

"That brings us to your first question, Charlie. Let me approach it this way: A problem I have always had with the presuppositionalists—though not with them exclusively—is their constant reference to *the natural man* as though there were a single *static* and *non-developmental* generic description of the unsaved intellect—that the unsaved intellect, outside of special divine intervention, is a rational and cognitive *zero* when it comes to entertaining the Gospel message. Keep in mind that I have already granted that spiritual deadness *is* a generic condition of the unsaved. But this deadness, I believe, is a deadness *with a temporal dynamic*: the dynamic of relational estrangement. There can hardly be a better reference to the estranged response to God than that given in Romans 1:28: ' . . . they did not *like* to retain a knowledge of God.' That's the language of estrangement, not incomprehension. Another clear verse to this effect is Romans 8:7: ' . . . the fleshly mind is *hostile* toward God.' And this too speaks of estrangement rather than literal cognitive deadness to God. Let me illustrate what I mean by means of some current neurophysiology.

"Perhaps you have read Oliver Sacks's book, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* [1970]. In this and a more recent book (*An Anthropologist on Mars*, [1995]), Sacks tells the stories of people suffering from a variety of neurological deficits. One such deficit is *agnosia*—the partial or total inability to recognize a specified class of familiar objects by a sensory modality (e.g., vision). Agnosia is selective for certain common objects, and the type of agnosia most discussed these days is the inability to find faces familiar. Facial agnosia is called *prosopagnosia*, joining the Greek word *prosopon*, meaning 'face,' to agnosia. Anyhow, people who are quite bright and with otherwise normal vision may suffer from prosopagnosia. When they do, they cannot find even their own spouses and family members familiar by the sense of sight. Although they may *see* objects perfectly well, and while they can find voices and smells perfectly familiar, their sense of sight cannot deliver a *familiar* face. They see their significant others without being able to *see* who they are! The part of the brain that handles emotional and personal nuance of facial gestalts is impaired for whatever reason, and so they are informationally blind in this one area.

"Well, does Scripture mean a similar informational blindness in the case of the unconverted? Did the inhabitants of Capernaum, let us say, have *theosagnosia*—an utter blindness to the significance of divine working