

The Nature and Disposition of the Human Spirit

By Tom Plumb

Disclaimer: The purpose of this article is to re-state proven Wesleyan truths that have been seen to work, not create another alternative gospel. There have been enough of those already.

The Problem

You see God was alone in a Heaven He had created, surrounded by creatures that He had created and trained. He was all in all, and nothing was apart from Him who was ALL.

Now as we all know domesticated horses and dogs are very good, but not adequate to be a full partner:

18 ¶ “And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.” Gen. 2:18-20

You see God understood Adam's need, because He was also alone and had no “helper comparable to Him”. Mere creation and training alone are not equal to such a task as this, since it requires separation and individuation. Filling Heaven with clones would have been intolerable since it would have turned His Heaven into a “hall of mirrors”. A nice novelty for a moment, but who would want to live that way?

Elements of a Solution

We are made of body, soul and spirit.

But none of these are complete within themselves:

- The body needs his or her spouse to be able to do all it is designed for.
- The soul needs larger society. Without it the full faculties of language, intellect and friendship could not exist since they would atrophy.
- The spirit needs God. Without His higher realm of the spiritual always beckoning it would have no reason at all to even exist. Without Him all the faculties of love, joy, peace, patience and kindness etc. are mere shadows of what is possible.

Perhaps we could describe the nature of the human as “derivative”, since it is not complete –even within the whole of the human race.

Within each of us dwells a spark of the divine –be it ever so small –that needs His fullness to function properly.

In this we could say our spirit resembles a radio receiver. There are endless varieties of radio receivers made, from crystal radios to radio telescopes, but their job is all the same: to receive radio signals. Without these incoming signals, the receivers are all virtually useless. But with these signals, they help keep us in touch with far wider realities so that we can be more fully human. These realities range from the latest supernova, to the latest hockey

scores. But the radio needs its aerial, cable or satellite dish working in order to do this..... We could say that this is what Adam and Eve lost.

It's like a Ford dealer without Fords, because the factory has been on strike for 50 years.

It's like a farmer without rain –or irrigation.

It's like grocery store without groceries.

It's like a Post Office without mail, because the mail sorters are on strike.

It's like a cloud without rain.

None of these are whole at all without connections to their respective sources. But what does the human spirit receive from God? Why just about everything we need to function!!!

- The natural endowment of courage is often inadequate to cope with the challenges of daily life. Even unbelievers use faith to receive greater stores of courage from Him. By this they can have great courage within themselves.
- Our natural endowment of love is so locked into being self-aware that it does not stretch much beyond the end of our nose. The more we are able to receive His infinite love, the more we are able to apply love to wider challenges such as outreaches to share our faith.
- Our natural endowment of any “fruit of the Spirit” is deficient without His help. With a deficiency we are left with a degree of the opposite of these fruits: emotional depression, war, impatience, cruelty, unkindness, evil, faithlessness, brutality, incontinence and the punishment due a law-breaker.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV

So without him, the human spirit is too weak and incomplete to cope properly with the complex, demanding, and sometimes harsh reality, which is everyday living. Is it sinful to be weak or unguided like this? Of course not, but it is still the consequences of Adam's sin. Similarly, it is no crime to be poor. But the criminal that made your dad's business become bankrupt is guilty and responsible for your poverty. In other words, it is no crime to be a victim of crime.

The Ford dealer, lacking Fords, might run out of patience and sell his soul to Hyundai!!! There is just no telling. But for sure, if he does that, Ford will disown him.

So, Did God Create Evil?

“Does Genesis mention God creating darkness? No, darkness already existed before God created light (Genesis 1: 2-3), God created light, darkness is simply the absence of light. So too all evil is simply the absence of the good things that originate from God, such as: love, holiness, unity, truth, harmony, health, peace, life, pleasure, faith etc... in the absence of these "things" you have: hate, unholiness, disunity, fallacy, disharmony, sickness, war, death, pain, fear etc... which all fall under the category of evil.

The Bible says God created all things and all things were good, evil isn't good, therefore God didn't create evil. If God created all things, and God didn't create evil, then evil is not a thing, but a lack of something.

Notice also that much later on in the Bible God speaks of creating darkness, see: Isaiah 45:7, Psalm 104:20, Amos 4: 13. But since light was already created in these accounts, creating darkness would simply involve excluding or removing the light. To speak of creating darkness, implies that light already exists and is present. Just as speaking of creating a vacuum in a tube, implies that something other than a vacuum is already in the tube. So to remove light is to create darkness.

So when God says he creates evil in Isaiah 45:7, It is God removing the good things, such as His blessings of peace, provision, protection etc... when God curses something, he simply removes His presence and blessings, when Adam sinned, God withdrew His life giving presence and all creation was cursed because it was cut off from the Source of Life and all things good.

Following this train of thought, sin could be defined within this context as a thought, action or state of the soul that lacks love, truth, faith, holiness etc... (i.e. “turned aside from His Way”)

Evil is not an illusion of the mind or soul as some cults believe. Evil is very real and its power is very real, yet it is nothing. How can nothing have power? A vacuum is nothing but a void, yet it has great power to pull things towards it.

Satan's kingdom of darkness is like a spiritual vacuum, that seeks to suck humanity of life, love, the light of truth. etc.” by Terje Romnenberg

So God did not remove something from Man so that he would get into trouble. No! God forbid! No, he just could not sovereignly add what He did not have: the necessary individuation -so that he would not create either clones or more pets. God just had nothing apart from Himself.

The Sin Question

So how does sin enter this picture? Very easily. When we are faced with a question of “what am I going to do with the choices before me?” It is very easy to make the wrong choice in order to compensate for weakness or lack of guidance:

- A man lacking in courage may run from an important challenge instead of facing it. This is called defeat and rank cowardice. Will this man succeed much in life? Perhaps only through a cowardly illegal means.
- When a man sees a pretty new face, he may not resist and instead say, “My wife will never find out.”. This is called adultery. This man will likely go from romantic disaster to disaster until he finds the gutter.
- When a man is cheated in business, he may not resist his cruel instinct for revenge. This could easily go as far as murder! This man could easily find himself on death row!
- When a child feels rejected by his peers, he may steal some money, and buy candy for them. This cunning manipulation is called theft and bribery. Later, during his business career he will find himself quite experienced in this....

The following lighthearted verse suitably illustrates the tangled miasma of thought and emotion that results from this weakness or lack of guidance in even small situations. Men of this world count this as “normal”!

The Cookie Thief

A woman was waiting at an airport one night,
With several long hours before her flight.
She hunted for a book in the airport shop,
Bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop.

She was engrossed in her book, but happened to see,
That the man beside her, as bold as could be,
Grabbed a cookie or two from the bag between,
Which she tried to ignore to avoid a scene.

She read, munched cookies, and watched the clock,
As the gutsy “cookie thief” diminished her stock.
She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by,
Thinking, “If I wasn’t so nice, I’d blacken his eye!”

With each cookie she took, he took one too.
When only one was left, she wondered what he would do.
With a smile on his face and a nervous laugh,

He took the last cookie and broke it in half.

He offered her half, as he ate the other.
She snatched it from him and thought, “Oh brother,
This guy has some nerve, and he’s also rude,
Why, he didn’t even show any gratitude!”

She had never known when she had been so galled,
And sighed with relief when her flight was called.
She gathered her belongings and headed for the gate,
Refusing to look back at the “thieving ingrate.”

She boarded the plane and sank in her seat,
Then sought her book, which was almost complete.
As she reached in her baggage she gasped with surprise,
There was her bag of cookies before her eyes!

“If mine are here,” she moaned with despair,
“Then the others were *his* and he tried to share!”
Too late to apologize, she realized with grief,
She was the rude one, the ingrate, the thief.

Valerie Cox

This clearly illustrates the insularity of the small and weak consciousness we are heir to. This insularity manifests itself in the self-aware reductionistic nature of all human transactions.

“The Cookie Thief” also clearly demonstrates the superficial, mute and impotent “false righteousness” both are heir to after generations of soaking in the dilute brine of mere religion.

The Will

However, the above disconnection still does not explain the nature of the “free will” that we observe.

How did Adam fall?

Well think of it. He was created full-sized and not born. He learned to talk by talking with God, since there was nobody else there that could respond verbally. By the time Eve was created, had he even finished naming the animals? So here we have pair of full-sized two or three-year-olds blundering around the garden. OK, perhaps, they were not blundering physically, but mentally and emotionally they were.

You know how kids in their play like to pretend that they are doing adult things? In so doing, it helps them hasten the process of becoming mature, since we could say they are “practicing”. Neither one of them had any experience of any sort of trouble. They had never had cause to fear for anything. When the serpent came along they were the ultimate innocent, “babes in the woods”.

Yes, it was deliberate sin when they fell, but apart from God’s word to them, there was no hedge against that sin. They had no perspective on who their friend God was. To them the serpent was just another harmless animal. In short, they did not yet have any comprehension of the nature of the reality they were enjoying. They did not understand that the foundations of their whole reality could be removed by such a seemingly trivial act as the serpent suggested to them. Fear? They had no reason to know it yet. Kids learn by doing. When they do wrong –

that's when they really learn what words are for. After that mistake it is "you listen to the words, or you get pain."

Words are important. But they did not yet understand how important.

Perhaps the situation of Lucifer before he fell was the similar. He was the worship leader of God's angel choir, and so needed to be created with the capability of more independent action than the other angels. But he really had no clue. He had no fear. There was nothing in Heaven at that time to prevent his becoming lifted up with pride, and so he did. Perhaps he saw becoming "like God" a worthy thing. (We do, but through the cross.) This is "the mystery of iniquity".

Why did Lucifer fall? Because he could. Why did many angels fall after the example of their worship leader? Because they could. None of them had much of an idea of who God was, or that their heaven was anything special. It was all they had ever known. And they didn't know much. It was ordinary to them. Even so, two thirds of the angels could not bring themselves to follow Lucifer's strange way. Perhaps they were the more perceptive and conservative ones?

Why did Adam and Eve fall? Because they could.

Shouldn't they all have revered the words and presence of God? Have you helped to raise any children? It requires some learning to understand that words have anything to do with actions –or that they have any special importance. It also takes some learning to understand that mom and dad are capable of anything more than fulfilling every passing need. Revere? Few of them knew the meaning of the word.

Similarly, teenage children seldom revere their parents and recognize the sacrifices they made for their sake. Ungrateful louts, they often seem. Most just don't get it yet.

So the proper question is not "Why did they sin", but "How could they not sin after a while?" Or did you actually suppose this falling away caught God unawares? At the conclusion of this eon of trouble God will have created a species capable of previously impossible levels of His trust. They will be wonderfully crafted as stewards for His ever-increasing future glories.

However, some kids are just "good kids" and have a tender heart that instinctively avoids trouble, even the trouble they find within themselves. Given adequate outside guidance some of these can enter into Godliness without turning aside. But they must still repent and be saved, like any other. They are still human. Because a soul "can" fall, doesn't necessarily mean they are required to. They have a real choice.

I was a variety of this. I received near nil outside guidance, and so got into plenty of trouble on the way, but kept on "earnestly seeking" in my quest to find life, and the fullness of it. And now I am so thankful, I am unlikely to vary from it.

The Obstacle Course

Could we view this whole scenario from Lucifer to the end-times as a vast obstacle race?

There are prizes galore of various sizes for the participants! There are "punishments" for those who did not bother to run, and those who hindered the contestants. With this view we could view our choices in life as being real, and our spiritual victories being small turning-points of His continuing creation: His creation of a new order of Heavenly Creature: [The Covenant Man who is not swayed by any distraction, for He has fixed His path in Him.](#)

Covenant

We see above that they all had free wills through this eon, and they used them without limitation to their lasting destruction. However, in the ages, we have not seen that God wants to remove our capability of choosing. However, He does want it in right relationship to His Will.

In no place in the scripture do we hear of Lucifer or the angels pledging a holy bilateral Covenant with their God to follow His ways and no other. We also do not see an explicit promise from God to be with them. Nothing else was possible -for there were no other obvious alternatives at the time. Perhaps it was the same for Adam, Eve, and Cain. Just before Cain killed his brother, God informed him that he could keep the sin under. There is here no indication

of any prior agreement that he would. Cain had made no prior Covenant.

6 “So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” Genesis 4:6-7

Yes, there is an indication that Cain knew. But as we all know, knowing and settling a solid promise are two very different things. Perhaps we could say that before he murdered, Cain was in the same position as a saved Christian. He knew God. God was working with him. But he had no great fear of God.

The dispensation of the Law had yet to come and “make sin ever more sinful”. God was certainly not keeping him within the holy hush of His Rest where such temptations have lost their allure. There was as yet no Covenant of any kind for Man or Angel.

There were also no preachers, no Sunday schools, no spankings while growing up, no police, no jails, no electric chairs, and no social stigma for sin. Deliberate sin and murder were just an easy choice....

The Pit of Deliberate Sin

This is another whole area that is off the topic of “original sin”. Deliberate sin further twists our sensibilities and makes God more and more distant, and His voice ever more silent. We become cut off and without help in a hostile and predatory world.

There is an old Irish proverb that says: “A borrowed saw will cut anything!” We understand this swindling narcissistic observation all too well. In different countries around the world this same sentiment is repeated in different local proverbs. In Australia they commonly say, “I’m aw-hriot Jack, & %*?# yours!

This dark cavern of selfism has an opening in the bottom that opens out into the larger “pit of perdition” toward which all things inexorably slide under slavery to gravity. It also has a small opening above through which light can be dimly seen afar off

A good illustration of this personal pit is the life of a two year old. They are sure sweet, as we all know. As long as everything is coming their way, and as long as they are not required to share or give something they really want they will stay sweet, at least for a while. Their view of life is very, very small. Their lifestyle is very, very dependent on being waited on for every whim. Their abilities are small. They cannot go out and get the things that they need. Their consciousness is small. Their wisdom is small. Their ability to withstand any hardship or lack is small. Their capability to even survive is small. Their needs are full-sized!!

We take all of the above points for granted, but imagine if everybody was reduced to that degree of smallness. Survival just would not happen.

As a matter of fact, survival did not happen. We thank our God who intervened repeatedly with mercy in our typical historical downward spiral to putrefaction and eternal perdition. At best, history is a disgusting charnel-house story of man roiling in his own blood and bondages, struggling to reproduce fast enough to replace the hordes lost to the encroaching predations of sin, war and disease. By His mercy and foresight, He redeemed for Himself a people for His Name out of that putrid rushing downward flood.

“And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with men forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” Genesis 6:3

He did this because He had a dream before it all began! “Then God said, “**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness**; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Gen. 1:26

This is God’s vision of our predicament:

The Pit

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out.
A subjective person came along and said, "I feel for you down there."
An objective person walked by and said, "It's logical that someone would fall down there."
A Pharisee said, "Only bad people fall into pits."
A mathematician calculated how he fell into the pit.
A news reporter wanted an exclusive story on the pit.
An IRS Agent asked if he was paying taxes on the pit.
A self-pitying person said, "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit!"
A fire-and-brimstone preacher said, "You deserve your pit."
A Christian Scientist observed, "The pit is just in your mind."
A psychiatrist noted, "Your mother and father are to blame for your being in that pit."
A self-esteem therapist said, "Believe in yourself and you can get out of that pit."
An optimist said, "Things could get worse."
A pessimist claimed, "Things WILL get worse."
Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.....

On our own we seldom have enough conviction to truly apprehend how truly abhorrent we have become in His sight. Everything and everyone conspires together to tell us that our deplorable condition is fine since it is so common. It is "normal". We end up making one compromise after another, rather than paying the price to get free. Revivals cannot stay since the Lord has no place to lay His Head. There is so seldom a heart that will give Him more than very brief freedom so He can dwell and be Himself. He cannot stay if He is not made welcome.

When I look out on the world this is what I see every day: people "more self-aware than they are aware". They are so lost within the unique personal labyrinths they have created to guard and forward their own self-interests that they have almost totally lost touch with objective reality. In my view God is at the center of the wondrous reality He created, and all decisions must be made in counsel before Him. There is no thing than can be done without Him.

To my way of observing most people avoid this reality, and so are largely schizophrenic as a result. However, no-one dares call it a psychotic because virtually everybody has it. This is not flattering; and as we know, all things must be flattering.

I see sincere Christians both charismatic and evangelical as participating in this to a degree. When we are saved, we accept His pardon. This gives us a fore-taste of life with Him. When we enter His Rest, we are "fully sanctified" and made pure. Pardon and purity are two different but related things because purity is the completed form of pardon that has been made real by and through our participation with Him in total consecration and total trust. His Rest is a fore-taste of life with Him in His Heaven itself!!!

So, I see almost everybody trapped within a "Pit" of his or her own creation. The only ones who are truly free of this are those He has taken to abide within the Covenant of His Rest. And it cannot be denied that there are some lingering deficiencies of immaturity to be overcome even there! (See my "Wisdom for Ministers" page)

Is There a Hell?

"I form the light and create darkness, I make peace [national well-being] and I create [physical] [1] evil (calamity); I am the Lord, Who does all these things." Isaiah 45:7 (AMP)

"But who are you, a mere man, to criticize and contradict and answer back to God? Will what is formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus?(1)" Romans 9:20

"I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." Isaiah 45:7

Some always seem to have a problem accepting the fact that a good God who created all things would include Hell and evil. But in a sense we could say that God never tossed anybody into Hell or evil, and so we really have no reason to complain....

Let me explain:

We were all created out of earth, and are by nature earthy. What is earth? Supernaturally speaking, it is merely a thin and temporary way-station between two unlimited realms. It is as thin as the number of days we are allotted here. On one side stretches a vast fetid slum filled with evil. On the other stretches a verdant walled community filled with grace and privilege.

The fetid slum desperately reaches out to grasp all to come within her gaunt and unwashed hopelessness. The walled community is entered by invitation only, since it is a land built exclusively for friends of its good and generous King.

These souls of earth are actively wooed to friendship by the King of grace, at some point during their lives, but strangely enough, only a few respond to His earnest friendliness. Both sides actively attempt to recruit each earthy soul since that soul is given a capacity to choose while yet a babe, and usually refuses to be merely "Shanghaied", even though that is often tried by agents of both sides. During their lives they can see around them souls enlightened by grace, and souls stained by hopelessness as the result of ministrations from one side or the other. All this seems more than fair.

So perhaps this "problem" is merely sour grapes for not being born in Heaven rather than upon earth? Get over it!!! Instead, rejoice in His invitation to His realm of privilege!! This is sweet grapes!! (In order to be simple enough to be understood the above picture cannot address every issue you can think of.)

I give thanks for the power of choice that the Lord has given me. It allows me to "participate in my own creation" instead of being ruled by mere instinct as the beasts are. It is a great power, and like any power, it can be either used or abused. The choice is ours every moment. The consequences are eternal. God is waiting to see what we will make of what He has given us. We must give an accounting....

It is better to live accountable now, than answerable for neglect in that day, and then suffer loss.

(I believe a large percentage of today's believers will be saved "as by fire". They will be in heaven, but will have little or nothing to boast of before God. They will have little or no additional reward. They will obtain the status of elementary students learning again their "ABC's", rather than trusted stewards. But while there is life there is hope to improve this. But it always costs...

Those believers unrepentant of serious sin such as destroying their marriage through adultery in a trendy so-called "remarriage" will not be there. Our God is a jealous God, and they have already chosen their "god". He was never allowed to befriend them, even though He was closer than a brother....)

The Covenant Of An Everlasting Priesthood

From Andrew Murray's "The Two Covenants": (found on my website in PDF) CHAPTER XV

"That My covenant might be with Levi. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity." -MAL. ii. 4-6. (and on pages 32-33 on the PDF is shown the tribe of Levi's extreme jealousy for God -which proves how incorruptible and set as flint were their faces!! These guys were RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS!!!!)

"To those who desire to know the conditions on which, as part of the New Covenant, the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood can be received and carried out, a study of the conditions on which Levi received. The

priesthood will be most instructive. We are not only told that God chose that tribe, but what there specially was in that tribe that fitted it for the work. Malachi says: "I gave him My covenant for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before

My name." The reference is to what took place at Sinai when Israel had made the molten calf. Moses called all who were on the Lord's side, who were ready to avenge the dishonour done to God, to come to him. The tribe of Levi did so, and at his bidding took their swords, and slew three thousand of the idolatrous people (Ex. Xxxii. 26-29). In the blessing with which Moses blessed the tribes before his death, their absolute devotion to God, without considering relative or friend, is mentioned as *the proof of their fitness for God's service* (Deut. Xxxiii. 5-11) : "Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his own brethren, nor know his own children: for they have observed Thy word and kept Thy covenant."

The same principle is strikingly illustrated in the story of Aaron's grandson, Phineas, where he, in his zeal for God, executed judgment on disobedience to God's command. The words are most suggestive. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, hath turned away My wrath from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I consumed them not in My jealousy.

Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace: and it shall be unto him, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel" (Num. Xxv. 10-13). To be jealous with God's jealousy, to be jealous for God's honour, and rise up against sin, is the gate into the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood, is the secret of being entrusted by God with the sacred work of teaching His people, and burning incense before Him, and turning many from iniquity (Deut. Xxxiii. 10 ; Mal. ii. 6). Andrew Murray

(found at the bottom of my "Entry Directions" page.)

Written by Tom Plumb

earnestseeker@enterhisrest.org