



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“Man in His Nature - II”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we commit to Thee the study of the Scripture again tonight. We thank Thee that, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And that words are the means by which Thou dost communicate with us, while preeminently -- preeminently through the word that became flesh. Nevertheless, in words also -- the words of Scripture, Thou hast told us of him. Thou hast spoken of our spiritual condition. Thou hast reminded us of the work that Jesus Christ did in our behalf in becoming our substitute, bearing our judgment, giving us life and forgiveness.

And we pray that as we study the Scriptures again tonight, we may understand and may progress in the knowledge, not only of the words, but also of the living word, our Lord. We commit the hour to Thee, and we commit all who are present to Thee, and pray that the spiritual needs of each one of us may be met.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are continuing and concluding our study on the subject of “Man, His Nature, or Dichotomy vs. Trichotomy, and Creationism vs. Traducianism.” I hope this stays there.

And first of all, according to my outline, you’ll notice we have a word of introduction. Now, we may deplore, but we cannot deny, that contemporary society has focused its attention upon man himself, as never before. In a sense, we are living in the “Age of Man.” Now, we are living in the age in which men are thinking about man’s life, about man’s actions, about man’s feelings, man’s struggles, man’s potentialities. Men are occupied with themselves. Now, we deplore that society, however, looks only within itself for solutions. It never seems to look toward God. We are busy analyzing ourselves, but we are not anxious for God’s word to throw any light upon our human situation.

Well, this interest in man, and this tendency to find solutions in human reason alone, is illustrated in the explosive problem of abortion, politically as well as morally. Now, this problem is an explosive problem. As you well know, if you read your newspapers, it has become one of the issues of the present presidential campaign.

Today, I received my copy of “Time” magazine, and one of the opening articles in “Time” had to do with abortion. And this is just a paragraph or so. “This spring, George McGovern squirmed uncomfortably over the issue of abortion. After his opponents criticized him for favoring legalized abortions, McGovern changed his stand and said that the issue should be left for the states to decide. Richard Nixon never had a doubt. He has resolutely opposed legalized abortion, and defended the sanctity of human life. It may be that both candidates, whatever their moral scruples, are miscalculating the issue’s political reverberations.

Last week, a Gallup poll found that 64 percent of all Americans are actually in favor of legalized abortions, with Republicans more in favor, 68 percent; than Independents, 67 percent; or Democrats, 59 percent.” That surprised me a little. “Even Catholics, in the sample approved -- approved by 56 percent.” And they have been, as you know, strongly opposed to any form of abortion. “Three years ago, only 40 percent of those polled favored legalized abortion.”

I think you can see from this -- and I’m not trying to suggest that either candidate is wrong in their viewpoint -- but I think you can see from this, that our society in the United States is not at all, so far as we can tell, opposed to the idea of legalized abortion. Roman Catholics, as you may know, have been historically, very much opposed to abortion under any circumstances. Most Evangelicals oppose a liberalizing of our abortion laws, but surprisingly, many of our church groups favor a legalizing of abortion. For example, the American Baptist Convention -- the Northern Baptist Church -- has come out in favor of it. The Presbyterian Church in the United States -- the Southern Presbyterian Church -- has come out in favor of loosening our abortion laws. The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America -- which is the Northern Presbyterian Church now joined to the United Presbyterian Church -- they have favored it. The Episcopalians have come out in favor of abortion. So abortion is not simply a moral issue, it has now become a political issue. The issue in abortion -- if you wish to think about it for yourself -- it seems to me is, “Is the unborn child a human being? And if so, from what point? Is the unborn child a human being? And if so, from what point? That is, what point in his existence? Is he a human being at conception?” Well then, it should be obvious to us that, abortion would be the taking of human life if the being comes into existence at conception.

If, as Aristotle said, “At the end of forty days the fetus, providing it were male, were a human being, or eighty days in the case of a female, then beyond the eighty days, abortion would be the taking of human life.” The Romans felt that a human being did not come into existence until birth. And so, if that were the biblical position, then a Christian could favor -- it would seem to me -- abortion, because it would not be taking a human life. So that’s the issue. Is the unborn child a human being, and, if so, from what point in its existence?

Well, what are the solutions? All evangelicals agree with the principle of the sanctity of human life. Most evangelicals would also grant that they do not believe in the

sanctity of all life. That is, there is a distinction between human life and animal life. In my *Tim* magazine for today, on the “People” page, a picture is there of one of Leo Tolstoy’s daughters, who is now eighty-eight years of age. And Tolstoy, as you know, wrote *War and Peace*.

Woody Allen says that, “He didn’t think that these courses in reading were really so good.” He said, “He had taken one, and he read *War and Peace* in twenty minutes. It’s about Russia.” And so, Miss Tolstoy said that -- in this *Time* article -- she told a little story about how she was with her father once, and some other friends were there, and during the course of the time, he reached over and slapped a mosquito and killed a mosquito on the body -- the forehead I think -- of a friend of his. And they remonstrated because he was one who was not supposed to believe that that was very good -- to take a life like that. And she talked about how they all laughed because he became confused over the fact that he had done that.

It is said that Albert Schweitzer would not kill a fly in his hospital in Lamberine in Africa because he also had the view that all life was equally to be held in sanctity, and that one could not distinguish between human life and animal life.

Well, we have seen from the study of the Scriptures, that God does make a definite distinction between animal life and human life. It is only in human life that he breathes the breath of life, and that while animal life possesses -- is life, and an animal possesses a soul, that is, an animal has feelings, emotions, but an animal does not have spirit. It does not have rational faculties, or the faculties that belong to man, those things that are related to spirit.

And so all evangelicals agree with the principle of the sanctity of human life, if not of all life. And they believe that that sanctity is based upon the fact that, God created man in the image of God. Now, next Tuesday night -- Tuesday week -- we are going to talk about the image of God and man, and what that means. One of the great subjects of the Bible, actually.

Now, this sanctity of life is based upon creation, and it is based also upon redemption. Now, redemption has to do with the work of Jesus Christ in giving himself for sinners, but does -- this is the issue -- does Scripture or science enable us to rigorously prove when a human person comes into being? Can we look at the Bible and answer the question, “When is a human being a human being?” Or is there something in science that would enable us to answer that question, if the Bible were silent?

To be honest with you, I think the answer to that question is probably “no.” That is, there is no way to rigorously prove that a human being is a human being at the moment of conception, or at forty or eighty days of existence or life, or at birth. There is no way, as far as I can tell, to rigorously prove it. That is, the Bible does not address itself primarily to that question. I do think that there are some suggestions that the preferable answer to this question is that a human being becomes a human being at conception, rather than at birth.

Now, let me point you to a few passages from Scripture. Exodus chapter 21, verse 22 through verse 25. Now, this text has been controverted and good men differ over its interpretation. I will tell you what these interpretations are, if you are interested. If you’ll turn to Ex -- Exodus chapter 21, verse 22 through verse 25. Moses writes, verse 22,

“And if men struggle with each other, and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage.”

Now, that is what my text has here in the New American Standard Bible. Literally, the text reads,

"And if men struggle with each other, and strike a woman with child so that her children come out of her, yet there is no injury." (“Further” is not in the Greek text. It is in my version.) “There is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may

demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty, life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”

So what this text seems to say, is if -- if a woman is pregnant and men struggle with each other, striking a pregnant woman, and her children are born, then the person responsible may be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him. But if there is injury -- in other words, I presume, if there were any kind of injury -- if there were an eye damaged, if there were a tooth damaged, hand damaged, or life taken, then the *lex tallionus* -- the law of retribution referred to here -- pertains. Eye for eye. Tooth for tooth. Hand for hand. Foot for foot.

Now, that seems to me the plainest meaning of this text, but that has not been taken to mean that. Others -- and many others -- have taken it to mean this. Verse 22,

“And if men struggle with each other, and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage -- (that is, if the child dies. Miscarriage equals death of the fetus.) “Yet there is no further injury -- that is, the woman is not injured -- he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is further injury -- if the woman should lose her life -- then the *lex tallionus* applies. In other words, if that second interpretation were true, then the fetus would not have the value of a person.

When good Bible students differ over the interpretation of a passage, what do simple people, such as you and I are, do? Well, we go the Bible and study it for ourselves. The Bible possesses the quality of perspicuity. That is, it is clear. Now, if it not clear, there are two or three things wrong. Number One; we have not worked at finding the interpretation. We don’t really care. We want someone to tell it to us. And if he’s dogmatic enough, intelligent enough, or we have enough confidence in him, we’ll just believe what he believes. Well, a person who has that attitude is an incipient --

incipient Roman Catholic because ultimately, he wants the Church to do his thinking for him.

And that’s not only a fault of some in the Roman Catholic Church, that is true of Protestants and it is true of Evangelicals, because they like to gather around a certain person who speaks authoritatively and, “Whatever that person says, that’s what I believe.” If Dr. Johnson says it, I just think that it’s bound to be true. Let me assure you that, that is a wrong attitude to take to the word of God. You are responsible ultimately before God yourself.

I say then, if we come to these different interpretations, it’s because we have not applied ourselves, or we are not interested, or it is possible that we are living in such a way that the Holy Spirit has deemed it not wise to reveal to us the interpretation of that passage.

Well, now, that’s one place. Let’s look at some other places. We’ll pass that one by. I still think that the first interpretation is preferable, but I would not force it upon anyone. I may be wrong.

Ah, Genesis chapter 25, verse 19. Genesis chapter 25, verse 19. This will -- going to be a long introduction tonight, by the way, on purpose. Because what I’m going to say afterwards, I think I can cover in about twenty minutes, and it relates to this. And so that’s why I’m engaging in this lengthy introduction. Exodus -- Genesis chapter 25, verse 19. We’re trying to seek to answer the question, When does an unborn child become a human being?

“Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son. Abraham became the father of Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanarim, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife. And Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was barren, and the Lord

answered him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her.”

Now, there is a struggle between the two -- the twins. The struggling took place before their birth. There seems to be clear evidence of life, and as a matter of fact, this struggling is the anticipation of the struggling that will take place between Jacob and Esau later. Now, I’m not suggesting that Jacob and Esau were so rational at this point, that they knew what they were doing, but there is clear evidence of considerable life.

Let’s turn to Psalm 51, verse 5. Psalm 51, verse 5. David says,

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.”

It seems evident from this that David has understanding by the Holy Spirit of the fact that even from his conception, he was in existence and that he was conceived in sin.

Now, turn over to Psalm 139. Now, you can see from these passages that there is no clear proof of what I am saying. That’s why I said originally, there is no demonstrable proof to which we can point; only suggestions. Psalm 139, verse 13.

“For thou didst form my inward parts. Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance, and in thy book they were all written. The days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”

Again, there seems to be this confidence that he was a person, as God was forming him. He speaks of himself as “me” then. Again, only suggestions.

Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 5. Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 5. Jeremiah says, giving the words that God gave to him. Jeremiah 1:4 reads,

“Now, the word of the Lord came to me saying,” (now here is verse 5 -- page 1049 in my edition.) “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Now, the interesting thing about this, is of course, that not simply that God knew Jeremiah before there was any conception. He did, because you see, he had already planned that there should be a “Jeremiah” by his decorative will, and that Jeremiah should be a prophet to the nations. But he says, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.” That would seem to suggest that, when he was formed in the womb, he was a person. And he is saying, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.” I knew of you by my decretive will, and my eternal counsels. And I knew you even as one to be formed in the womb. And again, Jeremiah seems to -- in his text here -- suggest that he was a person at that time, in the mind of God.

Now, let’s turn over to the New Testament. Luke chapter 1. Again, no demonstrable proof, but evidences, suggestions, inferences. Luke chapter 1, verse 39.

“Now at this time, Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it came about, that when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she cried out with a loud voice and said; Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how has it happened to me that the” (By the way, “Blessed is the fruit of your womb.” If this were only tissue, as the Methodist Church has officially pronounced, the unborn child means nothing more than

tissue, then this does not really make too much sense, does it?) “And how has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come, for behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.”

Amazing thing. Now, if we are to take these texts at their face value, and not simply as figurative, then it would seem to suggest that there is some comprehension in this case, which would suggest to us that we do have a human being in the fetus.

Now that of course, is very, very slender evidence on which to base any strong theology. I think I would hesitate to want to enforce my opinion upon anyone because it seems to me the Bible is not very complete on that point. There is one other thing I think that we should remember though. That when we read the Old Testament, we discover that when God gave the laws to Israel, he not only required them to be very careful about the life of other Israelites and other people, but he also required of Israel, the most scrupulous care in avoiding even the possibility of manslaughter. In other words, in the Old Testament, the idea is given that the life of a man is extremely sanctified, holy in the sight of God.

Now for example, when murder is specifically forbidden, it is said because God created man in his image. That’s why we should not murder. That’s why murder is such a heinous crime. Because men are created in the image of God. And consequently, the most scrupulous care should be observed to avoid even the possibility of taking life. Not murder only, but manslaughter. And you will find in the Mosaic Law, rigid statements regarding manslaughter and the possibility of it. So in other words, if I were going to give the benefit of doubt to either of these views; that is, that an unborn fetus is or is not a human being, I would, in the spirit of the Old Testament -- I would give the doubt to the view that the unborn fetus is a human being, rather than the other side -- than the other way, in order to avoid any possibility of being guilty, even ignorantly, of manslaughter.

Now, John Stott who is a great Bible teacher, an Anglican, disagrees with this. He says, “It is not, in his opinion, correct to say that the fetus is a human being. We should rather say, the fetus is a potential human being.” And consequently, while very strongly opposing lax abortion laws, he goes on to say that, “In his mind, there is reason for the permission of abortion under certain circumstances upon that basis, that we do not have a human being, we have a potential human being.” So that the right to live is, for Mr. Stott, not really as significant as the living life of a mother.

Well, that is an opinion too. I think most of us would certainly sympathize with those who have to make the decision, “Shall we preserve the life of the fetus or the life of the mother?” And in such cases, if decisions were made to destroy the fetus, most of us in the fact -- in the light of the fact that the Bible doesn’t have a whole lot to say about this question, would not feel too strongly about such a decision. That’s not really the point at issue. That type of abortion has been permitted all along. The other types of abortion are the types of course, that men are concerned about today, because this has -- as you well know -- the loosening of our abortion laws has increased the incidents of abortion many, many fold.

What does science have to say about this? Well, so far as science is concerned, science knows no distinction between the fetus and the completed human being, other than development. As I think I’ve mentioned to you before, there is absolute -- at the present time -- absolute scientific agreement in the viewpoint that there is absolutely nothing in the fetus that is not there, that is in the -- the human being that is ultimately born.

Let me read you the statement of one doctor. Dr. Herbert Rapner writing in 1966 says, “It is now unquestionably certain that a human being comes into existence precisely at the moment when the sperm combines with the egg. From everything we know of genetics, it is proven that when the sperm and the egg nuclei unite, all of the characteristics such as; color of the eyes, hair, skin, et cetera, that make up a unique

personality, are laid down determinatively.” And I think that that is universal -- universally agreed upon.

In *Life* magazine, in its drama of life before birth -- the series published about seven years ago -- there it was stated, “The beginning of human life occurs at the moment the mother’s egg cell is fertilized by one of the father’s sperm cells.”

You may also be interested to know, one of the things that has resulted from Britain’s liberalized abortion laws, is that not long ago -- in 1970 -- a British magazine carried an explosive story by its editor concerning the sale of live aborted fetuses for scientific research.

Well, these are the questions. Is a fetus simply a piece of tissue that is a part of a woman, or is a fetus a human being with a right to be born? The right to live? Now, that’s the question. You know -- may I say a word about some of women’s lib and their remarks. And this is said in all seriousness. Most of my remarks about women’s lib are not said in seriousness, so I hope you realize that. Ah, I’m a male chauvinist pig, [laughter] and I want to confess that. I want to confess that, but one of the things that is constantly said, is that a woman has the absolute right to determine the future of the fetus. Now, let me say that that speaks of the spirit of rebellion. A woman does not have the absolute right to speak for the fetus that has been conceived within her. Her responsibility is to God. She and we -- we men. We have no such absolute rights at all. And, consequently, if we should speak that way, we are speaking in the language of rebellion.

Well, now we’re going to turn tonight, for the rest of our time, to the related problem of the origin of the soul. And here we want to talk about pre-existentialism -- only for a moment -- creationism, traducianism. The origin of the soul. This is our third problem of “Man in His Nature.” There are three theories of the origin of the soul.

One is the theory of pre-existentialism. This theory says that all human souls were created at the creation of the world. That is, when God created Adam and Eve, he

created all of the souls of all of the people who were ever going to live. And then, as men and women unite, and as generation takes place, then God unites the pre-existent soul with the human body at conception. That’s theory number one.

Now, let me say something about that, right at this point. Only a few have adopted the theory of pre-existentialism. Origen, one of the early church fathers -- an Alexandrian -- church father did. And one modern student, a man by the name of Mueller. Beyond them, that particular view has had little support. And since it destroys man’s unity, it’s a baseless theory; purely speculative, with no support at all from Scripture, not even suggestions from the word of God. It would mean, in effect, that the soul of the man were -- well, if the world is six thousand years old, or ten thousand years old, or twenty, or whatever it may be, it would mean that his soul is that much older than his body. So let’s forget that theory. Very few people today would even think of entertaining such a theory.

The second theory is the theory of creationism. This is B in our outline. Now, the theory of creationism is that, at the moment of conception, or at the moment of birth -- generally, at the moment of birth -- at the moment of birth, God creates a soul for each fetus. So it is a new soul, and created by God, united with the fetus at the moment of birth -- moment of birth. Now, it would be possible of course, for one to think of creationism as a creation of a soul and a uniting at the time of conception. And that I think is probably the most common Christian form of this theory. That is, that God, at the moment of conception, creates a new soul. It is united with the fetus, or created simultaneously with it, and thus, the soul is directly created by God, not passed on from the parents to the individual. So in that case, you and I being born, we would have the material substance of our being. Our bodies from our parents, but our soul would be derived directly from God. Creationism was dominant in the east, and it became the view of the Catholics, and it also was the view of John Calvin. That’s almost enough to make you want to accept the view. But since I’ve already exhorted you about -- about

accepting any view on the authority of any man, even a man like Calvin, we must look at what the Bible has to say.

The other view, traducianism. Traducianism is the view that the soul of a man, just as well as his body, is transmitted from the parents. So that you and I -- if we were traducianists and if this were true, we would derive not only our body from our parents, but we would also derive our souls and our spirits from our parents. Traducianism means to pass on by transmission. *Ex triduche* means “by transmission.” And so traducianism, is the theory that our soul is transmitted from man to man. Creationism is the theory that God, at the moment of our conception, or the moment of our birth -- preferably conception, the usual view -- God created a new soul, united it with our bodies. And pre-existentialism, we will neglect.

Now, let’s think about creationism for a moment. Since the Pope has re -- recommended creationism as sound doctrine, one might think settles the question, but it doesn’t really settle the question for us. What are the supports?

Arabic 1, under the theory of creationism, Its Supports. What can we say? Well we want to look, first of all, at what the Scriptures say in support of this theory of creationism. It is said by those who hold to this view, that the Scriptures support creationism. Let’s look at Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. And we’re going to try to think as if we were creationists for a moment. We’re trying to prove that God created a new soul for us at conception, that we derived our bodies from our parents. We’re looking for support, so we read here in Genesis chapter 2, verse 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 soul.”

In other words, God created Adam’s soul. Why should not we expect that to be a pattern for us, that he creates every man’s soul thereafter? Soul and body have different

origins. In the case of our body, it is derived from the dust. In the case of our soul -- or spirit, as we saw last time, because we pointed out that man is body, soul, and spirit. Our spirit is that which is derived from God. And so, then it would seem that our bodies should be derived from our parents, and our spirits, directly from God. As you can see, this does not necessarily say that. That is only an inference.

Let’s look over at Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verse 7. Ecclesiastes. Now, we’ll declare a one-minute intermission while we attempt to find the Book of Ecclesiastes, because not too many can locate this book in a hurry. But use your index. Just don’t be upset if somebody looks at you. Ask your husband or wife, as the case may be. It’s on page 946, in case you’re desperate and have the New American Standard Bible. Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes. Now remember, the Book of Ecclesiastes does not give us absolute truth. The Book of Ecclesiastes is a book in which Solomon writes as if he were a man who did not know that God had revealed things to him, and so he speaks out of what he sees in human experience. He says, for example, “Men die and they’re gone. That’s all there is to it.” Well, that’s true if we had no divine revelation. And so he speaks as a man who does not know God, and does not know God’s divine revelation. Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verse 7. Have we found it? Some of you are still looking. It’s all right. One of the deacons may still be looking. I don’t know. I’m not really looking. I don’t know which one of you found it. Have you all found it? Have you all found it? Okay. Verse 7,

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

Now, does that not seem to say that God created the soul? Well, it does seem to say it, but, remember, Solomon is writing of the things that he sees. And when he sees a man die, well, the body is there and the spirit is gone. And so he says it must have gone back to God who gave it. But the question is; Does that mean that he gave it at

conception, or does it mean he gave it in the Garden of Eden and has been passed down through the years? The text doesn’t answer that question. Thus, what appears to be a proof is not really a proof.

Well, I’ll turn to one more text for the sake of time. Hebrews chapter 12 in verse 9. These are about all the texts, by the way. There are two or three others that are not quite as good. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 9. “Furthermore,” the writer of the epistle says -- page 346 in my edition.

“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?”

The father of spirits. Does not that seem to suggest that God is the one who gives us a spirit? But he’s not speaking of God as the “father of spirits” as over against not being the father of the body. What he means is that, God is not only the father of human spirits, but he is also father of angelic spirits as well. And so this text, “the father of spirits,” does not mean that God gives the spirit at the moment of conception. The text may appear to. It is been called the classical proof for creationism, but it really does not. It does not prove that.

So let’s say, the Scriptures then are not clear on this point. What else may we say for creationism? Well, we could say if we were theologians -- and I’m trying to make you theologians, you know. That’s what we really talk about in this class. This is not a Bible class. This is a theology class. So I’m trying to get you to think theologically.

Traducianism, it is said by the proponents of creationism, suggests a division of the soul. That is, if my father is responsible for my body and my soul and spirit, then I must have part of his soul or spirit. And thus, we have a division of the spiritual nature of man, which is an impossible thing to think about. Spirits cannot be divided, but that’s not necessarily true because, when we talk about propagation, we’re not talking about

division. When we say, “a man propagates another man,” we’re not dividing up men. Propagation is different from division. So that’s not a good objection to the other view.

It is also said that our Christology -- our theory of the person of Christ -- demands that our spirits be created by God because, think; if Jesus Christ were truly man, then he must have derived his body and his spirit from Mary. And if he derived his body, his soul and his spirit from Mary, then he had a sinful nature, for Mary’s nature was sinful. So how much better is it then to believe that Mary is responsible for the fetus? The Holy Spirit is responsible for the conception, so that our Lord was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and given a holy spirit at his conception. And so, on this argument, creationists rest their case with the others.

Now, I think this overlooks the fact that the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ’s birth was by virtue of a virgin. It was by virtue of the action of the Holy Spirit. For example, the text of Scripture says, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee. The power of the highest shall overshadow thee Mary, and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Now, it would seem from that text -- and all I think agree, whether creationists or traducianists, that what that means is that, the action of the Holy Spirit was so powerful and predominant in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, that when the conception took place, it was a conception apart from sin. And it is by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit, that our Lord’s nature -- though Mary’s nature is preserved from any contamination from sin. In other words, his nature was sanctified before that union with the divine seed took place.

Now, if that’s true, this objection to traducianism is of no weight at all because the traducianists, if he believes in the virgin birth, believes that if Mary derived her nature from her parents, then in our Lord’s case, he was prevented from participating in her sin, though he received from her body, soul and spirit by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit. So it would seem to me that, the idea that our Christology demands that we have

creationism is not necessarily true at all, because it is the Holy Spirit responsible for our miraculous conception of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what can we say against creationism? Well, how can we explain the origin and existence of original sin in a newly created soul? Let’s just take Bob Nixon, for example. He’s sitting up here on my left. Now, let’s just think of Bob’s parents, and let’s think of his conception. And let’s suppose that he received his human nature, his body, from his parents. But at the moment of his conception, he is given a spirit by God. Now then, why is it that his spirit is sinful? For he is born in sin. The Bible says he’s born in sin. “In sin, did my mother conceive me.” Who is responsible for the sin? If it does not come from his parents, from whom does it come? From whom does the sin of his spirit come?

Well, you can answer the question. From whom does it come, under that theory? You don’t want to say it because you don’t think you know it’s not right. But what am I trying to get you to say? It comes from whom? God. Because you see, if he is not -- if it does not come from God, then there’s a time when he has a sinless soul or spirit. And that’s contrary to Scripture. Now mind you, God permits sin. He designs that there should be sin. So we’re not trying to suggest that God has no contact with sin, but this makes him the direct father of sin. And most creationists cannot handle this question because you see, if we say, too, that his spirit did not come from Mary, then he did not really possess everything from Mary. He was not totally from Mary, yet the Bible says he would be seed of the woman, and he would be of the line of David. And so he had to be body, soul and spirit from David’s line.

There’s another thing creationism cannot handle. It not only can handle -- cannot handle this question of sin, but it cannot handle the question of heredity. Now, we can understand how a fat man may have fat children. We say, “Well, that just pertains to the body.” Now, we can understand how a thin man may have thin children. How a -- how a man with a long nose, such as I have, may have children with a long nose. Those are

bodily characteristics. But now, if we believe that God gives a spirit at birth, and we derive our body from our parents, but our spirit from God, how do we account for those mental and moral characteristics that we notice in the descendants of individuals. Well, we might say, “It was by example.” That does not explain, however, many of the cases of heredity. It does not explain, for example, how in the case of my son, he is a very thrifty individual, because his Dad is not thrifty at all. And furthermore, I didn’t teach him that. It just came because my father was that way, and it reappeared in him. It skipped me. [Laughter]

As I said to some of you a long time ago, “Thrift is one of the most marvelous virtues in human experience, especially in one’s ancestors.” Well, it’s totally skipped me, but it reappeared in him. And he’s very careful. I know he’s going to take care of me in my old age. [Laughter]

Now, you see, if there were no real connection mentally and morally with our parents, how would we explain these things? We know that wise men have wise children, as a rule. Scientifically intelligent men often have scientifically intelligent children. Not always, but there is enough evidence of it for us to realize that heredity is not something that pertains to the body only, but also to the spirit.

So I myself -- while most of my good friends hold to the theory of creationism -- am more inclined therefore, to the theory of traducianism. This is the theory that, not only is our body passed on to us from our ancestors, but also our inmost immaterial part as well. So that my body, my soul, and my spirit are derived from my parents.

The supports. What are the supports? Well, there are biblical texts that support traducianism I think. Let’s remember again Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. Remember, “God breathed into Adam the breath of life.” Do we read that he ever did that again? That was the time when Adam received his immaterial life. Do we ever read of that happening again? What happened when he created Eve? Well, everybody knows that, especially you. You were here last week. You know that God said, “Now, we need a little

anesthesia.” He put Adam to sleep. He took out his scalpel, and he sliced a little part out of Adam’s side, took out a rib, and out of that rib he created a woman. Body, soul, and in spite of what some men say, spirit with mine. Complete woman. Complete woman. He did not breathe into the rib.

Now that, traducianists think, is instructive. Once God breathed into the human race -- into Adam -- taking then, Eve out of Adam. “For the woman is out from the man,” Paul tells us. He lets us know that men and women are derived from Adam because you see, when God created Adam, he created a species. Remember the text said, “Male and female, created he them.” And Eve’s name was Adam, originally. Not only did she become Mrs. Adam, but her name was Adam, originally. Man. That was her first name, because she was in the species. Supplementary but nevertheless, Eve in toto is derived from Adam.

Now then afterwards, in the human race, so far as the Bible is concerned, there is propagation by generation, and that’s all. Men and women propagate by generation, and there is no further breathing of God ever mentioned in Scripture. That would seem to be suggested to us.

Genesis chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. Do you remember those verses? After God had finished his six days of creation we read, “Thus, the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And 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. The God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.” Creation was over.

Now, if God still creates the souls of individuals at conception, his creating work is not over. It’s still going on. Creation has not finished. Creation is continuous. That seems to contradict this statement.

In John chapter 3 in verse 6, remember Jesus is giving some words to Nicodemus, and he said to Nicodemus, “Nicodemus, I don’t understand why you’re puzzled over the

new birth? Anyone ought to know the new birth. You shouldn’t be marveling over it. The new birth is no wonder. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” Now surely, when he speaks of the new birth, he’s talking about the fact that the whole man has been renewed by God. We are born again in our spirits and ultimately, we shall have a new body at the resurrection. So the work has been done. In the new birth, it guarantees a new spirit, a new soul, and ultimately, a new body. Now then, if in other words, that which is born of the spirit, his spirit has to do with the whole man than that which is born of the flesh. His flesh has to do with the whole first man, it would seem.

Turn back to John chapter, verse 13. John 1, verse 13. I’ll find it in a minute. John 1, verse 12,

“But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them who believe in his name. Who were born,” (Now, he’s describing those who are born again. And he says,) “Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

In other words, he says of us who have believed in Jesus Christ, that we are born - - we’re not born of bloods. We’re not born of the will of the flesh. We’re not born of the will of man. We are born of God. Now, it would seem that, since he is speaking here of how the regenerate are born, and saying they are not born like the unregenerate, well that would seem to imply that the unregenerate are born, as he says, “We are not born.” So we would be born of bloods. We would be born of the will of the flesh. We would be born of the will of man. And consequently, it would be implied there, that our natures -- our total nature -- is involved in our birth. Naturally. Just as in our new birth, it is to be traced to God.

Now, there are other texts we could refer to. Romans chapter 1, verse 3. Acts chapter 17, verse 26. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 10, where the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that Levi paid tithes in Abraham, so to speak, when Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. And paying tithes is a rational act.

So the biblical texts then, seem to suggest that the whole man is born when a person is born. And thus, his body, his soul, and his spirit are passed on from his parents. Theologically, if it is true that sin is passed on from one person to another, and that accounts for the fact that all of us are born in sin, well then, the idea that our spirit is passed on from our parents is most in harmony with the transmission of sinful nature. When we read in Ephesians that we are by nature children of wrath, that really means by birth. So that -- that best explains how we are born in sin, because our nature is given us by our parents. Our body, our soul, our spirits with -- touched by sin, are passed on to us through our parents. That’s why, from the time that we are born, we need redemption. So theologically, it seems to me, we must believe in a traducianism. Tertullian said, “The transmission of sin requires the transmission of the sinning soul.” And so we must believe that, it seems to me.

Physiologically, we could also say, “Man is a species, and in nature God does not create piecemeal.” There would be no evidence anywhere else, of any kind of creation in which the body is created, and then the spirit is created. And that would be what we would have to posit by the other theory.

So in conclusion, I think the evidence of Scripture is that our bodies, our souls, our spirits are passed on from our parents. Now, let’s remember this. One of our great theologians has said, “It should not surprise us that nowhere in Scripture is the origin of the soul spoken of as a separate theme.” In other words, nowhere is there any text in the Bible in which the author says, “Now, I want to tell you about the origin of the human soul.” What we have done is infer from various statements in Scripture, plus some theological and logical reasons.

Now, that should engender caution in our decision. The question nevertheless, is a very important one because it comes back -- right back to that question of abortion. If it is true then, that our body, our spirit, and our soul is passed on to us from our parents, then it should be evident to us that in the fetus, we would be most in harmony with Scripture if we were to recognize that in that unborn child, there is all of the potential of a complete human being. And thus, abortion might well be called infanticide, or fetuside, becoming an extremely serious, very solemn question.

So, you see, while creationism and traducianism is a very, very difficult -- and I’m sure you have thought, dull theological subject, it has some very definite practical implications for us.

Now next time, we’re going to pick up a happier subject; “The Image of God in Man.” I would suggest, in preparation for this, that you again study Genesis chapter 1, verse 26, 27, 28; Genesis chapter 9; James chapter 3; 1 Corinthians chapter 11. These are the primary texts that touch it. Genesis 1, Genesis 5, Genesis 9, 1 Corinthians 11, James chapter 3. Now, if you’ll study these for next time, I think you’ll get a lot more out of our time together. Let’s close in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word, and we pray that we may be subject to it. Enable us to fashion our lives by the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit in such a way that Thou art pleased with us.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.