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## The Problem of Pietism and Non-Doctrinal Christianity

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I hope that on this Lord's Day morning we will find some edification in the Word of God. The gentleman who made this polite introduction made two mistakes. Covenant College is not in Tennessee. It's in Georgia. And after having spent all my life, almost, in the North, we've become Georgians now. The reason that not only the gentleman who made the introduction made the mistake but nearly everybody else does, is that the post office for Covenant College is in Tennessee, but the college is one mile on the other side of the line. And of course everybody gets it mixed up. Now the second and much more serious mistake the gentleman made was when he said he didn't think I had any notes this morning. How can I do without notes? Well it's true that I don't have 150 pages, but I have one or two. And so we'll proceed.

There is a little difficulty or small problem in adapting to what really isn't an ordinary Sunday School class. I'm used to Sunday School classes of anywhere from 3 to 15 or sometimes 50, but not two or three hundred. And this is not just an ordinary classroom situation. And, furthermore, when a visitor comes—it's a one time situation—it's impossible to give a series or to take any subject with any thoroughness, but also the choice of subjects is rather arbitrary. What is more appropriate in one city may be less appropriate in another, and to choose something that is particularly interesting or applicable to Dallas or wherever a person goes...to choose something that is applicable is more a matter of chance than of careful calculation. However, I shall try to take a subject of some contemporary interest, a contemporary problem, whether it is particularly acute in this locality or not, it is, I think, a fairly wide-spread problem in the conservative churches of the United States. But maybe not here in Dallas; however, that's the best I can do.

Now, the contemporary problem is also one that is connected with the previous lectures on my pet peeve of empiricism. A few years ago, speaking in tongues was a popular movement and it was discussed in many places, but the excitement of 3 or 4 years ago seem, or maybe 5 or 6

years ago, the excitement seems to have died down. And I do not meet this problem very often in (well, I don't travel around too much, but I see various ministers and people), but this does not seem to be a burning issue at the present moment. There is something else that attracts attention. This phenomenon which I shall discuss in a moment occurs, has occurred, in other centuries, it has reoccurred in the history of the church at different places in different times, and I think a form of it is present with us today. This is a tendency, particularly among churches that are relatively conservative, not the extreme liberals. I'm talking about churches with which you would be in some sympathy. It is the problem of pietism. Or if you're not acquainted with that old German movement of three or four hundred years ago, you can use the phrase non-doctrinal Christianity. This may be a contradiction in adjective, but it describes what I'm going to talk about.

Now, this movement, this pietistic movement, this anti-doctrinal tendency, is indeed partially due to the rise of neo-orthodoxy. Neo Orthodoxy has had this effect, a movement such as that, of course, has ripples throughout all areas of the church, and people who may not individually come in contact with the neo-orthodox are nevertheless influenced by them in second or third degree distance. So neo-orthodoxy which of course gives little value to doctrine, has had some effect and is a part of the explanation of pietism in the relatively conservative evangelical churches.

There is, however, another factor which may, possibly is, more of a cause, more definitely operative in this, and that is a certain amount of inertia, fatigue and discouragement within these congregations. We are so beset with enemies without, not to mention heresies within...but we are so beset with enemies without, the tremendous decline in morality in our civilization, the increase of crime, all the works of the devil seem to be so powerful, and we seem to have no way of combating this development that we sort of give up in despair. So we withdraw and go through certain forms of devotion which I suppose are all right to a certain extent. I don't object to your reading the bible privately—of course not. But that's not the only thing, it seems to me...that is not the only thing a Christian should do. But this is a tendency to withdraw within ourselves and to engage in private devotions and let the world go its wicked way.

Now, these people do not usually deny any of the great doctrines. They simply treat them as useless. Religion is a matter for them of devotion, in a certain sense, of emotion, but not of

intellectual understanding. This view of the nature of Christianity, and I suppose you might say they think that St. Bernard of Clairvaux was the greatest Christian who ever lived in spite of his horrible doctrine of the atonement...these people start from a relatively modern analysis of human nature. The common division of human analysis of human nature that is prevalent in the churches today, I mean the evangelical conservative churches, is the three-fold division of intellect, volition, and emotion. And some people have never heard of any other analysis of human nature. But this is a relatively modern analysis. It is not common in the history of the Christian church. And having made this analysis the tendency which I speak of is to disparage, positively to disparage, the intellect. The will, the volitions, are buried in silence. And religious experience is all emotional.

As I say, this three-fold division is a rather modern one. It is not characteristic of 1500 years of church history. Neither Augustine nor John Calvin nor Charles Hodge (who of course didn't live 1500 years ago—he was just last century)...neither of these three, ever adopted this three-fold analysis. Augustine had a three-fold analysis because he had the idea that human nature somehow or other reflects the Trinity. And so he was anxious to find an effect or an evidence of the Trinity in the being of man. But he didn't he have intellect, volition and emotions. He had intellect, volition or will and memory. You don't hear memory as one of the three constituents of human nature. That's not at all popular today, people don't mention it, but Augustine thought it was very important for an interesting reason. Memory was his solution to the continuity of the individual in this life and in the life to come. How is it possible for the same individual to be here on earth and then later in heaven? What is the continuity? Continuity is the man's memory. And he developed that at some length which you can read if you are interested.

Now, Calvin and Hodge did not have a three-fold division. They speak of the intellect and will and make no mention of the emotions at all. Now I am of the opinion that Calvin and Hodge, oh, Augustine too, are closer to the Scriptural view of man than this contemporary three-fold division of intellect, will and emotion—especially the Gospel of John. I'm not going to spend much time on the Gospel of John or even on 1 Corinthians chapter 2 or really chapters, maybe, 1 to 4 and some other places. I noticed that when I was emphasizing the intellect in one of the recent lectures, the audience tittered when I translated a verse from the Gospel of John that if a man holds my theology he shall never see death ever. That is John the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 51<sup>st</sup> verse, because the Greek word there is logos or word. And logos in Greek is a word of many

meanings. Liddell and Scott's lexicon has seven columns of fine print, ninety-two lines on a column, explaining the word logos. It always refers to some expression of reason. And the Old Testament says that the Messiah is the wisdom of God, Paul in 1 Corinthians says the same thing, the wisdom of God, the logos of God. Now, the word logos, l-o-g-o-s, can mean a book, it can mean a mathematical ratio, it can mean an argument, it can mean a word, though usually it doesn't mean a single word there is another Greek term for that. But it means any expression of reason.

And so when you read through the Gospel of John and see the emphasis on logos you must recognize an intellectual interest that it can be expressed in sermons, in doctrine, in speech. And Jesus says, "If you hold to my doctrine, you will never see death ever." And I could quote some other verses of John: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." It doesn't say if you're real happy, happiness will set you free. It's the truth that sets you free. And then John also says/records, "The words He has spoken are spirit and are life"—the words. And this of course is an intellectual reference. It has to do with the mind. And it's talking about the mind of Christ which the Apostle Paul exhorts us to have. He says, "Have the mind of Christ." I don't know any verse in the New Testament that says have the emotions of Christ—have the mind of Christ. These are his words, his thoughts and, to rub it in, his theology.

The anti-intellectualists, however, try to find some scriptural basis for their emotionalism. And by emotionalism I don't just mean holy rollers that get up and shout and roll on the floor and that sort of thing. That's emotionalism, but there are quieter forms of emotionalism. The pietist in Germany didn't get up and shout. They were quiet people, and you would call them devout people. I remember on one occasion when we were on vacation that we came to a town that we had never been in before in Colorado, and it happened to be Sunday evening. We attended church somewhere out there in Wyoming in the morning. And we came to Ft. Collins in the afternoon. And we drove all around the town to see, well, in the evening after dinner...we drove around the town to see what churches might be open. There were only two open. All the rest were closed. One was a Pentecostal church. I don't mind attending a Pentecostal church once in a while, but we were awful tired. And I was afraid...I was afraid that if we went in there at 8 o'clock we wouldn't get out before midnight. So driving around a little bit we saw some elderly people, quite elderly, making their way to a large church building and they were going in. And, well, I said, "Let's go in there." We didn't know what the church was but we'd go in there. It was

open at any rate. Pentecostal was the only other church open. So we seemed to have been just at the tail end of the people that went in. We parked and walked in and the service had begun.

We sat in the back row because the room was fairly well filled. It wasn't as big a room as this. The room was fairly well filled. And so we sat at the back. Well, we found that it was quite a church. The minister who was speaking was speaking in German, not in English. And a man, oh, two-thirds of the way back from the pulpit looked around. You see, I was there, my wife and two daughters. And he looked at me [Clark seems to make a quick waving motion]. I caught on. I came up and sat with him, and the wife and two daughters sat on the other side of the aisle. We conformed to the etiquette of the place. And they had three speakers that evening. The whole service was in German. They were talking on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. And each of the three speakers took that Psalm.

Then between two of the speakers there was a period of prayer. This is very interesting. I like to see how other churches besides my church—which of course does it correctly...I like to see how other churches do it incorrectly. Well, at this point the whole the congregation rose and everybody prayed out loud at the same time. It was quite an experience. Well, after a while they stopped one at a time, or, really, they all pretty much stopped at the same time except for one lady who kept on for three or four sentences more and then she stopped and we all sat down. Well, these were very devout people. And they meditated a little and talked about the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. But they were pietists. They were not interested in doctrine. They were interested in some heart comfort or something of this sort. Good people with whom, of course, I could not altogether agree. Now, this sort of thing is supposedly based on scriptures which refer to the heart of man.

Now, it would be well, if you are so inclined, to take a concordance and trace through the occurrences of the word heart through the bible. If my computer is correct, there are approximately 700 instances of the word heart in the Old Testament, and I wouldn't want to guess exactly how many there are in the New Testament, maybe a hundred more. So you can go through the bible and check 800 verses and see the meaning of the word heart as it is in Scripture. I shall not quote them all, all 800. As I say, I don't have a 150 page manuscript in front of me. In fact, it's about 3 pages, and I'm already on the 3<sup>rd</sup> page. No, I guess I must have 4

pages only one isn't numbered. I shall, however, quote a few. I shall not quote many in the Old Testament, maybe just one. But I wanted to pay more attention to the New Testament.

And you can work your way through the Old Testament if you are so inclined. But in Genesis the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, you might look it up, but I would be more particularly interested if you would look up the New Testament references when I come to them. But this is a verse with which you are all familiar. It says, "The thoughts and imaginations of their hearts were only evil continually." Now there is a reference to heart. And what the heart is doing, the hearts of the people referred to in this verse...what the hearts are doing is thinking evil thoughts. It's thought. The heart is the organ of thinking. And these people who were condemned to be punished by the flood were people whose hearts continually thought evil thoughts. The point is the heart is the organ of thought. It's not emotion. It is thought.

And there are other... well, as I say there are a lot of verses in the Old Testament. I tucked a few of them away in the odd corners of my lectures. And I suppose you didn't notice them as I was going through. But there are a lot of them. I'll just give one more. It is an idea that occurs in several places. It is in Proverbs for one place. But it occurs in several places in the Psalms and in one of the historical books and in Isaiah, so on. It speaks about God's turning the king's heart in one place whither so ever He will or in a given direction, and so on. And this means of course that God causes the man to think certain things and to make certain decisions so that God's plan for the preparation of the Messiah goes on. This is a part of God's plan as the nation of Israel develops leading on to the birth of the coming Messiah. But the idea is the king makes decisions, of course, a decision requires some intellectual content to begin with, but the heart is the organ for the thinking and the decision as to what the king will do. The king thinks up a plan, decides it's a good plan, and operates on that. And this is the work of his heart. The heart then is the organ, it's the word that is used to indicate the person's thinking capacity.

But this morning I'll leave the Old Testament go by, and I'll use a number of verses in the New Testament. I probably can't get over them all before half past ten, but there will be enough of them to give you a sample, and you look them up for yourself. Now, then, in Matthew the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 34<sup>th</sup> verse, maybe you could open to that. The same thing actually is said in Matthew 15:18 and 19. I guess it is repeated in Luke somewhere or other, but I'll quote at least a part of Matthew 12:34 where it says "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” So if you express, verbally, if you express some opinions it is because you think them. Oh, I know you may express opinions that are not yours. You may be a hypocrite or something like that or you may be telling a funny story. But the usual thing is that when you express an opinion, your own opinion, this expression is the result of certain thoughts which you had and these are the thoughts of the heart.

Perhaps even more explicit or pertinent is in the next chapter of Matthew the 15<sup>th</sup> verse, Matthew 13:15 where you have the phrase understand with their heart, they understand with their heart. So you see the word heart does not refer to emotions. It refers to one’s understanding. This of course is intellectual not emotional and not necessarily volitional either, though it may be that in addition. But it is the understanding that the heart does.

Now, if you will turn just another chapter or two, Matthew 15:8 which is repeated in a parallel in Mark the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 6<sup>th</sup> verse. But Matthew 15:8 will do. There is a distinction that is taken over from the Old Testament, but one that is not well attended to by those of pietistic leanings. I have heard and you will all, I suppose, have heard too, a contrast drawn between the heart and the head. The head is hard, intellectual fact and the heart is warm, emotional ... mess. That does not occur in Scripture. There is no contrast in Scripture between heart and head—try to find it. There is a contrast in Scripture, but it is a different one. It is between the heart and the lips. This is what I referred to a moment ago. Sometimes when people speak they do not reveal their real intentions and thoughts, they are hypocritical, and they say things they don’t mean. This often happens in church work.

Dr. Buswell of Wheaton College once told me that when he was interviewing prospects for positions on the faculty, he found out that many prospects would agree to any doctrinal position he wanted them to take. They wanted the job, and they would give lip service. But they didn’t believe, you see. There is the distinction between the heart and the lips. And one of the neo-orthodox people, I forget whether it was Reinhold Niebuhr or somebody...someone confronted him with this and asked him how in the world can you say the Apostle’s Creed in the church with the kind of theology you accept. “Oh,” he said, “I don’t say it, I sing it.” And this is the excuse, one of the excuses, that is given. This is a matter of lips and not heart. That is the scriptural distinction between a man’s real thoughts and what he says to deceive other people.

Well, going on a little bit you can turn to Mark 11:23. Here is another intellectual activity. It is not exactly understanding. It may even be a little bit of misunderstanding, but the phrase is “shall not doubt in his heart.” Well, it’s put in the negative, but it indicates that doubting is a function of the heart. And while doubting may not be exactly understanding, it is an intellectual endeavor to understand that results in failure, but it is certainly not emotion. It is an intellectual doubt.

Now let us go over to the Gospel of Luke in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter and the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, and the idea is repeated also in the 51<sup>st</sup> verse of the same chapter, where it says she pondered them, these things, she pondered them in her heart. Here she was thinking over what had been told to her. It was puzzling. Her activity was not exactly doubting, but rather investigating and trying to figure out the meaning and implications of what had just been said. She pondered these things in her heart. So once again the heart is the organ for understanding, investigation. It is an intellectual activity.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke, verse 47, it refers to Jesus who perceives the thoughts of their heart. These people who were with Jesus then were thinking something. This time they didn’t express it. But Jesus per...or maybe they whispered or murmured, but this time it says Jesus perceived the thought of their heart. This was a thinking process. And the process is referred to the heart.

And I suppose this is getting tedious, one verse after another, but as in the 150 page lecture last night, I would like to impress you with the pervasiveness of this. Last night it was a matter of predestination, and I am relatively sure that multitudes of Christians don’t realize how pervasive the doctrine of predestination is in the Old Testament. And so I wanted to go through 50 or 75 passages and I guess I didn’t quite make it. But that’s the motivation here. It may be a little tedious, but once in your life you ought to go one by one and see precisely what the word heart means. And I haven’t given the whole idea yet for that matter, but I want to make this one point.

Luke 12:45 where the phrase is “shall say in his heart.” Here is a sentence. It may not be expressed audibly. It may be something you say to yourself. But it is a saying. It’ll be a proposition that can be understood. And this is what you do in your heart.

Well, now I won’t mention the book of Acts or the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is, oh, I might say, super intellectual. You find tremendous emphasis not only on logos, which I

mentioned a bit ago, but on rhema which is another word in Greek for word. The difference between logos and rhema, or one of the differences, is that the term logos can refer to any expression of thought—a book, mathematical ratio, an argument—whereas the term rhema refers particularly to what we call words like cat and dog and tree and rock and other words. And in going through the Gospel of John, kindly see how that particular term is used along with logos. But that would take too long.

We'll jump over to Roman 10:6. And here there is a phrase, "say not in their heart," I think that's the phrase, is it? This would be something like Luke 12:45 where you say something in your heart. But then in the same chapter Romans 10: 9,10 it says, "thou shalt confess with thy mouth." Now, this says mouth, of course, and we've been talking about hypocritical statements, but the word confess rules out hypocrisy. This is a confession. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart. Here is belief, faith you call it. Belief, believe in your heart that God has raised the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto salvation. The heart then is the organ of believing. It's the organ of faith, the belief. And no reference to emotion at all.

I might indicate, just to protect myself from misunderstanding, there are a few cases, in the Old Testament at any rate, where the word heart can possibly mean emotions. I think in the 700 instances of the word heart you will find possibly a maximum of 10 percent that could mean, sometimes it's not quite clear just what it means, but it could mean emotions, a maximum of 10 percent maybe only 5 percent. You will find perhaps 15 percent of the instances where the word heart means will or volition and that brings you up to about 25 percent. But 75 percent of the time it means thinking such as we call intellect or reason that sort of thing. And here it says with the heart you believe unto salvation.

Now, going on I only have 30 seconds left. Oh, that's too bad. Tempus fugit all the time. Hebrews 3:10 says, "They do always err in their heart." They make intellectual mistakes in their heart. They make mistakes. They fall into error which of course means they think the wrong things. But it is the heart that does the thinking.

And then for just the final one in Hebrews 4:12 it refers to the thoughts and intents of the heart. And I suppose if I stretched it just a little bit I could say not only is the heart the organ that

thinks, but that the word intend indicates volition. If you don't like my understanding of the word intent as volition, well, then it has to be intellectual rather than volitional and that is the point I want to make.

These word studies I think are basic to further theological development. They are a little tedious. And you have paid remarkable attention to something that is very dry and technical, but I do trust that the Scripture will prove to be edifying both to you and to me and to whomever the Gospel of Salvation is preached.

Let us bow in prayer. Gracious God who art the God of Truth and who doth control the unruly wills of the wicked, do Thou so work in us that we may accept thy truth, worship thee in Spirit and in Truth, and receive thy direction in all the affairs of our life, to whom, oh Lord, through Jesus Christ we give praise and glory forever and ever. Amen.