate solidarity with the individual and human race.

*If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh (sarx), and might save some of them. (Rom. 11:14)*

*So we, being many, are one body (soma) in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Rom 12:5)*

In his book, *Christian Theology*, Finger points out that when Paul spoke of human frailty and limitation he usually used *sarx* (118). When speaking of our propensity to sin, Paul used *sarx* almost exclusively.

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh (sarx), to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Rom. 13:14)*

This does not refer to simply biological drives but that which attempts to exalt that which is physical, visible, and measurable against God. Also on several occasions, Paul does

use *soma* in the same way as *sarx*. But a crucial distinction arises, when *sarx* means a way of life, it is utterly negative but when he uses *soma* in the same sense, it may participate in the new life.

*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies (soma) by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom 8:11)*

These three terms have the whole person in view from different vantage points. Also, the body is so integral to what a person is that to orient one's body in any direction is to orient one's self in that way (Finger, 120).

Theologically, life is involved in a conflict between two great corporate solidarities (Finger, 121). Those who choose to follow their sin nature are living in the flesh. This is unfortunate because the body is not enslaved to the flesh. Therefore, individuals appear capable of choice in regards to whether to follow the flesh or the Spirit.

The three terms for the body tell us much about the physical realm but little about the immaterial. Fortunately though, the Bible has much to say in regards to man's immaterial state.

*Nepesh* in the Old Testament is often translated soul. It is used to designate the organs of the neck and throat at times.

*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.  
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear  
before God?(Ps. 42:1-2)*

*Nepesh* always refers to the individual living being who has neither acquired, nor can preserve, life by himself, but who is eager for life, spurred on by vital desire (Finger, 122).

In the Old Testament, *Lebab* is used to indicate the core of the person. This word is often translated “heart.” It is used like *nepesh*, for desire and longing. It can also be used for a variety of emotions such as fear.

*And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim.*

*And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. (Isa 7:2)*

Though today we associate heart with the emotion and head with thinking, the Hebrews used *lebab* to describe everything that is ascribed to the head and the brain.

*And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. (Gen 24:45)*

Power of perception, reason, understanding, insight, consciousness, memory, knowledge, reflection, judgment, sense of direction, and discernment are all attributed to the heart in the Old Testament (Finger, 122). *Lebab* though doesn't refer to knowledge but grasps the deeper significance of what it comprehends. This term combines knowing and doing leaving no distinction. If the heart is inclined towards a certain action, it will happen. In the Old Testament, this is especially seen in the decisions one makes to follow God's law or deviate from it. *Lebab* therefore refers to the whole person in its feeling, knowing, and volitional functions as oriented toward or away from Yahweh.

In the New Testamen, *psuche* is usually translated soul. While it can refer to the whole person, his life in general, and his striving to remain alive, it most often refers to the inner deliberations and feelings (Finger, 123).

*(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)* (2Pe 2:8)

In Mark 8:35-36, *psuche* is described as persisting after death and the true life of the individual.

*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* (Mk. 8:35-36)

The conscience is another part of the immaterial man that is represented by the Greek word, *suneidesis*. In Romans, Paul states that *suneidesis* bears witness to the law of God in our hearts.

*Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)* (Rom. 2:15)

Even though conscience in the above passage refers to general revelation that all men have, in other passages we that conscience does not always fit with real knowledge.

*Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.* (1Cor. 8:7)

What we do find from both passages though is that it is important to God that one's actions agree with one's conscience. *Suneidesis* therefore refers to the entire person's

awareness of the harmony or discord between one's beliefs and one's awareness (Finger, 125).

The last term for the immaterial part of man found in the New Testament is *kardia*. It is the most comprehensive term for the essence of human nature and corresponds with *lebab* in the Old Testament. It indicates emotions, physical drives, will, and thinking functions.

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (Rom. 10:1)*

*And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; (Jh. 13:2)*

This then is the true center of the person that only God can penetrate.

Thomas Finger states that in classical rationalist philosophy, reason unites man; their bodies separate them (126). What we find from the Bible though is that the body unites people, but the soul distinguishes them.

Significant insight can be gained from a study of the words that are translated spirit. In the Old Testament, *ruach* is used to refer to natural forces in regards to wind. This word often is used in reference to Yahweh when he empowered a person for a special task.

*And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim. (Jdg. 3:10)*

*Ruach* also carries with it an anthropological sense. It is the dimension of the human person that comes closest to what we think of as will (Finger, 132). It does not operate

independently though. *Ruach* specifically is that part of man that can be moved by God's *ruach*.

*Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. (Ezr. 1:5)*

In the New Testament, *pneuma* can also mean wind or God's spirit. The uniqueness of this term is especially prominent when one studies the verses that distinguish soul from spirit. One finds clearly that to understand mankind's *pneuma*, he must understand the workings of God's *pneuma*.

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

(Rom 8:16)

In this verse, God the Holy Spirit is precisely distinguished from the spirit of man. Also, we find that there is a vital connection between the two that involves spiritual communication.

In striving to understand God's Spirit, we find that it is often related to freedom from the control of sin and the law.

*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

(2Co 3:17)

According to Paul, true freedom does not emerge simply through the actualization of some "natural" anthropological capacity; it begins when God's Spirit releases one from the otherwise invincible bondage of sin and death (Finger, 134).

In several verses, we find that man's spirit refers to that part of man that is dead in the unbeliever before salvation.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (Eph 2:1)*

The Bible repeatedly stresses that salvation is a radical time for man's nature. The Bible teaches that man was literally made alive at salvation from the utter depravity of his nature. This cannot refer to the body of the lost because it is not dead. Their soul also has the ability to think, feel, and choose. The spirit is the part of man that this radical renewal takes place at. Therefore, a biblical understanding of mankind's spirit shows that it refers to man from the standpoint of salvation and his responsiveness to the Spirit.

The argument that spirit and soul are synonymous is an admittedly difficult argument for trichotomist to answer. But when studied closely one sees that there are significant differences to be found in the adjectival forms of the two anthropological words (Weigle, 13).

We find that when referring to the highest part of the natural, unsaved man the Bible equates them with natural, sensual, and soulish and when referring to God-influenced part of man, it is spiritual (*of pneuma*).

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1Co 2:14)*

The natural man is literally the soulish person. This is also contrasted with the fact that the soulish person can not receive spiritual things because they require a spiritual outlook. These terms in this verse refer to humans in so far as they are open to the divine knowledge.

*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1Co 15:44)*

In this verse, the earthly body is referred to as soulish while the glorified body is from *pneuma*. Also in the book of James, earthly wisdom is referred to as soulish.

*This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

(Jas. 3:15)

It is clear that *psuche* refers to the mind, will, and emotions of man as related to his earthly, soulish nature and *pneuma* is the part of man that is spiritual that allows man to commune with God (Fitzwater, 309).

In his book, *The Bible and Spiritual Life*, Arthur Pierson gives three problems that he believes are unsolvable except by the view that man's nature is composed of three parts (117). The first is the impossibility of man satisfying the higher nature with sensuous things. Man's body needs food, air, and water to live. His soul thinks, reasons and therefore cannot find satisfaction in material things. His spirit was made to have fellowship with God. Because of this, man must know God to experience real satisfaction. The person apart from the Creator is literally restless.

Second, trichotomy explains the utter impossibility of educating men into being Christians. One cannot be a Christian while his life remains in darkness. The human personality must be quickened by the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is not generation. The soul has not had imparted to it any new faculties, rather man has been made alive by the quickening of his spirit.

Third, the difficulty of a materialistic and rationalistic interpretation of the Scriptures is shown to be incapable with other views. Paul declares that the Scriptures must be spiritual discerned in I Cor. 2:14. This reconciles the inability of the world's

greatest minds to grasp spiritual things. The deeper spiritual things are hid from the wise and prudent.

The study of the constitutional nature of man is not a purely academic study; it has wide reaching practical applications. It is especially useful in the area of sanctification. The dichotomous and monistic position can often picture sanctification as a period of training; it is a matter of controlling behavior. This is because since the immaterial part of man has been saved, the body needs to be trained in holiness. Whereas in trichotomy, the spirit was completely saved at salvation and the soul is progressively saved by yielding it to the Spirit's influence.

Also, the way a church evangelizes is greatly affected. In monism, the church is to be concerned in ministering to the whole person. This is especially comes into play in their belief that church needs to have programs that help out the physical side of man (exercise, poverty, diet, and health) to be biblically sound and effective (Hoekema, 223). In dichotomy, a more rationalistic approach can sometimes be used to reach the soul of mankind. In trichotomy though, it is understood that nothing can save a man besides the working of the Spirit. Humans cannot receive the truth in their souls while their spirit is dead in sins. Therefore, the primary concern is to preach the gospel and allow the Holy Spirit to work.

Since soul and spirit are sometimes carefully distinguished in Scripture, it is probably best to consider man a tri-partite being. This doctrine is important and has a far-reaching affect on how one views himself and his ministry. Therefore, it is necessary that believers come to an understanding of the constitutional nature of man.

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