

Amazing Grace! John Newton

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound!
That saves wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now I'm found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and trials,
I have already come'
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand year,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun ●t&dw

Who Shall Save Me From Myself?

A pill may save my body's health,
A safe preserve my worldly wealth;
A fire may shield from cold's cruel stealth,
But who shall save me from myself?

The fire shall dim, the cold shall win,
My worldly wealth all turn to tin;
The grave shall snatch this body's health,
Yet God shall save me for Himself. ●ejr3

Thought of the Week.

The man who proclaims an ideal to which he himself has yet to attain is not a hypocrite. The man who thinks he has arrived, or the man who leads others to think he has arrived, is absolutely a hypocrite.

●ejr3

Feature Article:

The Threefold Nature of Man. Part 1

For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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

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.

1 Thess 5:23

Doctors have been able to perfect various operations that require incredible precision at microscopic levels. Their scalpels are tiny laser beams, accurate enough to split nerve fibers. But the *Word of God* in the hands of the Holy Spirit is able to do what the most skillful surgeon cannot. While the surgeons scalpel may be able to divide the “joints and marrow” of the body, the Word of God goes much further, able to divide the soul and spirit, and do exploratory surgery on the “thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Although many theologians, today, may insist that the human being consists of only two divisions - body and spirit (*bi-partite*), there are passages, like the above, which suggest otherwise. It is true that the various terms for soul and spirit are at times used interchangeably, distinguishing the *incorporeal* aspect of human life from the *corporeal*. But it seems to me that it requires a great deal of rationalization to force other passages, like the above, into that category. In these instances, the soul and the spirit are clearly distinguished, making man to have a threefold (*tri-partite*) nature. Lets “flesh” this out (pun intended).

The soul is the animated, *conscious* life force - the *self* - within the body. Like an electronic circuit whose components are all specifically designed to be utilized by an electric current, so the body, with its brain and all its physiological processes, is marvelously designed to be *utilized* by the living soul. Together they are a functioning unit. The body without the soul is dead. The soul without the body is unnatural - naked (2Cor 5:1-4).

As originally created, this soul-body unit was entirely under the dominion of the spirit, as its head. Here resided God-likeness and God communion. Thus the

body-soul-spirit union, forming one complete being, was perfectly fitted to know and experience God fully, and to “live out” - to manifest - His perfections, so glorifying Him in creation. With the addition of the women, the perfect vessel for the fullest manifestation of God-love was formed in the marriage union. All was in perfect balance, and the crystal perfection of God’s holiness permeated all things. ...Then came the fall.

Like a rock through the canvass, the first human sin shattered the crystal perfection of God’s image. The perfect balance was lost. Man and nature became corrupt, and subject to corruption. Severed from God, the nature of man was turned entirely upside down. The flesh now ruled the conscious being (the soul), and the spirit became subject to the powers of darkness. The remnants of God-likeness - shattered fragments of wisdom, creativity, and love - were all now perverted to glorify man and to satisfy the flesh. *Pleasure, possessions, and personal exaltation* became the entirety of man’s world, under the “god of this world”, Satan (*1Jno 2:16; 2Cor 4:4;*). This unholy alliance of the *flesh, the world, and the devil* now dominates fallen man (*Eph 2:1-3*). This is the “natural man” born of Adam.

In this state, man views all of human nature as *mono-partite* - there is *only* the body. Everything emerges from the natural evolution of the flesh. All of man’s existence and experience is defined by “natural physiological processes” of his material components (and ironically, these processes of the flesh *do* dominate the soul and spirit of fallen man.) So rather than seeing the reality of his own corruption, and his lost condition before his Creator-God, man fancies himself as “highly evolved” from the slime of some primordial stew.

Faced with the undeniable reality that life in this condition is often hard and very unpleasant, many people do seek refuge in religion and philosophy. However, when the *natural man* delves into the spiritual, he merely seeks to substantiate the vain imaginations of his own heart (*Jer 13:10, et al*). Spiritually blind, he frames his religious or spiritual ideas under the influence of “*doctrines of demons*”, and of the flesh itself (*1Tim 4:1; James 3:15*). He then proceeds to boast. Deeming himself better than the *naturalists*, he takes great pride in his own “spirituality”!

It is clear that the human being is entirely at the mercy of God’s grace, if there is to be any remedy

for the human condition. The good news is that there is grace! The instrument of that grace is found in the *living and powerful Word of God* - the testimony of Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit of God, utilizing that two-edged scalpel, can perform the life-giving surgery - the *circumcision of the heart* - that severs the soul and the spirit from the dominion of the flesh, the world, and the devil. In this regeneration, Christ indwells the believer by His Spirit, God thus *sealing him as His own* (*1Cor 9:2; Eph 1:13, 4:30*), assuring that the *whole* man - body, soul and spirit - will be preserved until the day of Christ; then the glorifying redemption of the body shall bring about the perfecting of God’s ultimate purpose for man - a glory even greater than that of the first Adam at creation.

Next week, I will discuss the present dynamics of the body, soul, and spirit relationship in the believer. ●ejr3

Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute. **Profitable Servants**

So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” Luke 17:6-10

What a slap down for self-esteem! You mean that if I could keep all the Lord’s commandments I would still be an unprofitable servant? Does this not give us a defeatist attitude before we even start? The answer to both questions is “yes” - *if* we are looking toward our own promotion. There must be, in our thinking, a clear distinction between self-esteem and the personal satisfaction and joy of walking with Christ. Great humility and great joy are inseparable. Submitting to God and serving Him is the only pathway to true joy.

In addition, if we are walking in communion with Him, we will be quite cognizant that it is *His grace* alone, working in us, that enables us to do anything to His glory; and whatever we do for our own glory is but wood, hay and stubble to be burned.

In dying to self we are raised to walk in newness of life. We are then quite happy that all the glory and credit should go to Jesus; and our reward is the extent to which He is glorified in us. ●ejr3

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