

**JESUS HEALS  
THE EMOTIONS**

**STEVE FERNANDEZ**

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Zondervan, Michigan, 1960, p. 101

4. Mark McMinn Psychology, Theology and Spirituality in Christian Counseling, Tyndale House, Illinois, 1996, p. 6
5. I owe a significant part of the thoughts expressed in this chapter to Edwards’ great work, The Religious Affections.
6. Jonathan Edwards, The Religious Affections, The Banner of Truth Trust, Pennsylvania, 1997, p. 46
7. Ibid, p. 47
8. Ibid, pp. 49-50
9. Ibid, p. 46
10. Charles Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol 34, Pilgrim, Texas, 1974, pp. 496-498
11. Seamands, p. 15
12. John Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol. XXI, Baker Book House, Michigan, 1981, p. 167
13. Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol VI, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991, p. 494
14. Spurgeon, Vol 34, p. 500
15. Fritz RENECKER/Cleon ROGERS, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, p. 461
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Published by  
 Cornerstone Publishing  
 710 Broadway Street  
 Vallejo, CA 94590  
 www.cbcvallejo.org

Publisher’s Note: This work is excerpted from the book *The All-Sufficient Savior* by Steve Fernandez. ©March 2001 Community

blessing of His inexhaustible fulness. And more importantly, Christ's glory will be seen in its fulness before the watching world.

## Notes

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1. David Seamands, Healing For Damaged Emotions, Victor Books, Illinois, 1981, p. 12
2. Sinclair Ferguson, The Christian Life, The Banner of Truth Trust, Pennsylvania, 1981, p. 57
3. Clyde Narramore, The Psychology of Counseling,

## JESUS HEALS THE EMOTIONS

A popular Christian book a few years back opened with the following words:

*Early in my pastoral experience, I discovered that I was failing to help two groups of people...Their problems were not being solved by the preaching of the Word, commitment to Christ, the filling of the Spirit, prayer, or the sacraments...they have scars of ancient painful hurts...as when a little boy rushed downstairs one Christmas dawn and discovered in his Christmas stocking a dirty old rock, put there to punish him for some trivial boyhood naughtiness...such scars have been buried in pain for so long that they are causing hurt and rage that are inexplicable. And these scars are not touched by conversion and sanctifying grace.<sup>1</sup>*

These comments and the thinking behind them bring before us a burning question. Does Christ's sufficiency extend to the healing of people with deep emotional pains and problems? Or do people with acute emotional problems need to be directed to those trained in the theories and techniques of psychology? The focus of this chapter, is to look at this vital issue.

My primary aim is to demonstrate that Christ's sufficiency does, in fact, extend to man's emotional needs. We will see that the Scriptures clearly present Christ as the healer of ruined and damaged emotions. Furthermore, we will see that the division between the spiritual and the emotional, so commonly

accepted today, can't be supported from Scripture. It is a concept imposed on Scripture, brought over from secular psychology through the Christian psychology movement. It is not biblically based, and it greatly diminishes people's confidence in Christ's restoring, healing power. The Scriptures clearly teach that the psychological/emotional aspect of man and the spiritual aspect are two inseparable parts of the same inner person, ruined by the fall. Therefore, Christ's renewing and sanctifying grace, by which He delivers from the effects of the fall, reaches to every part of the inner man. This, of course, has been taught by the church for centuries. Sinclair Ferguson, echoing the church's long accepted teaching that Christ's renewing and restoring work extends to every part of the inner person, says:

*But just as total depravity means sin has influenced every area of our lives so grace reaches into every aspect of our experience where the ravages of sin first ventured. It is through the new birth that the image of God like an embryo in the womb is restored. It then begins to grow to that full maturity of the later stages of Christian experience.*

2

It is only relatively recently that people's emotional needs have been taken from Christ and partitioned off to those who claim special insight and knowledge. It has, however, gained widespread acceptance in the church. It has taken the church by storm. This is an issue of great significance. It has to do with the glory of Christ. The Scripture presents the glory of Christ as consisting, in large part, in the fact that He is able to restore the whole person - the

*refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And in a word, there never was anything considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.<sup>17</sup>*

In conclusion, we can say that a primary focus of Christ's saving and sanctifying grace is to work a deep change in the emotions of man. We also conclude that the idea that emotional problems are different from spiritual problems indicates an ignorance of what the Scripture teaches concerning Christ's delivering power. Practically speaking, it has a harmful effect on the church. It directs people away from Christ, the all-sufficient river of life, to the broken cisterns of this world. Jeremiah warns, "They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). Christ Himself, therefore, pleads, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, if any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living waters'" (John 7:37-38). These Scriptures point out the great need to see Christ in His all-sufficient fulness. A fulness more than enough for the most needy of soul-famished people.

May the Lord rise up and defend Himself and His glorious all-sufficiency. For then will His people find their all in Him, and the church will experience the

no acceptable service to God either. The Scripture condemns a dispassionate, cold-hearted service. A service that is mechanical—something done out of a sense of duty. Christ commends a church that stands for the truth and opposes evil. He said to the Church at Ephesus, *“I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance and that you can not endure evil men and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false and you have persevered and have endured for My name’s sake and have not grown weary”* (Revelation 2:2-3). However, this is not enough. He also demands an earnest heart, a heart moved in its affection for Him. He says, *“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first: or else I am coming to you and will remove your lamp stand out of its place – unless you repent”* (Revelation 2:4-5).

Christ warns that unless this church rekindles its love for Him, He will remove its lampstand! It is evident, then, that service is unacceptable apart from the healing and restoration of godly emotions. Therefore, it is just as evident that saving and sanctifying grace must, necessarily, center upon the healing and renewing of the emotions. This is how Christ, in large measure, fits His people to offer Him acceptable worship and service. Once again, Edwards is to the point; he says:

*I am bold to assert that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any person, by anything of a religious nature that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his affections [emotions] moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation...nor was ever one induced to fly for*

mind, the will, and the emotions - from the devastating spiritual and emotional effects of sin. The Scriptures teach that He is the soul-healing Physician-Savior. They teach that there is no limitation to His soul-healing power. In other words, there is a wonderful comprehensiveness to Christ’s delivering and renewing work. A comprehensiveness and sufficiency to which God calls His people to put their absolute trust. Therefore, nothing should be allowed to diminish or detract from the Savior’s glory in this regard.

The comments quoted at the beginning of this chapter, however, give a different understanding of Christ’s power and ability. They are based upon two lines of thinking now commonly accepted in the evangelical church. First, there is the thinking that serious problems, problems that affect the deep inner person are beyond the scope of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The author says: *“Their problems were not being solved by...a commitment to Christ.”* He indicates that, Christ’s soul-healing power is evidently not sufficient to help these people, for he also says, *“these scars are not touched”* by Christ in *“conversion and sanctifying grace.”* Whatever Christ, His Spirit, His Word and His people are able to do, they are not able to heal the deep scars of the soul.

The second line of thinking that underlies these statements is another commonly accepted idea. This is the idea that a distinction must be made between emotional and spiritual problems, and that, as distinct problems, they must necessarily be dealt with differently. People with spiritual problems are to be directed to pastors and spiritual counselors who direct people to Christ and His Word. However, people with deeper emotional problems are to be directed to specialists or counselors who are trained in

the latest theories and techniques gleaned from secular psychology. This thinking long ago made its way into mainstream evangelical thinking. A leading pioneer of Christian psychology said:

*Man is more than a spiritual being. He is an...emotional being as well, Although a person's spiritual condition affects all other aspects of his life, he may need diagnosis and help in these other areas. Therefore, a counselor may need to refer his counselee to the person who can help him most.*<sup>3</sup>

A more recent writer also makes this distinction between emotional and spiritual problems and the need for something more than Christ. Speaking of those who use secular techniques in Christian counseling, he says:

*These specialists integrate Christian theology and psychological techniques and help their clients with both spiritual and emotional growth...they respect and honor people's Christian values while helping them understand and change their emotional pain.*<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, it is believed that emotional problems are different from spiritual problems. Emotional problems are psychological in nature and require a different approach. Therefore, in the minds of many Christians, things such as anger and rage, anxiety (including neurosis and panic attacks), depression and the like are no longer considered spiritual issues. They are psychological and emotional. This is their thinking – it must be said in passing – in spite of the fact that Christ often speaks of the emotions and His ability to restore them. He asserts that He is able to restore peace, rest and joy irrespective of the pain and

*men*" (Matthew 15:7-9). Therefore, since Christ places such a premium on the heart, we should expect, that His renewing work would, in fact, exhibit itself in godly emotions. And, as we have seen, this is indeed what the Scripture teaches. Edwards comments on the vital role of restored emotions in worship. He says,

*That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God, in His word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, "fervent in spirit," and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion...If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercises of our hearts...unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigour in the actings of our inclination so requisite as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious.*<sup>16</sup>

We see, then, that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who declares the priority of godly emotions in worship. And it is the Lord Jesus who provides these emotions through His renewing work. It must be said in passing that I am not diminishing the vital role of truth and doctrine in worship. Christ Himself said *"those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). To neglect truth and doctrine is to corrupt worship in another direction. It is to degrade it into a sanctified superstition. Nonetheless, it is clear that Christ requires the involvement of godly emotion in worship.

Not only that, but without godly emotion there is

change that Christ works in His people. It is a change that penetrates to the deepest part of the inner person. In other words, there is no aspect of a person - no scar, no pain, no wound of the soul or damaged emotion- that can't be directly touched by His renewing and sanctifying grace. To teach otherwise, even unwittingly, is to detract from the Savior; it is to diminish His great, soul-healing glory.

Paul also speaks of the breadth of Christ's soul-transforming work. He is careful to emphasize the fact that all true believers are the objects of it. He says, *"but we all with unveiled face are being transformed...from glory to glory."* Notice that Christ is the soul-healer of all His people. None are excluded or are beyond His ability to change them deeply.

### **CHRIST HEALS THE EMOTIONS IN ORDER THAT HIS PEOPLE MAY OFFER ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP AND SERVICE**

There is one last matter which we must consider that proves that Christ is the healer of emotions. It is the fact that God requires godly emotions as a prerequisite for acceptable worship and service. Scripture constantly emphasizes that God rejects cold, lifeless worship. It is, in fact, no worship at all. It is what Jesus calls vain worship! Christ sternly rebukes cold-hearted worship. He says, *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophecy of you, saying, 'this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me, but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of*

suffering that a person is experiencing (John 14:27; 15:11; 16:33). The aim of this chapter is to show that such thinking has no basis in Scripture. More specifically, its aim is to show the sufficiency of Christ for the healing of severe emotional problems. My desire is that people in great need, and those who help them, will rest with complete confidence in Christ's all-sufficient soul-healing power. Its objective is to exalt the glory of Christ in His healing and delivering work.

I must make two clarifications before we go on. First, I am not saying that Christ's sufficiency means that a person should not consult a physician when there is an obvious physical problem. That is self-evident. Secondly, I am not discounting or ignoring the relationship that physical problems may have on a person's spiritual and emotional well-being. It is well known that physical ailments may cause and compound emotional problems. It must be emphatically stated that there are physical problems that cause depression and other emotional ills. For example, hormonal imbalances, hypothyroidism, fatigue, chronic viral infections, liver disease, and even brain tumors, and the like, have been shown to cause depression. This must be recognized, and steps must be taken by a physician to search this out. Of course, the fact that depression and other things may be caused or compounded by physical problems doesn't mean people aren't responsible to live godly lives as they seek to discover the source of their problem. Having made this clarification, we will now turn our attention to the sufficiency of Christ for the healing of emotional problems.

## CHRIST HEALS AND RESTORES THE WHOLE INNER PERSON

We will start by showing that the emotional and the spiritual are two inseparable aspects of the same inner person. This is evident, first of all, by the fact that the Scriptures teach that the sinfulness of fallen human nature consists in large part in ruined and corrupted emotions. This is stating nothing new. It has been an essential component of Christian theology for centuries that man's sinful depravity extends to the emotions as well as the mind and the will. It is a long accepted Christian teaching that man's fallen spiritual condition includes his fallen emotional state. Speaking in contemporary terms, the fall damaged man's emotional capacity. Therefore, the spiritual and emotional are inseparably linked, and both are the object of Christ's healing grace.

A number of Scriptures prove this. To begin with, the fallen heart is described as a hard, stony heart. That is, man, because of sin, is described as unaffected and unmoved in his emotions as he ought to be. This is manifested primarily towards God and secondarily, towards his fellow man. God, speaking through Ezekiel, says:

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (Ezekiel 36:26-27).*

Notice, man's heart is stonelike. That is, it is

change by the putting forth of His power. And since it is Christ who works in such an all-sufficient manner, our most needy and our most emotionally bankrupt people must be pointed to Him, who, as the Great Physician, is able to heal their soul.

Paul says more about the work of Christ in verse 18. He says that Christ not only initially renews, but that He continues His work in an on-going transformation of the soul. Paul says, "*But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit.*" Both the breadth and the depth of Christ's transforming work are indicated here. First, Paul speaks of its depth. This is indicated by the term 'transformed.' This word is a translation of a Greek word that comes into English in the word *metamorphosis*. It speaks of a penetrating transformation. One source defines the Greek word as "*to change the inward reality of something.*"<sup>15</sup> In the New Testament, it is the word used to describe an essential change that penetrates the whole person. It is contrasted in Romans 12:2 with another Greek term that refers to a surface, outward change. Believers are not to be, in Paul's words, "*conformed to this world [an outward superficial change] but, to be transformed [a deep, penetrating change] by the renewing of your mind*" (Romans 12:2). The root word (*morphe*) is used of Christ when it says of Him, "*although He existed in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped*" (Philippians 2:6). Christ was in the form of God. That is, in the core of His nature, in His essence and inner being, He was God. Therefore, the term 'transformed' emphasizes a core, internal change. A change that is intrinsic and essential as opposed to outward and incidental. It is just such a

*but with the Spirit of the living God not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts and such confidence we have through Christ toward God. (II Corinthians 3:2-4).*

First of all, note Paul's confidence. It is a confidence that Christ is able to effect a deep and pervasive change. It is a change "*written...on tablets of human hearts.*" Paul is referring to a penetrating change, a central feature of which, as we've seen, is a change in the emotions. Notice also that he attributes this change to Christ, though it is through the agency of the Holy Spirit. He says believers are "*a letter of Christ,*" a letter as it were written by Christ Himself. Calvin says it this way, "*Pursuing the metaphor he says that the Epistle of which he speaks [the great work on the heart] was written by Christ...he makes Christ the author and Himself the instrument.*"<sup>12</sup> Or as Matthew Henry says, "*they were the epistle of Christ...Christ was the author of all that was good in them.*"<sup>13</sup> In other words, Paul is emphasizing that it is Christ who comes through the Gospel. It is Christ whose power operates both in conversion and sanctification. Spurgeon once again is clear in this regard. He says:

*We do not receive any blessing apart from our Lord Jesus. In all works of the Spirit, whether regeneration or renewal, it is the Lord Jesus who is putting forth his power. For He saith 'behold I make all things new.' The Mediator is the conduit-pipe through which grace supplies us day by day with the water of life. Everything is by Jesus Christ.*<sup>14</sup>

It is Christ who works this great soul-healing

defective in its emotional capacity. Jonathan Edwards states it clearly:<sup>5</sup>

*Now, by a hard heart is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not easy to be moved with virtuous affection [emotion] like a stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved and hard to be impressed. Hence, the hard heart is called a stoney heart and is opposed to a heart of flesh, that has feeling and is sensibly touched and moved.*<sup>6</sup>

The inseparable connection between the spiritual and emotional is clear. Man's sinfulness—his spiritual hardness of heart—consists, in large part, in his ruined and damaged emotions. This, then, becomes the object of Christ's renewing work both in salvation and sanctification. In salvation, Christ gives a new heart: a heart of flesh, a tender heart, a heart with new receptive emotions. This heart then undergoes a further lifelong transformation. Both are the work of Christ as He renews and restores His people. As Edwards says:

*...Since also the Scriptures, do so frequently, place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart: it is evident that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must in great measure, consist in its having pious affections [emotions] and being easily susceptible of such affection [emotion].*<sup>7</sup>

There will be more on this later. For now, we can see that there is no biblical basis for treating emotional problems in a distinct way from spiritual problems. The ruin of the one involves the ruin of the other. Likewise, the restoration of the one involves the restoration of the other. Both come under the soul-

healing reach of Christ. To make such a distinction is, in effect, to remove from Christ the task which He came to do. It is to replace Him in His calling as the Great Physician of the diseased soul. In the final analysis, it is to diminish and detract from His saving glory.

There are many other passages of Scripture which demonstrate that man's emotions are part of his fallen spiritual state. The Lord Jesus, for example, was moved to anger and displeasure by the hardened unresponsive emotional condition of the heart, not simply intellectual and spiritual ignorance. Mark reporting Jesus' response to uncaring religious leaders says that He, *"after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart"* (Mark 3:6). In this same vein, Paul speaking, concerning a chief reason for God's anger towards man, says, *"Because of your stubbornness [hardness] and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God"* (Romans 2:5).

In addition, the Scriptures teach that man's corrupted emotional condition manifests itself in a spiritual manner in two primary ways. First, men do not fear God; it is not simply that men lack a mere intellectual reverence for God, but a heart gripped, as well, in its emotions. Indeed, fear is one of the strongest emotions; yet, in regard to God, men have none. Isaiah says, *"Why O Lord dost Thou cause us to stray from Thy ways and harden our heart from fearing thee?"* (Isaiah 63:17). According to Isaiah, the absence of the emotion of fear manifests a hard heart, a heart fallen in sin. Paul, in fact, states it as his climactic indictment against man, that proves that man is under sin. He says, *"There is no fear of God before their*

*world who are saved...saved even now – saved from the dominion of the evils which we described under our first head...Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus...is saved from the...power of sin. He shall no longer be the slave of his lusts and pleasures; he is saved from that dread bondage. He is saved from hate, for he has tasted love, and learned to love.*<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, emotional transformation is a central facet of Christ's renewing work, and, as we shall see, it is a central facet of sanctification as well. Those who claim that serious emotional problems aren't healed by spiritual renewal and transformation are sorely mistaken. It is, in many regards, fundamentally an issue of unbelief. In the words of Christ, they *"are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God"* (Matthew 22:29). Sadly, many are saying such things in the church. For example, one author speaking of a person who has in his words, *"a continuous feeling of anxiety, inadequacy, and inferiority,"* says that these problems aren't helped by Christ through the Gospel. He says, *"The good news of the Gospel has not penetrated down into his damaged inner self."*<sup>11</sup> Is this not a denigrating and diminishing of Christ? Does this not lessen Him in the minds of people? Christ, through the gospel, doesn't reach the deep inner person we are told! Is it any wonder that the church is infirm and powerless when such a weak, powerless Savior is preached in many pulpits?

Contrary to such statements is Paul's teaching in II Corinthians 3. In this classic text, Paul speaks in detail on the depth and breadth of Christ's great heart-work. He says,

*You are our letter. . .being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink,*

It is the Apostle Paul who speaks most directly concerning Christ's power to restore damaged emotions. A key text briefly mentioned above is worth repeating here. He says, *"we also once were...enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another"* (Titus 3:3). Notice, he describes the unregenerate, unsaved state as characterized by hatefulness and hating, envy and malice. Moreover, He says that believers have experienced a great healing of the soul. In Paul's words, *"we also once were"* all those things. Christians are no longer hateful, and hating; their emotions have been renewed and restored. How? Paul tells us, *"but when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3: 4-5).

By means of the renewing of the Holy Spirit, Christ penetrates the deep inner person and restores the emotions. He effects a great emotional transformation. Spurgeon, whose confidence in Christ's soul-healing power marked his unparalleled ministry, says:

*He speaks of 'living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another'...Revenge is the delight of the wicked, but to do kindness in return for injury is the luxury of a Christian. One main distinction between the heirs of God and the heirs of wrath is this: the unregenerate are in the power of self, and so of hate, but the regenerate are under the dominion of Christ, and so of love. God help us to stamp out the last spark of personal animosity...Hearken to this. There are men in the*

*eyes"* (Romans 3:18).

The other primary way man's fallen, emotional condition manifests itself spiritually is in the absence of love. Men have no love towards God nor towards their fellow man. Jesus says, *"but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves"* (John 5:42). Paul says that men are *"hateful to God"* (Romans 1:30). Paul also says that the unsaved, unregenerate life is characterized by hate. He says, *"For we also once were foolish ourselves, dishonest, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another"* (Titus 3:3). Clearly, malice, envy and hatred are emotions; and just as clearly, these emotions reflect the spiritual corruption of the fallen heart. To this point, then, we can conclude that Scripture makes it abundantly clear that man's emotions are corrupted, and this emotional corruption is spiritual in nature. They are intertwined, being two interconnected aspects of the same thing.

Therefore, just as the spiritual condition of fallen man consists in corrupted emotions, so, also, the object of Christ's renewing and sanctifying grace is to restore and heal these emotions. We will look at this in depth in a moment. For now it can be pointed out that both Paul and John teach that the healing of the emotions is a focal point of Christ's saving work. John says, *"we know we have passed out of death into life because we love"* (I John 3:14). Paul says, *"we also once were...hateful and hating"* (Titus :3). Clearly Scripture teaches that Christ changes His people to the deep inner core of their being; He heals and restores their emotions. They are people who are no longer dominated by hate. They are people who love. In light of such Scripture, there is no warrant to speak of

deep emotional problems as psychological and not spiritual. If Christ, in His delivering work, does not restore and heal the emotions, then what does He do? Does Christ merely change the mind and leave the heart and its emotions untouched? Is His work purely a cerebral, intellectual thing? Does He merely change thinking so that people are able to speculate and theorize about God in an unfeeling manner? Does not Scripture teach that God detests such a theoretical, knowledge-only religion? Did not this emphasis upon knowledge and intellect, to the exclusion of the heart and its emotions, bring Christ's scathing rebuke of the Pharisees? (Matthew 15:7-9).

Edwards, once again, is to the point about the central place of emotions and the danger of a mere intellectual view of Christ's renewing grace, He says:

*For although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection, yet true religion consists so much in the affections that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no religious affection. . . where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light; that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things.<sup>8</sup>*

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the emotions are a component of man's spiritual makeup. To separate them is to intellectualize Christ's saving

work, and, therefore, to endanger the Gospel!

## **CHRIST HEALS THE EMOTIONS BY HIS RENEWING AND SANCTIFYING GRACE**

We will now consider in more detail the main proof that demonstrates that Christ heals the emotions. It consists in the fact that a central element of the work of Christ, both in the new birth and in sanctification, is to effect a great change in ruined and damaged emotions. The Bible states this change in different ways. The new birth (regeneration), for example, is called a circumcision of the heart, Moses says, "Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul in order that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6). Whatever else the imagery of circumcision conveys, it conveys that Christ's work cuts deep into the inner person. It reaches man's emotional state. It reaches the heart. Those affected by it are marked by love. "God will circumcise your heart...to love." The new birth is also described as the receiving of a heart of flesh. God says through Ezekiel, "I will give you a new heart...a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). As we've seen, a heart of flesh is a tender heart, a heart with restored and healed emotions, a heart that, in Edwards' words, "Has feeling and is sensibly touched and moved."<sup>9</sup> It can be seen that the whole inner person comes under the domain of Christ's all-sufficient soul-healing work. He makes a heart tender. He changes it such that it now is moved and affected. He enables it to love!