

What is trichotomy? 2

The spirit is the organ of God consciousness. The Greek word used is *pneuma*. It is dead in the unregenerate (Eph 2:1), that is, dead towards God or separated from God, but resurrected in regeneration. In the spirit God places the new man, created in the likeness of Christ (Eph 4:24). We pray and commune with God in the spirit and this is the realm where sanctification has been fully achieved ‘you were sanctified’ (1 Cor 6:11). It is in the spirit that we are seated with Christ in heaven (Eph 2:6). The past tense of salvation is thus applicable to God’s work in the human spirit. The facilities of the spirit are conscience, communion and intuition, thus it is the vessel of spiritual apprehension.

The soul is the organ of self-consciousness. The Greek word is *psuche* which means ‘the breath of life’, thence ‘soul’. It is the seat of personality (Lk 9:24) and is theoretically comprised of the *mind* (Ps 139:14) or intellect, the *emotions* (Matt 11:29) and the *will* or volition (Matt 22:37). The varying balance of these three parts makes up the differences in human personality. Some folk are more wilful but less intellectual; others are more emotional but weak-willed etc. A proper balance of intellect, feelings and volition make for a well-rounded and balanced personality. However, the soul is organically indivisible, the component parts work together in unison. The soul is the organ which is being saved (1 Cor 1:18; 1 Tim 4:16; Heb 10:39). Progressive sanctification regards the battle being fought for the possession of the soul between the flesh and the Spirit. As a neutral vessel, the organ for self-expression of character, the battle for holiness regards which nature the believer will express, or put on. If he puts on the old nature, the soul becomes flesh (Rm 7:18); i.e. the personality of the sinful Adamic nature; as this is expressed then the body becomes ‘the body of sin’ (Rm 6:6). This is why we see the ‘mind of the flesh’ and the ‘mind of the spirit’ (Rm 8:6; lit. trans.). If he puts on the new nature, he will express righteousness empowered by God’s spirit. It is the soul which is the ground of the present tense of salvation, the salvation being worked out in us by God’s energy (Phil 2:12-13) every day. [The word ‘soul’ is also used for persons or individuals (Acts 2:41), natural life (Matt 2:20), disembodied life (Rev 6:9) and the personal pronoun (Jn 10:24).]

The body is the means whereby the expression of the self, or character, is manifested to the world. The soul is the executor of the person, and the body is the vehicle that complies with the directions of the soul; it executes physical actions. The mind, emotions and will determine what the body does. The salvation of the body is future, being completed at the return of Christ when it is transformed immediately (Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2).

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