

Knowledge and Persons

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[Note. Of historical note, there are a number of persons identifiable in the audience of this lecture. Clark's publisher John Robbins and his wife Linda. Clark's son-in-law and founder of Sangre de Cristo Seminary, Dwight Zeller. Clark's adopted Korean granddaughter, Rebecca. And seminary students, Mike Waters and Kelly Moore.]

There are other points also to be made, but someone is sure to say all this is tedious. Why so many quotations with their individual and elementary exegesis? To this question there are approximately four answers. Why do I quote, or why does anybody quote verse after verse after verse. Gets tiresome you know. There are approximately four answers.

The first is that the Bible is our one and only source of information on the spirit. For Paul, the source was direct revelation from God. For us it is the Scripture. W. H. Griffith Thomas in the book cited earlier makes some puzzling statements about Paul. And also some statements that strike me as false. "We must never forget that St. Paul's doctrine of the spirit is uniformly practical not speculative. It is conceived and maintained in close and constant connection with his own personal Christian experience." Let me read the quotation again. "We must never forget that St. Paul's doctrine of the spirit is uniformly practical not speculative. It is conceived and maintained in close and constant connection with his own personal Christian experience."

Now Kevin what do you think of that?

Kevin: I have more reading to do ???

Yeah, that's a good idea. Kelly, you have probably read it a few times, what do you think of it?

Kelly: I was curious what he meant by speculative.

Yeah, that's so... terrible word, needs to be defined.

Kelly: And practical also is not that well defined either.

Maybe not. Yeah, a lot of words that don't mean anything. Is that so? Yes, Mrs. Robbins.

Mrs. [Linda] Robbins: ???

No, but your husband held up his hand for you.

[Audience laughter]

Mrs. [Linda] Robbins: ???

Yeah, of course, that is so, isn't it. "We must never forget," he says, "that St. Paul's doctrine of the spirit is uniformly practical not speculative. It is conceived and maintained in close and constant connection with his own personal Christian experience." If in this quotation, the word speculative means philosophical thinking without a verbal revelation from God, the statement is true. If it means conjecture or guesswork, the statement is true. This is Merriam Webster's fourth meaning. You must remember, every noun in..., well I give... maybe some technical words in science, but generally every noun in the English language means four or five different things. And you will them listed in Merriam Webster's unabridged dictionary. And you have to determine which of the five meanings should be used in a given paragraph. And when you talk about conjecture or guesswork, this is Merriam Webster's fourth meaning for the word speculative.

If, however, Griffith Thomas means, and the quotation is from Merriam Webster, "the faculty, act, process, or product of intellectual examination or search." And that's Webster's third meaning. The statement is at least doubtful. And I think false. Paul was a learned intellectual man and he did a lot of thinking. Remember that after his conversion he did not immediately set off on a speaking tour. For some three years he went into the desert to reexamine his pharisaical interpretation of the Old Testament. This meditation had been initiated by Christ's verbal communication "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Without such a revelation, bright lights, and visions would have been meaningless.

Dr. Thomas next quotes two modern theologians, apparently with approbation. They both emphasize experience. I have heard many people emphasize experience including a good number of students. But it becomes clear that they do not quite mean experience. When I recommend the experience of memorizing the Greek irregular verbs so as to be able to read the New Testament, it seems to dampen their enthusiasm.

The first of the two theologians Dr. Thomas quoted said, "Paul's psychology is not a matter of inference, and certainly not a philosophy, but of his own personal experience." By the two words "Paul's psychology," I take it he means Paul's doctrine of man. Paul's psychology in the sense of his own mental characteristics is tautologically his own personal experience. But Paul's theory or doctrine of human nature could never have been deduced from his own personal experience. He had no experience that all had sinned and come short of the glory of God. It could have been a good guess, but Paul had no experience of all men. Nor could he have experienced his own acquittal, his justification, for this was a judicial act of God and is not an experience at all. And of course he did not experience the Trinity.

The second theologian Dr. Thomas quoted said, "Nothing is more certain than that his whole conception of the spirit was religious and has his roots in his experience of the fruit of the spirit in his inner life." What this second theologian said can be made true if his experience of the fruit of the spirit means divine verbal revelation. But the Scriptural phrase, the fruit, not the fruits, it's singular not plural, the fruit of the spirit does not include revelation. This criticism is all the more

serious because Thomas on page 88, I suppose I should say Griffith Thomas, he doesn't have a hyphen but he's known that way, writes, "Whatever difficulties there may be in the orthodox view of the relation of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, it has one supreme advantage over every other theory, it is rooted in a personal experience which has always proved its perfect safeguard against all foes."

This is actually a total rejection of Scripture, and it is utterly absurd. For, first, no one has ever experienced the relations of the Son and Spirit to the Father. And second, if anyone claimed to have such an experience, anyone else could reply, "my contrary experience is authoritative as yours." This subjectivizing of Christianity is its evisceration. You see, if you appeal to your own experience, another person can say, "Well, I appeal to my experience. Why is your experience any better than mine? Mine is better for me, yours is better for you, you know." Of course we based our thoughts on experience, but our experience is different. And one's experience is just as authoritative as another. An appeal to experience is a rejection of Scripture. The experiences of people differ. You must realize that.

I think it was early this year, if I can remember the painful experience, I went to a musical program. I think it was to compliment one of the musicians whom I wanted to give a little compliment to. But there were two girls who played a duet of a Bach fugue which lasted for 20 minutes. Now their technique was superb, and it is amazing how they could memorize a series of notes that were 20 minutes long. But the experience was very repulsive. If it hadn't been those two girls I wouldn't have gone. But I submitted to this very painful experience just because I wanted to pat one of the girls on the back. Now I suppose there were people in the audience that enjoyed the experience, I don't know how in the world they could enjoy it, but I suppose some of them did because tastes differ you know. And I've often heard people say, "but if you only understood what they were trying to do you'd appreciate it." And I've usually replied, "If I understood what they were trying to do, I would like it still less." Ho hum.

[Audience Laughter]

Audience: Not everybody likes strawberries.

No, they don't. I don't mind them. Not everybody likes olives, I think they're pretty good. Rebecca *[GHC's adopted granddaughter]*, you're making a face? You don't like olives, huh? I hope I never have to listen to a Bach fugue again.

[Audience Laughter]

Later on, Dr. Thomas presents a much more orthodox position. On page 251 he says, "The only guarantee of preserving Christianity in its purity and fullness will be the insistence on the supremacy of divine revelation in Scripture and the necessity of the Holy Spirit as its guard and guide." The chapter in which this sentence occurs, it's on page 251 if you can ever find his book, the chapter in which this sentence occurs is weak and wavering. And the sentence itself is open

to a weak interpretation. Notice that the phrase, "The supremacy of divine revelation in Scripture," that phrase, is less than the supremacy of Scripture as being completely the divine revelation. And here's another of those typographical errors.

Audience: ??? three of them ???

That haven't been noted?

Audience: ??? I found two of them.

Oh, thank you. And I read this three or four times before I xeroxed it. That's experience. Very, very fallible.

Audience: These weren't errors at all, they were just missing letters ???

Oh, well that may partly be the typewriter or maybe this...

Dr. Thomas' wording allows that while there is a divine revelation in Scripture, the Bible is not all an entirely divine revelation. He had previously said, on page 151, "The uniqueness of Scripture lies in its possession of the record of a divine revelation of Christ as redeemer." Well that is obviously quite heretical. I'll read it again. "The uniqueness of Scripture lies in its possession of the record of a divine revelation of Christ as redeemer." This wording anticipates Karl Barth's view that the Bible is not a revelation, but only a record or attestation of a previous unwritten revelation. You find this in Barth on every other page, you know. The Scripture is an attestation of revelation.

Audience: ??? write down what they think the revelation was?

Yeah, they're giving an account of their own experience, and of course the account itself may be untrue because a person doesn't always know what his experience is. If, however, one wishes to give Dr. Thomas the benefit of the doubt, the conclusion is that he failed to understand what he quoted from the two bishops which I quoted somewhere earlier. Emphasis on experience is dangerous because so frequently it is a covert method of denying the infallibility of the Bible.

Now can you, or do you know who it was that initiated this emphasis on Christian experience? Where did this emphasis begin?

Audience: Would it be the Pentecostal movement?

No, before that.

Audience: ???

Who?

Audience: ???

Before that.

No that..., you have something there, but there is one person who rather distinctly makes experience the basis of everything. All Christian theology. I think Wesley did misunderstand experience, but I'm thinking of someone who made it more specific and definite than Wesley.

Schleiermacher! Schleiermacher tried to develop all theology out of, not merely Christian experience, but particularly Protestant experience. S C H L E I E R M A C H E R, it means a maker of veils. His family seem to have been manufacturing veils from the Middle Ages, and they got the name of Schleier...macher.

Audience: He developed his theology based on experience?

Yeah. Now...

Audience: Protestant Experience.

Yes, and the humanists, maybe some others before the humanists said: but if you wish to be consistent, you must take all human experience. You can't just take the experience of a certain group. And if you will read Burt, what's his first name? Who?

Audience: Edwin.

Yeah. Yeah. You will see how he develops humanism out of Modernism. Historical account of how Schleiermacher had won, and then it was broadened and then finally became modernism and then later became humanism. And because if you appeal to experience you have to appeal to everybody's experience. For example, Schleiermacher defended the Lord's Supper. He said this is a proper ritual in the Christian church and the reason it is proper and the reason we should observe it is that it represents fellowship among people, and we like to have good friends and so on, and hence that is why we should celebrate the Lord's Supper. And so he tries to defend the right of the Lord's Supper on the basis of human experience, or Protestant experience, it would be Catholic too.

But as the 19th century went on, the followers of Schleiermacher found that they could get less and less definitely Christian material out of experience, and this is where humanism came in. So you get Edwin A. Burt, *Types of Religious Philosophy* I think it is. And actually his first edition on this particular point is better than the second edition. It's towards the end of the book where he traces the development from modernism to humanism. It is a very interesting and very accurate statement.

Audience: What's the name of the book?

Types of Religious Experience. Is that right, Dr. Robbins? *Types of Religious Philosophy*.

Audience: What about mysticism that Warfield writes on?

Well that's another experience. But the trouble is, you can't get anything out of mysticism. You have certain visions, or you're in a trance, and Plotinus made it quite clear that you never learn anything, you don't get any information at all, you don't improve in philosophy a bit by having this experience. And Plotinus claimed to have had this experience. Well, let's say, Porphyry reported that Plotinus had this experience six times in the four years he was with him, a student under him. But, Plotinus never claimed that the experience gave him any information. He was just merged into the One and that was it.

Audience: I was thinking of MacDonald's church, Irvingites. Mary MacDonald and the vision she got on the second coming of Christ.

I don't know that. Who's MacDonald?

Audience: Well, there was a MacDonald family. There was with two sisters and two brothers in England. Irving, the Irvingites come out of that.

Then these people were about 1800 or before? Well I thought Irving sort of developed it on his own. Yes, Irving brought glossolalia in, approximately 1830. Roughly, I just don't know what date. Well, we'll continue.

Several paragraphs ago we started to give approximately four answers to the question, why so many Bible verses are so tediously quoted? The first answer was that the Bible is our sole source of information. The second answer will not really be an answer. It is a negative and minus quantity. This quotations do not aim to convince liberal theologians that the Spirit is a person. The more liberal they are, the more likely they are to agree that this is what the Bible teaches, only the Bible is wrong as usual. On the positive side, one may hope that these numerous quotations may convince people who still respect the Bible, but who have advanced heretical theses either unwittingly or by perverse interpretation.

Though it is doubtful that the leaders of The Way will be convinced, some of their followers may be, for their followers their followers have not studied the Scriptures very carefully. Conversely, there are church members who have accepted orthodox doctrine at second hand and therefore really know little of the Biblical basis. One hopes that extended quotation in their case will be more stimulating than tedious.

Let me ask you this. That was the third reason. I'm giving four... Well, you can check on it later.

Audience: What page?

Oh this is page 29a. Now I'd like to ask you a question. How long has it been since you've heard a sermon on the Trinity. Anybody want to tell me? You can't remember.

Audience: You asked us this last year. And we still couldn't figure it out.

What is it Beth?

Audience: This is what you asked us this last year.

Oh, did I ask you this last year? Well, I'll ask it again.

Audience: Well obviously not very often.

Audience: 4 years ago.

Good. I only remember one sermon on the Trinity. Of course I don't remember every sermon I've heard over a period of time. But I can certainly say over the past 30 years I have only heard one sermon on the Trinity. I turned on the radio one Sunday. I don't know if it was Sunday morning or not. May not have been. They have sermons other times. And I got into the middle of a sermon. And I listened, and I said, "My that's sort of interesting. That is much better than most of these sermons on the radio are. I might listen some more. Well, I wonder who is doing this preaching." And it got better and better. And it was a fine, powerful sermon on the Trinity and I said I want to find out who this man is who's preaching. And so I listened till the end and found out at the end that he was a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church. But I haven't heard any Protestants speak on the Trinity. That's the basis of Christianity. You might think that an evangelical Protestant might preach on the Trinity at least once in his life, but I haven't heard him.

Well, I may have told you that last year but there are some people here now that weren't here then. I don't mind telling it again.

There are also, now this is the fourth reason for perhaps boring you with perhaps too many Scripture passages. There are also preachers, especially young preachers, who have difficulties in preparing sermons every week. These pastors could use much of this material and make a sermon out of it. Nothing wrong in that. But there is also an additional possibility. The young pastor might choose a verse for a textual sermon, not all sermons should be textual but some can be perfectly legitimate. The young pastor might choose a verse for a textual sermon or a passage for an expository sermon and might find something here in this discussion of the Holy Spirit, to fill it out. The personality of the Spirit need not be his main topic. But he can show how

the passage can be applied in various ways. And even if the sermon is mainly on the journey's of Paul, he can refer to the Spirit by whom Agabus gave the warning.

There is also a not-too-complimentary fifth reason. Seminary students do not often take the trouble of looking up citations. The best way to provide them with what they need is to encumber the volume with a plethora of pertinent passages. Prior to some verses which teach the personality of the Spirit, not by his ability to speak but in other ways, it would be helpful to somewhat define the term *person*.

This is more necessary in the doctrine of the Trinity. And I once wrote a treatise on the Trinity which a publisher made a promise to me to be ready in a year and to find out it comes three years afterward.

[Audience Laughter]

Audience: Good enough for government work.

In this book, a treatise on the Trinity, one asks, "How can three persons be one substance?" To answer this question one ought to define the two main terms. So far as the first term is concerned, most orthodox theologians have defined or partially defined personality as...

Audience: Beg your pardon?

Audience: Do you want us to write this down? Or are you going to give us your definition of personality? Not the rest of the theologians.

That isn't either/or. It is both/and.

Audience: ???

Yeah, see logic controls this. And when you try to escape from logic, I'll trip you up.

Audience: Even if we take the existential ???

That's a 2000 foot cliff with sharp rocks at the bottom. I might ask two questions. Have you read in any contemporary or rather recent books on theology or Christian material, have you ever read any definition of a person? Well, yeah, maybe you know what I'm going to say. You're a little ahead of some of the others in the class. Kelly?

Audience (Kelly): Not that I can recall.

Mike, No?

Audience (Mike): Not off hand.

Mr. Hamilton?

Audience (Mr. Hamilton): You didn't expect us to read did you?

Yeah, you're interested in theology, you must have read something.

Audience: ???

Good, good. Yeah, you've read that. That's fine.

Now, let me ask, is that the standard position of the Reformation? You're not sure?

Audience: I don't think so.

You don't think so.

Audience: No, not from reading, what was read, at least ??? a lot about power also.

Maybe. Well, I'll continue. So far as the first term is concerned, most orthodox theologians have defined or partially defined personality as consisting in intellect and volition, period! For instance, John Gill, *A Body of Divinity*, and you can get this because Jay Green has published it in Sovereign Grace edition 1971.

Audience: It is also being publishing...

Again?

Audience: Again, in paperback.

Seems strange that you should have it published twice so soon, but all right, fine. John Gill, *A Body of Divinity*, Sovereign Grace edition 1971, chapter 31, page 167, column 1 says, "A person subsists and lives of itself, is endowed with will and understanding or is a willing and intelligent agent."

Audience: Please read that again.

Well the point is he defines a person as a being endowed with will and understanding. Well, we'll see. Similarly, speaking of a human person, Jonathan Edwards wrote, "God has endued the soul with two principle faculties, the one that by which it is capable of perception and

speculation, or by which it discerns and judges things, which is called the understanding. The other, that by which the soul is in some way inclined, this faculty is called will. Mind often called heart.” That’s not a complete quotation, I’ve put three dots here and there. I just picked out see...

The Lutheran theologian, Pieper also mentions intellect and will. You’ll find this in his book called Christian Dogmatics. On page 519. He was a Lutheran theologian. And so he defines personality as intellect and will.

Audience: ???

Pieper. P I E P E R. I forget his first name, somewhere around here.

Hodge, this should be volume..., Hodge volume 1, page 523 says, “The Scriptures clearly teach that he is a person. Personality includes intelligence, will, and individual subsistence.” It is not clear what Hodge means by “subsistence.” Theologians have often used this term subsistence, but the meaning is hardly, if ever clarified.

Walvoord, who I guess is still living, down in Dallas, defines personality “as containing the essential elements of intellect, sensibility, and will. All these elements can be found in the Holy Spirit. His sensibility is revealed in that the Spirit can be grieved by sin.” And he refers to Ephesians 4:30 and that’s the end of the quotation. Now what am I going to say about Walvoord? Can’t you anticipate? Ho hum.

Audience: He’s one step further.

Two notes are needed. First, if sensibility includes sensation, and I don’t know how sensibility can avoid including sensation, what does the word come from? It must be denied to the Spirit. He has no sense organs. He’s not corporeal. He has no eyes, ears, or nose. If, nonetheless, the Spirit grieves, as Ephesians 4:30 says, the verse must be taken as an anthropopathism. And it is a little strange, though very common... most people are not disturbed or misled by the anthropomorphisms of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. But they are awfully disturbed and upset by the anthropopathisms. And yet the principle is the same. If you attribute hands and arms to God, as the Scripture does, and if the Scripture says that God’s eyes run over hill and dale on little feet, people are not too bothered. But if human passions are ascribed to God, they think that this is literally true. It is no more literally true than when hands and arms are ascribed to God.

Audience: So when he in the Old Testaments talks about God laughs, is that a case?

That would be an anthropopathism.

Audience: ???

Yeah, that's right. That's right.

Audience: I have to think about that. ??? How do you describe what Jesus went through when he cleared the temple?

Jesus had a human nature. The Trinity doesn't. See, he's two natures in one Person forever. You're talking about the incarnate Jesus.

Audience: But does God love then?

What is love? Aside from God's love, people talk about human love. You must love people. And you know love is one of the virtues. I don't remember any minister ever defining love. I do remember a minister who began his sermon by saying, "This morning I'm going to preach to preach on love. Of course I can't definite it, but I'm going to talk about it anyway." That's just about what he said. And of course what he said was half right and half wrong. But why didn't he define it? The New Testament defines love, but people never notice it, notice the definition. There are at least, the definition occurs at least twice in the New Testament and maybe more times by implication. But the people who talk about love just don't know what love is, Christian love that is. No love in some other sense. Now you look through the Scripture and find two places where the Scripture explicitly defines love. No.

Audience: What are they then? First John 4 talks about love.

I didn't say there were only two places where the Scripture talks about love. I said there are two places where the Scripture defines love. Look, I may say "a triangle is one of the things you study in geometry." That's true, but that's not a definition of a triangle.

Audience: Would you define it by saying what it is, and what it isn't.

Well we better say what it is.

Audience: Well, First Corinthians 13...

No it doesn't!

Audience: First John 4 is the love of God and then it goes on.

That's no definition either.

Audience: What about 13, it tells you what love is.

No it doesn't.

Audience: It doesn't give it an explicit definition.

Exactly. It doesn't define the term. Suppose I tell you, "Rembrandt's paintings are wonderful." Well that doesn't really give you any notion of the difference between Rembrandt and Rubens or something. That's not a definition of Rembrandt's art. It may be a true statement, but it's not a definition. Not every true statement is a definition. I can say an ocotillo is not beautiful, but that doesn't tell you it's not a cactus.

Audience: If you said it has what appears to be no true leaves.

Oh, that is part of the definition, yes.

Audience: Well, when they say love is in 1st Corinthians 13, he's talking, love is not jealous and...

Well I can say a dog is a nice pet, but that doesn't distinguish between a dog and cat. It may be perfectly true that a dog is a nice pet. I like dogs, I'm fond of them. But to say a dog is a nice pet isn't to tell what a dog is.

Audience: Well, we got on this whole subject, whether love is a feeling or not.

Yes.

Audience: Whether God has feelings.

That's why I say you must find a definition. And there are at least two places in the New Testament which explicitly define love.

Audience: Romans 13:1 Love is the fulfilling of law.

Precisely! That's it.

Audience: That doesn't tell you what love is though.

Yes, that is. That is what love is.

Audience: That is the same thing as 1st Corinthians 13.

No.

Audience: Let me say this. God also hates. And the definition of hate is in Psalms 55.

Maybe, I don't know.

Audience: That is an emotion.

[Audience laughter]

Audience: Is it not?

No. Christian love is not an emotion. It is a volition.

Audience: An act of will.

And act of will, yes. Because you cannot command emotion. They take off at all ridiculous ways. And when you are commanded to love, obviously love must be a volition. And the volition is "to obey the law." Love is obedience to the law.

Audience: Do you feel that emotions are good or bad?

Bad. Doesn't the Apostle Paul say "suppress your emotions"?

Audience: Then we should all be Stoic?

Huh? Well, not Stoics, no.

Audience: I don't think emotions are bad.

You don't? Well if you ever become the pastor of a church I think you may conclude that. Nearly all the church fights arise out of emotions.

Audience: I'm not talking about general emotions. I'm talking about, you know ok, there are emotions that are evil. Those should be suppressed. But there are others, such as love...

Love isn't an emotion. It's a volition!

Audience: You're talking about loving your wife which we are commanded to ???

And what is that command?

Audience: Love her. Protect her as Christ...

Well that isn't an emotion. That's a volition. That is a determination of something you're going to do.

Palmer stresses man's need of regeneration because of total depravity. Well and good, but to substantiate man's sinfulness after speaking of man's intellect and will, he adds, "And as far as his emotions are concerned, he cannot love God because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, Romans 8:7." That an unregenerate man cannot love God is indubitably true, but the mind of the flesh is not the emotions. The history of orthodox theology, at least from Augustine on, teaches that love is a volition, not an emotion. Paul himself has small respect for emotion.

Audience: ??? back over again to what you said?

In Colorado, oh no this is Colossians.

[Audience Laughter]

In Colossians 3:5...

[Audience Laughter]

Audience: Colorado 3:5.

Audience: Maybe that is a highway number.

Well, it's C O L.

In Colossians 3:5, he says "mortify therefore your members which are upon earth. Fornication, uncleanness, *pathos*, inordinate affections" and so on. The NAS translates the last two words as "evil desire." Desire may or [may] not be an emotion. Fornication and uncleanness seem to be emotions, and *pathos* surely is. The NAS translates it "passion," the English cognate. Arndt and Gingrich give "suffering" which makes no sense in this verse, and then add "passion, especially of a sexual nature," also anger. The supreme of all lexicons, who Dwight's discussed, Liddell and Scott, has "accident, experience, misfortune, death." None of these make sense in this verse, but the continuation is emotion, that is the continuation in Liddell and Scott, emotion, passion, sensation, and in literature, emotional style. Paul therefore instructs us to suppress our emotions and if so, love is not an emotion. It is a volition. Palmer himself escapes nearly all the religious deterioration this misinterpretation has so widely caused in recent years. But the congregation subjected to semi-Christian psychologies need constant warnings.