

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 13: Anthropology: The Nature of Man

Systematic Theologies:

Berkof, Boyce, Calvin, Chafer, Culver,
Erickson, Grudem, Lloyd-Jones, Ryrie

INTRODUCTION:

We've spent considerable time already in our discussion of man as he was created, but there still remain a couple subjects worthy of our consideration. In this section we will consider the constitutional nature of man. Again we will observe how our beliefs in anthropology have significant impact on other sections of theological study, like Hamartiology, Christology, and Eschatology.

Q1: How ought we think about man's constitution?

Q2: How does our belief of man's constitution impact our daily living?

Q3: How does the immaterial aspect of human nature come to reside in each human being?

I. The Constitution of Man

A. Introduction:

1. Throughout history, the constitutional makeup of man has been greatly discussed.
2. Even to the present many ask: "What is man?"
3. Three views predominate: (1) Monism – man is one element (2) Dichotomy – man is two parts (3) Trichotomy – man is three parts.

B. The Monist View

1. While this is the view of the materialist/naturalist, for they deny the supernatural realm altogether, this view is shared by some non-evangelical scholars as well.
2. Monism asserts that man should not be construed as existing as a composition of parts but instead as a unity.
3. The monist views all of the biblical terms for flesh, body, soul, spirit, etc as mere synonyms denoting "the human being" or "the self."
4. They posit that to be human one must have a body and consequently there is no possibility for post-death experience in a disembodied state. So there is no possibility for a future life apart from bodily resurrection and no intermediate state between death and resurrection.
5. This position is prevalent in liberal theologies and several Adventists sects, notably Seventh Day Adventists who believe in "soul-sleep" in which they state, "the soul has no conscious existence apart from the body, and no Scripture indicates that at death the soul survives as a conscious entity."
6. But the scriptures indicate an intermediate state between death and resurrection:
 - a. Jesus' statement to the thief on the cross: **Luke 23:43** And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."
 - b. Jesus' parable of the rich man & Lazarus: **Luke 16:19-31**
 - c. Paul's preference "to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord." **II Cor 5:8**
 - d. Numerous examples of distinction between body and soul: i.e. **Matt 10:28** "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

C. The Dichotomist View

1. This view has held much support over the years...
2. It describes man as made up of two parts: material/flesh/body & immaterial/soul/spirit.
3. We see this truth evident in the Creation Account: **Genesis 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being [נִפְשׁוּת].
4. **Berkof**, “Thus it may be said that man *has* spirit, but *is* soul. The Bible therefore points to two, and only two, constitutional elements in the nature of man, namely, body and spirit or soul. This Scriptural representation is also in harmony with the self-consciousness of man. While man is conscious of the fact that he consists of a material and a spiritual element, no one is conscious of possessing a soul in distinction from a spirit.”
5. Even human experience and scientific inquiry realizes there is an element of man that goes beyond the physical... **Robert Culver** tells of an article describing experiments that were done by doctors treating brain-damaged patients, “When everything about the brain (including all its physical and mental associations) has been explained and explored, something inexplicable remains. The surgeon can make the patient move, hear, see, have sensations and even dream dreams. But the patient never believes that he does these things of his own accord. By stimulating the appropriate region of the portion of the brain, exposed by surgery, with an electrode the doctor can force the patient to lift his arm but he cannot make the patient *will* to do it... although [the surgeon] now can probe into the brain’s deepest recesses [he], still cannot manipulate the human mind... Scientists have begun discovery of the physical basis [instrument?] of the mind – the ‘seat of the soul’ ... but their work does not explain the nature of the elusive spirit who seems to dwell there. The scientists have discovered the switchboard but the operator, who is apparently there, is still beyond their reach.”

D. The Trichotomist View

1. The trichotomist believes that man is made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.
2. The first part is the body or physical part of man, something that humans have in common with animals and plants. The human body is just more complex in structure than that of plants and animals.
3. The second part is the soul or psychological aspect (reason, emotion, etc). While plants are void of soul, animals are thought to have a simple one. Personality qualities reside in this part.
4. It is the third part called spirit which is thought to distinguish man from animals. This is considered the religious element that enables humans to perceive spiritual matters and respond to spiritual stimuli. Spiritual qualities reside in this part. Some maintain that this element is a higher faculty that comes alive when someone becomes a Christian – **Rom 8:10, Jn 4:24, Phil 3:3**.
5. A good amount of this discussion arose from Greek philosophy...
 - a. It was believed that God being spirit could only interact with the material realm through a some third (intermediary) substance...
 - b. Similarly it was the soul that made the bridge between the body and spirit...

- c. **Erickson**, “To the extent that it is related to the body, [the soul] was regarded as carnal and mortal; but insofar as it appropriates the spirit, it was regarded as immortal.”
6. **Key Scriptures:**
- a. **1 Thes 5:23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. **Heb 4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - c. **I Cor 2:14-3:1** But a natural man [ψυχικός] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual [πνευματικός] appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. ¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. ¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men [πνευματικοίς], but as to men of flesh [σαρκίνους], as to infants in Christ.”
 - d. **1 Cor 15:44** “it is sown a natural body [σῶμα ψυχικόν], it is raised a spiritual body [σῶμα πνευματικόν]. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*”
7. **Arguments for:**
- a. **1 Thes 5:23** seems to speak to “three parts of man”
 - b. **Heb 4:12** seems to speak of dividing soul and spirit, so are these not two separate parts of man?
 - c. **I Cor 2:14-3:4** speaks of 3 different kinds of people: (1) flesh – non-Christians, (2) Unspiritual – Christians following desires of souls, and (3) Spiritual – mature Christians who follow the desires of their spirits
 - d. **Trichotomists** argue that it is the presence of a spirit that separates humans from animals...
 - e. **They** also posit that it is the spirit of man that comes alive when regenerated...
8. **Arguments Against:**
- a. If **1 Thess 5:23** represents distinct entities between spirit and soul then other texts would open the possibility for more parts of the human: **Luke 10:27** And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."
 - b. **Heb 4:12** does not speak so much to dividing soul and spirit as the word of God penetrating to the depths of soul and spirit... The terms utilized (soul, spirit, joints, marrow, thoughts, intentions) speak of the deep inward parts of our being that are not hidden from the penetrating power of the Word of God. The terms pile up to stress and emphasize that God searches our inmost being!
 - c. **In I Cor 2:14-3:4** Paul distinguished between a person who is “natural” (soulish) from the one who is “spiritual” but “spiritual” seems to mean influenced by the “Holy Spirit” – the idea is not that one group has a spirit while the others don’t... instead it carries the idea that one man is under the influence of the Holy Spirit while another is not.

- d. **We are different from animals** because our souls/spirits have been gifted with the ability to relate to God in ways animals cannot. Our difference from animals is seen in our being “created in God’s image” with bodies & souls/spirits that are capable of spiritual fellowship with God.
- e. **At regeneration** it is not merely the “human spirit” that comes alive, but the entire person is made a “new creation” (**II Cor 5:17**). **Rom 8:10** just explains that we lived as “spiritually dead” before being made “alive to God” – similar to **Eph 2:1**.
- f. “spirit” and “soul” are used of animals – **Ecclesiastes 3:21** Who knows that the breath/spirit [רוּחַ] of man ascends upward and the breath/spirit [רוּחַ] of the beast descends downward to the earth?
- g. “spirit” and “soul” are used interchangeably:
 - (1) Parallelism: **Luke 1:46** And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
 - (2) Life described as “body and soul” [**Matt 6:25** “psuche-life” & **10:28**] and “body and spirit” [**I Cor 5:3**]
 - (3) Death described as “giving up soul” [**Gen 35:18**, **I Kings 17:21**, **Is 53:12** (from שׁוֹנֵה), **Lk 12:20**, **Acts 15:26** (from ψυχή), **Rev 6:9,20:4**] and “giving up the spirit” [**Ecc 12:7**, **Ps 31:5**, **Lk 23:46**, **Jn 19:30**, **Acts 7:59**, **Heb 12:23**]
 - o In these references never do we see “spirit and soul” departing to heaven... just one term or the other is used showing the terms “interchangeable.”
 - (4) Both spirit and soul experience emotions: Troubled in spirit [**Gen 41:8**, **Jn 13:21**] & Troubled in soul [**Ps 42:6**, **Jn 12:27**]
 - (5) Both soul and spirit can “sin” – this contradicts the trichotomist who thinks of “spirit” as purer than “soul” and free from sin... **II Cor 7:1** clearly implies there can be defilement of the spirit... **Ps 78:8** speaks of those whose spirits were not faithful to God. A “haughty spirit” goes before a fall (**Prov 16:18**). Isaiah speaks of those who “err in spirit” (**Is 29:24**).
 - (6) Both soul and spirit can worship God: Souls pray (**I Sam 1:15**), Souls are to love God (**Deut 6:5**, **Mark 12:30**), Souls thirst for God (**Ps 42:1-2**), hope in God (**Ps 42:5**), rejoice in the Lord (**Ps 35:9**), long for God’s ordinances (**Ps 119:20**), and keep and love God’s testimonies (**Ps 119:167**).
 - (7) But so do our bodies! (**Ps 28:2**, **47:1**, **63:1-4**, **84:2**, **134:2**, **150:3-5**)

E. Conclusions:

1. **Erickson** elicits a view he terms “conditional unity” to accommodate biblical revelation... “According to this view, the normal state of a human is as materialized unitary being. In Scripture humans are so addressed and regarded. They are not urged to flee or escape from the body, as if it were somehow inherently evil. This monistic condition can, however, be broken down, and at death it is, so that the immaterial aspect of the human lives on even as the material decomposes. At the resurrection, however, there will be a return to a material or bodily condition. The person will assume a body that has some points of continuity with the old body, but is also a new or reconstituted or spiritual body.”
2. But his explanation does not seem far from what a dichotomist would purport.
 - a. In making a distinction between body and soul/spirit we do not inherently make a separation, nor do we charge one part to be inherently sinful and corrupt. When

Adam fell in the Garden of Eden all of man was corrupted (material and immaterial), and upon redemption all of man will be ultimately restored (material and immaterial) even if there is a temporary state of dissolution.

- b. **Grudem**, “We must at the outset make it clear that the emphasis of Scripture is on the overall unity of man as created by God. When God made man he “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). Here Adam is a unified person with body and soul living and acting together. This original harmonious and unified state of man will occur again when Christ returns and we are fully redeemed in our bodies as well as our souls to live with him forever (I Cor 15:51-54).”
 - c. **So while we are composed of distinctive parts, we are called to holiness as a “whole person.”** We are to “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit” (II Cor 7:1) and realize that every action we take in this life is an act involving our whole person... both body and soul...
3. **Erickson** offers a good analogy that comes to us from the realm of chemistry...
- a. In a mixture, 2 or more substances are combined in such a way as to allow elements to retain their distinctive characteristics because they maintain separate identities...
 - b. A compound on the other hand is a combination of elements where new molecules are formed. These molecules have characteristics/qualities unlike the original elements from which they are composed. Ex) Table Salt – NaCl ... you cannot detect the qualities of either sodium or chlorine but it is possible to break up the compound whereupon the original elements are manifest...
 - c. “We might think of a human as a unitary compound of a material and an immaterial element. The spiritual and the physical elements are not always distinguishable, for the human is a unitary subject; there is no conflict between the material and immaterial nature. The compound is dissolvable, however; dissolution takes place at death. At the resurrection a compound will again be formed, with the soul (if we choose to call it that) once more become inseparably attached to a body.”
4. **Implications:**
- a. We must admit material and immaterial parts of the human being.
 - b. We ought to think of ourselves as unities where neither body nor soul is neglected. We ought to pay attention to “Holistic Health...” **1 Timothy 4:7b-8** “... On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.”
 - c. Maturity is not found in merely neglecting one part of human nature. No part of the human nature is evil per se. So we don’t describe the Christian life as merely an attempt at bringing the body under control of the soul... both have been corrupted, and both will be redeemed. God is at work to renew us in totality. This refutes those practicing asceticism (denying natural bodily needs for its own sake).
 - d. We also guard against further tendencies within the trichomist view of man where the “spirit” is emphasized to the neglect of the “soul.”
 - (1) As a result intellect, emotions, and will can be neglected in supposed “spiritual pursuits.” This is most manifest in the “anti-intellectualism” present within many circles of Christianity. Remember Jesus commanded us to love the Lord

with all our “mind” (**Mark 12:30**) and take every thought captive to Christ (**2 Cor 10:5**).

- (2) **Grudem**, “Similarly, if we think of our spirits as a distinct part of us that relates most directly to God, we can easily begin to neglect the role of Bible study and mature wisdom in making decisions, and place too much reliance on “spiritual” discernment in the realm of guidance, an emphasis that has, through the history of the church, led many zealous Christians astray into false teaching and unwise practices.”
- e. Our eschatology includes a belief in a temporary dissolution of body and soul.
 - (1) **Philippians 1:23** But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;
 - (2) **2 Corinthians 5:8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.
 - (3) **Revelation 6:9-10** When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; ¹⁰ and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
 - (4) **Revelation 20:4** Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

II. The Transmission of the Soul

A. Introduction:

1. It is generally understood how man’s material nature is passed on from generation to generation... our bodies come from our parents, and their bodies from their parents, etc
2. But how does the immaterial aspect of man get passed from generation to generation?
3. Three views are worth mentioning here together: (1) Pre-Existence, (2) Creationism, and (3) Traducianism
4. The 2nd two have had numerous defenders throughout the history of the Church.
5. **James P. Boyce** explains, “This question becomes a difficult one because of the immateriality and unity and simplicity of the soul on the one hand, and on the other, because of the participation of the spirits of all men in sin.”
6. **Lewis Chafer**, “The question is not authoritatively determined, and when good men differ so widely it is usually due to a lack of decisive testimony from the Scriptures. The issue has always been one of personal opinion and not a basis for theological order and separation. Nevertheless, great issues are involved. At once the humanity of Christ is implicated as well as the whole field of truth relative to the transmission of sin, and to heredity.”
7. **While this subject lacks much explicit reference from the Bible, it is addressed in many a systematic theology... Why?** Because it has an inextricable connection with the doctrines of the soul, original sin, and imputation of Adam’s sin to the rest of mankind, and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to all who believe...

8. We will notice when we look at “hamartiology” (study of sin) how the origin of the soul is connected to our view of sin’s imputation:
 - a. Traducianism → Adam as Seminal or Natural Head
 - b. Creationism → Adam as Federal or Covenant Head
9. *Survey of our Systematic Theologies that speak to this issue:*
 - a. Creationist: **Grudem, Boyce, Berkhof**
 - b. Traducianist: **Chafer, Enns, Ryrie, Culver**

B. Pre-Existence

1. Some early Greek philosophers (e.g. Plato) held to the “transmigration of souls.” The idea was that human souls existed before being confined in physical bodies as punishment. These thoughts had some impact on the early church. Origen was a chief proponent of it and combined it with the notion of a pre-temporal fall. Scotus Erigena & Julius Mueller also advocated a system like this.
2. Origen taught that our present bodily condition is the consequence of sins committed in a previous existence... Erigena and Mueller also maintain that people sinned willingly in a previous existence which accounts for their sinful inclination now.
3. **Dr William Shedd** gives a clear explanation of this viewpoint, “The pre-existent life was Pre-Adamite. Men were angelic spirits at first. Because of their apostasy in the angelic sphere, they were transferred, as a punishment for their sin, into material bodies in this mundane sphere, and are now passing through a disciplinary process, in order to be restored, all of them without exception, to their pre-existent and angelic condition.”
4. This theory is much akin to the belief of reincarnation found in Eastern religions...
5. **Arguments Against:**
 - a. This view is absolutely devoid of scriptural & philosophical grounds...
 - b. **Ryrie**, “Orthodox Christianity has never held this view, for it has no biblical basis.”
 - c. This view also finds no support in man’s consciousness. We have no awareness of a previous existence (no memory) ... Nor do we feel our bodies to be a prison, a punishment enacted against our souls. Man’s typical experience is to be somewhat anxious regarding death and the temporary separation of body and soul...
 - d. This view denies the unity of the human race, most notably our connection to Adam – which the Bible describes repeatedly as the reason for our sinful condition... There is an outright denial of “original sin” present in this system...
 - e. It also fails to explain how God can declare everything “very good” (**Gen 1:31**) after creating man (if he was put in flesh as a result of pre-existing sin)...

C. Creationism

1. Those from this perspective teach that God directly creates the soul and unites it with the body at some point between conception and birth.
2. In this view, the soul is created pure, but is united with a depraved body, bringing about a corruption of the soul – pollution through contact with the flesh.
3. **Supporters Include:** Became the dominant view of the Roman Catholic Church... Thomas Aquinas went so far as to say, “It is heretical to say that the intellectual soul is transmitted by way of generation.” If Aquinas’ premises are true, his conclusion follows (but it is his premises that need scrutiny). Some reformers believed this way as well, most notably John Calvin who in his commentary on Genesis 3:16 stated, “Nor is

it necessary to resort to that ancient figment of certain writers, that souls are derived by descent from our first parents.” Charles Hodge is a strong defender of this view.

4. **Arguments For:**

a. **Scriptural Proofs:**

- (1) **Genesis 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.
- (2) **Isaiah 42:5** Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,
- (3) **Zechariah 12:1** The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. *Thus* declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,
- (4) **Num 16:22** But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?"
- (5) **Heb 12:9** Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

b. **Nature of Soul:**

- (1) Since the nature of soul is immaterial it cannot be transmitted by natural generation...

c. **Christ's Sinlessness:**

- (1) It is argued that Christ could be sinless only if his soul was created, and then being united to a sinless body – hence meaning His Person was sinless.
- (2) This view is posited to most firmly uphold the sinlessness of Christ. Parents may propagate a mortal body, but only God can produce an immortal soul.

5. **Arguments Against:**

- a. **Strong** explains, “This theory, if it allows that the soul is originally possessed of depraved tendencies, makes God the author of moral evil; if it holds the soul to have been created pure, it makes God indirectly the author of moral evil, by teaching that He put this pure soul into a body which will inevitably corrupt it.”
 - o Creationists respond by explaining that the descendents of Adam are sinful not by physical descent but by consequence of God's imputation of sin to Adam's descendents. Since God withholds from Adam's descendents “original righteousness” sin is sure to follow.
- b. Others object that this fails to understand God's present relationship to the world... They explain that God finished his “creating” work and now works through secondary causes to bring to pass His Sovereign Will.
 - o Creationists respond by questioning this dogmatic position. They posit that it might border on the line of Deism... They also do not believe that God's rest on day seven necessarily implies He has completely ceased from any creative work. Regeneration (a monergistic work) is cited as an example.
- c. Still others believe that this theory fails to take seriously the similarities manifest between parents and children in non-physical traits – mental and moral characteristics for example.
 - o Creationists respond as Berkhof explains, “This similarity may find its explanation partly in the example of the parents, party in the influence of the body on the soul, and partly in the fact that God does not create all souls

alike, but creates in each particular case a soul adapted to the body with which it will be united and the complex relationship into which it will be introduced.”

D. Traducianism

1. Traducianists (from Latin *traducere* – to lead or bring over) teach that the soul is transmitted along with the body through the process of natural generation. The soul and body of a child are inherited from the baby’s mother and father at the time of conception.
2. Only Adam experienced the “breath of life” from God... Eve’s soul was included in that of Adam, since she is said to be “of man” (I Cor 11:18), and nothing is said of a distinct soul directly created for her. Then Adam and Eve would bear children and propagate the species (bringing forth other “living souls”). The idea is that Adam and Eve would bear children who were like themselves, with a spiritual nature as well as a physical body – **Gen 5:3** “When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image...”
3. **Supporters Include:** Tertullian was first to state this theory, and it was well received in the Western Church early on. In particular it fit the doctrine of transmission of sin that they held to (more on this when we study Hamartiology)... Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, A.H. Strong. Dr. Shedd is a strong defender of this view.
4. **Arguments For:**
 - a. **Scriptural Proofs:**
 - (1) **God rested from His Creative Work – Gen 2:1-3** Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. ² By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
 - (2) **Levi was in Abraham’s Loins – Heb 7:9** And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.
 - (3) ^{KJV} **Genesis 46:26** All the souls [נַפְשֵׁי] - *nepesh*] that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six;
 - (4) **Both body and soul are rightly termed the Lord’s work, but through secondary causes – Psalm 127:3** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. **Psalm 139:13** For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.
 - (5) **J.O. Buswell**, “In our ordinary thinking when we observe such perfect uniformity and regularity in other matters, we usually ascribe the results to the secondary forces which God has created and which He maintains by His divine providence. For this reason, and for this reason only, I am inclined toward the traducian view, but I do not feel that it can be firmly established on the grounds of any explicit scriptural teaching.”
 - b. **The Unity of Soul and Body:**
 - (1) Man is always seen as a union of soul and body. It is more natural to consider both his material and immaterial aspects developing together.

- (2) Apart from the process of procreation, no children are born!
- (3) Reminds us of the ends and means of God's sovereignty. He is sovereign over the ends (the birth of a child) as well as the means (the necessity of procreation).

c. **The Fall of Souls:**

- (1) Creationism places God in the position of creating a perfect soul (He could not create a sinful one), and then having it fall in each newborn infant
- (2) Meanwhile, traducianism offers a simple solution – sin is passed from one generation to the next by transmission of a “soul” from parents to child. The sinful disposition of one's soul is the result of its inheritance from one's parents.
 - o **Psalm 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
 - o **Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

d. **Similarities of Souls:**

- (1) One does not need to look far to see many seemingly “immaterial” aspects of children to be held in common with their parents...
- (2) Not only can a child look very much like his/her parents, but that child can exhibit similar tendencies for good or ill...
 - o **Future generations affected by sin: Exodus 20:5** "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,
 - o This becomes a further discussion between “nurture” and “nature”...
 - o While some behaviors can be explained via imitation of parents, there are some actions that seem to be connected to hereditary disposition...
 - o **Berkhof** explains this view “... also seeks support in the inheritance of mental peculiarities and family traits, which are so often just as noticeable as physical resemblances, and which cannot be accounted for by education or example, since they are in evidence even when parents do not live to bring up their children.”

5. **Arguments Against:**

- a. Traducianism is contrary to the philosophical doctrine of the simplicity of the soul. The idea is that the soul is a pure spiritual substance that is indivisible. To propagate “soul” the child's soul would in some way separate from the soul of his/her parents... and does the soul come from both mom and dad? And if so is it a composite? Was all “soul” in Adam and then distributed among his descendents??
 - o The traducianist is not necessarily capable of explaining the “mechanism” by which the soul is transmitted, but believes this to be the best explanation for the similarities of “soul” found in each successive generation.
 - o **Shedd** explains that the creationist has a similar problem in contemplating the physical nature of man, “The creationist shares a common burden with the traducianist. For it is difficult to think of an invisible existence of a human body in Adam, as to think of an invisible existence of the human soul in him... There are difficulties attending either theory of the origin of man, but fewer connected with traducianism than with creationism. If the mystery of a *complete* existence in Adam on both the psychical and physical

side is accepted, the difficulties with the imputation of the first sin and the propagation of corruption are relieved.”

- o **He continues**, “Generation in the Godhead admits no abscission or division of substance; but generation in the instance of the creature implies separation of essence. A human person is an individualized *portion* of humanity.” – he believes there is no “philosophical objection” to this “division of human soul”
- b. Also the objection is made that if Adam’s sin is inherent now to all of human nature then how does one escape the conclusion that Christ’s human nature was sinful?
 - o Traducianists would explain that there are mysteries regarding the incarnation... We are told in **Luke 1:35** “The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”
 - o Chafer, “On the other hand, it is difficult to understand that a sinful nature which is attributed to all men and traced to the sin of Adam can exist, if God creates each soul and spirit individually at birth *ex nihilo*.”

E. Conclusions:

1. Caution needs to be utilized in this discussion (as with the constitutional nature of man)
2. Again we are warned away from the position of “pre-existence” – but the other two have pros and cons alike... The key here is to be careful about dogmatism.
3. **Hodge**, “The object of this discussion is not to arrive at certainty as to what is not clearly revealed in Scripture, not to explain what is, on all sides, admitted to be inscrutable, but to guard against the adoption of principles which are in opposition to plain and important doctrines of the word of God.”
4. *We’ll return to this discussion when we speak about the Transmission of Sin...*