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**THE MEANING  
& MAKING  
OF MAN**

*(A series of seven studies on  
Christian Counselling)*

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*by*

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Study One:  
***Man the Created***

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**An Introduction to the Studies**

**Knowing What Man Is**

The Psalmist cried, ‘What is Man<sup>1</sup> that thou art mindful of him, and the son of Man that thou dost care for him?’ He asked this question against the background of men’s seeming smallness in the face of the vast galaxies of the heavens. Why should God even consider man, much less be specially *mindful* of him and *care* for him? When we ask ‘What is Man?’ we are wanting to know all we can of humanity. This is the purpose of our studies.

**The Sources of Knowledge Concerning Man**

Our sources for knowing the nature of humanity are many. For our purposes we can describe them as biblical and extra-biblical. The two are not necessarily opposed, unless of course we start off with

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<sup>1</sup> The use of ‘Man’ here is not intended to be sexist. It is the generic use of the word, as against the specific use for the male human. That is, it stands for (i) the male-female entity (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-2), and (ii) the entire human race (cf. Acts 17:26; Rom. 5:12).

the presupposition that only one or the other is authentic. If we think all knowledge of God comes only from the Bible, then we will reject all non-biblical knowledge, which would be foolish, since we derive enormous knowledge of man from scientific research. If we think that biblical knowledge of man is worthless or even subsidiary to scientific research then again we would be rejecting a resource which might add to our understanding of man, in which case we would not be scientific. On any score the Bible is a resource for research. It has all the case histories we need; the uninhibited utterances of men and women in their various states of relationship, emotion, hope, hatred and despair.

Scientific sources are scientific and so are limited when Man is not taken into consideration as a spiritual being. When this possibility is accepted then the Bible can be of great use to scientific research. We cannot afford any kind of presupposition which is not based on fact. Of course intuitive reasoning is not presuppositional: intuition is valuable and has preceded many a scientific discovery. The Bible is basically revelational, and must be treated as such. As we will shortly see, human beings may have a bias which is religious or anti-religious, and both may impede genuine enquiry. Basically there is a difference between faith which is based on revelation, and religion which is human searching for the Divine. To be persons of faith does not necessarily mean being religious.

### **The Meaning of, and Need for, Revelation**

Internally the Bible speaks of Man's creation from (and by) which Man knew God, and then of his fall away from God, so that he rejected the way of God for the way of human autonomy. This naturally enough set Man at odds with himself, i.e. created to know

God, he desired not to know Him—at least not relationally—and so the utterances and other communications of God were not welcome. Also autonomous thinking precludes unbiased hearing. As we will see, the Scriptures speak of God's special revelations which He intends should break through the barrier of non-hearing. We must not think of revelation as the divulgence of esoteric or occultic (hidden) truth—revelations known only to the initiated—so much as disclosures by God of Himself, creation and Man (i.e. revelations which are theological, cosmological and anthropological). Biblically Man is not expected to go beyond what is necessary for him to know. Humanistically modern Man believes there is virtually no limit to the knowledge he may obtain, even the wide diversity of discovery calls for extraordinary computing.

Since the human brain is itself extraordinary, science cannot afford to rule out the idea of revelation both biblical (written) and extra-biblical (God speaking to human beings through various media).

### **Some Reasons For Wanting to Know Man**

The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes said, 'He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.' Humans want to know everything! They want to know all the action of history—without exception. They want to understand everything. Unfallen man—we assume—knew God, and knew Him in the *relational* way. Because he was made in God's image he could know himself, could know others, and could know creation. We will see that Man's break in relationship with God was also a break in relationship with others, with himself, and with his

environment. The loss of relational knowledge drives him to seek to recover what he has lost. Especially, then, man desires to know himself and this often with a view to being able to profit by his self-knowledge.

For our purposes the primary reason for wanting to know Man is related to being helpful—as humans—one to another. For obvious reasons we need to know Man (i) as innocent and unfallen, (ii) as fallen, (iii) as renewed by redemption, (iv) as seeking holiness of living, (v) as incomplete and looking forward to his completion in redemption, i.e. to being fulfilled by glorification, and thus by taking up his true position in the new, eternal age. If we do not understand these categories of human experience and human being we certainly will be unable to be effectively helpful in the matter of human counselling.

### **Who Can Benefit by Studying Theological Anthropology?**

Probably every one. Since biblical anthropology is simply a down-to-earth study of the text of the Scriptures, it should benefit us all. Undoubtedly our experience of human living should help us to understand the biblical text, and those who are involved in the various disciplines which are medical, social, sociological, behavioural (psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, etc.) should recognize corresponding elements within their own areas. Theology—once called the queen of sciences—and science are not basically opposed to one another, even though some argue that this is the case. Undoubtedly all of us have some elements of hidden agenda in regard to theology and science, but ultimately there may not be any need for variance within the two.

### **Human Ability to Know Humanity**

It would seem the most obvious thing for Man is that he is able to understand Man. This may not be wholly the case. Certain subjective factors may prevent us being wholly unbiased. Facts do not necessarily constitute the truth. Whilst facts may be 'true'—as against 'untrue'—yet the mere aggregation of facts may not conduct us to the truth. On the biblical assumption, truth is God, Who He is, what He does, and all other elements pertaining to Him. Outside of this we may generally assume that much knowledge concerning man may be accrued by research, much of it may find practical application, and much be reserved as information which, combined with further discoveries, may also prove useful in application. Those who think this is the truth may still be unsatisfied with it as the reason for all things, and the answer to life.

We would say that Man cannot fully know Man for the following reasons, (i) Man is made in the image of God and since we cannot work from the image to the reality (the human to the Divine), we must first know God in order to know Man, (ii) Man fallen is unable to know fully either God or Man, and indeed has a psychological, emotional impediment in facing up to who and what he is, (iii) there are elements beyond Man's creatureliness, i.e. limits to his knowledge. Some would say that Man being finite cannot know things infinite: we would say that Man being a creature cannot know God Who is Creator.

### **The Value of Theological Anthropology**

If our premiss is true that God reveals truth to us through the written word and other media (e.g. creation, angelic visitants, the law, the

prophets [cf. dreams and visions], conscience, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the church), then here is authentic information which bypasses Man's psychological and emotional dislike for the truth of God, creation and Man. The Bible is easy to read, has no complex ideas, no philosophical arguments, and no complicated ideas and concepts. Theology may have these. If, however, theological anthropology is put forth simply it will be a drawing together of the revealed facts.

For those who do not take the Bible as revealed truth, there is still a use of it in working through human situations and relations in all kinds of conditions, i.e. both favourable and adverse. For those who are Christians by God's transforming act of forgiveness and love, the Scriptures will mean infinitely more. Any one may come to know Man to the full pitch of what Scripture says of him.

Let us repeat: no matter at what academic or intellectual level any given person may be, he/she should be able to follow this simple course and arrive at a profound understanding of Man, especially in the light of his/her Father, Creator and Redeemer.

### **The Reliability of Theological Anthropology**

If we accept the thesis that the Scriptures give us revelational knowledge, then we may proceed with confidence that theological anthropology is an authentic source of knowledge. It must be proceeded with along the same lines as all forms of enquiry, i.e. not speculative but scientific in the sense that it accords with proper logic. Naturally enough the basic premisses may differ from some extra-biblical premisses but that does not necessarily invalidate it. A steady reader of the Scriptures will find, sooner or later, that they have a unity and integrity of their own, and provided we understand

this milieu, and do not introduce extra-biblical reasoning to validate or explain the revelational truth, then we should have little trouble. For example, we may find the Scriptures setting forth a doctrine of predestination. If we try to apply philosophical questions or reasonings to this theme we may find ourselves altering the biblical presentation and even its substance. It will be best to flow with the theme as biblically presented until it is fully grasped. We may then—if we wish—compare with other faith-systems or philosophical-systems if we wish to determine its value for our own ways of thinking.

## **The Substance of the Study**

### **The Biblical Resources Regarding the Study of Man**

We can go about our enquiry in the following ways, (i) scan the Scriptures for all the comments made regarding Man, his creation, constitution, place in history, vocation and relationships with God, the creation, himself and others, so deducing a doctrine of Man, (ii) within the Scriptures we can follow the history of Man, his behaviour and actions, and deduce a doctrine of Man, (iii) we can use methods '(i)' and '(ii)' together and deduce a doctrine of Man, (iv) we can take Jesus as the true Man, i.e. the paradigm for all humans, and by observing him, his actions, utterances and teaching, derive from him a doctrine of Man, (v) we can utilize all the elements of the methods we have named and so come to the biblical doctrine of Man.

What we must constantly keep in mind is the way the

Scriptures talk about Man, i.e. that he has been created in time, lives in time, has his vocation in time, but that he is nevertheless a creature of the future, a creature with immortal connotation and as such is, in this life, incomplete. He has a *telos*—a God-planned, pre-set goal, and so is a ‘becoming’ creature. Whilst in this world he is never a complete person because of his ever ‘becoming’. Within the biblical system we should, then, expect to find a consistent disclosure of the nature of Man. Since all truth is of God we would expect to find extra-biblical materials to confirm the biblical disclosures.

### **The Biblical Disclosure of Man as Created**

In concluding creation God said, ‘Let us make man in our image,<sup>2</sup> after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’ (Gen. 1:26). The text continues, ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the whole earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the face of the earth”’ (Gen. 1:27–28). The text concludes (Gen. 1:31), ‘And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good’.

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<sup>2</sup> For expanded reading use *The Things We Firmly Believe*, G. Bingham, pp. 72–75; *On Being Human*, R. S. Anderson, pp. 69–87; *The True Image*, P. E. Hughes, pp. 1–69; *Created in God’s Image*, A. A. Hoekema, pp. 1–101; Article ‘Anthropology’ in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 28–30. See also Bibliography at the conclusion of these studies.

This disclosure tells us that (i) man was created as the creature closest to God of all creatures even celestial creatures (cf. Ps. 8:5, ‘Yet thou hast made him a little less than God’), (ii) that Man was a male–female entity, i.e. a one–unity, (iii) that God blessed them together, and gave them—together—a significant mandate to receive the creation and administer it, subduing all dynamic elements.

### ***The Image of God***

Man is the image and glory of God (Gen. 5:1; 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; cf. Ps. 8:5–8). The terms ‘likeness’ and ‘image’ are generally seen to be the one as an expression of Hebrew parallelism, though some theologians distinguish between them. One definition is, ‘Everything that God is, man is like that, but anything that God is, Man is none of that’, i.e. to be Man is not to be God but to be utterly like Him, reflecting Him.<sup>3</sup> Theology speaks of God’s subsistent being—i.e. how He is—and of His economic or revelational being—i.e. what He does. Likewise Man subsists in dependence upon God, and acts with and for God. The image, then, is Man as a dynamic creature in relationship with God, with his fellow-creatures, the creation and himself, always acting according to the will of God and so reflecting the communicable attributes of God which are holiness, righteousness, love, goodness and truth. Proverbs 4:23 depicts man’s heart as flowing out these issues or elements.

For all this to have been so, Man had to be in the Paradise of God. He had to live in the presence of God. This was his life: he

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<sup>3</sup> II Pet. 1:4 says that we are partakers of the divine nature. A doctrine of theosis or the divinization of man has been propounded. It does not claim that Man becomes divine—having deity—but that God makes him one with Himself, whilst still leaving him to be Man.

had no other. Always in God he lives and moves and has his being. This must be contemplated.

### ***Man a Being of Glory***

God's glory is His own being. Likewise man's being was his glory since he reflected God's being and glory (I Cor. 11:7). God invested him with glory (Ps. 8:5f.). The attributes of God are His glory, and man is glorious when he flows forth from himself such attributes. According to Isaiah 43:6–7, I Corinthians 2:6–10, and Ephesians 1:4–14, Man was made for eternal glory. Since God breathed into the dust His breath—*ruach*—so Man was filled with the glory of God. God being the One Who supremely has choice, man became a moral creature—a creature of choice. Genesis 2:16–17 told Man he could eat of every tree of the garden—including 'the tree of life'—but 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' was forbidden to him, and this for his own benefit. He was told of a thing called 'death'. Man, then, was a testable creature. To maintain his humanity he would have to remain within God: he would have to believe and trust and act upon the word of God. His glory would remain with him in his intimate relationship with God.

### ***Man a Living Being***

A second account of Man's creation is found in Genesis 2:7, 'then the Lord God formed man of dust<sup>4</sup> from the ground, and

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<sup>4</sup> In a way we can say that all a man essentially is is dust—'you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust and to dust you shall return,' was God's statement after the Fall (Gen. 3:19), and the Hebrew was constantly conscious of this. Job said, 'Remember that thou hast made me of clay; and wilt thou turn me to dust again?' (10:9). The Psalmist said (22:15), 'thou dost lay me in the dust of death.' Ecclesiastes 3:20 has it, 'All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.' Kipling in his 'Last Reccessional' said, 'All valiant dust that builds on dust.' In regard to Genesis 2:7, Ecclesiastes 12:7 says of man's death, 'and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit [*ruach*] returns to God who gave it.'

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being'. Some translations have 'living soul' because in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the 'Septuagint' or 'LXX') the Greek word *psyche* is used. For the Greeks Man had a soul which was within his body, but a separate entity. For the Hebrews Man was a 'being' a whole being even though the terms 'body', 'soul' and 'spirit' were often used of him. Sometimes these terms were interchangeable. The term for 'being' is *nephesh* and this *nephesh* or personality (to use a modern term for it) was sustained by *ruach* or 'the breath' of God. Man always remains a creature dependent upon God. Without *ruach* the *nephesh* dies. Without *ruach* all man's personality (i.e. his *nephesh*) is without dynamic. Acts 17:28 quotes a Greek poet approvingly, 'In him [God] we live and move and have our being'. Man, of himself, is not immortal (I Tim. 6:15–16), yet nowhere is it said that God *extinguishes* a person (cf. John 5:28–29). Ecclesiastes 3:11 says 'He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end'.

### ***Man and Woman Together and as One***

Genesis 2:18–23 depicts the first man who is Man on his own (cf. Gen. 1:27a) until the woman is made, as naming all the creatures. The creatures stand in a hierarchical relation to Man as Man does to God. The creatures cannot provide him with a mate, and so God makes woman out of the side of the man. In one sense



she is a separate creation, in another sense she derives from the man—a point Paul makes in I Corinthians 11:8, ‘For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.’ The utter oneness of the man and the woman is expressed in the man’s statement:

This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.

Paul states that God, Christ, the man and the woman are in hierarchical relationship—a matter we will explore later.<sup>5</sup> As we see in Genesis 1:28 Man—man and woman as one—is a vocational creature with delegated authority over the earth and its fauna and flora. When God blessed the primal couple (Gen. 1:28) it was with a view to them being fruitful, multiplying their offspring, subduing dynamic elements, and ruling the earth. Any failure to do this would mean they did not fulfil their humanity, and their oneness as a male–female entity in hierarchical relationship.<sup>6</sup>

Genesis 2:24–25 shows the intimate relationships of the man and the woman, ‘Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were naked and were not ashamed’. This intimacy was a matter, too, of innocence, and the ‘one–flesh’ entity they experienced was essential to their being truly Man in the universe.

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<sup>5</sup> For the moment we describe a hierarchy as ‘a dynamic relational entity constituting love, which has a function to perform in fulfilling its given goal’. According to the N.T. each person is in the other in ascending–descending order, so that domination—as such—is absent from the entity.

<sup>6</sup> By ‘hierarchical relationship’ we mean that hierarchy of God, the male and the female—the three together—working to fulfil the creational mandate. This mandate has never been rescinded.

Sociality is of the essence of created Man. Any loss of innocency and any diminishing of the ‘one–flesh’ relationship would be bound to affect them adversely, for it would interfere with them being truly Man. To know God intimately, to be in Him, to know one another intimately and to be in one another, is the essence of true living and so is basic to all relationships.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Man and Woman Were Without Navels***

This is a semi–humorous quip. Cain and Abel had navels, but presumably their parents didn’t. By this we mean the first couple did not have anything of birth and growth into adults which had affected them. They had no ‘history’ other than the creative and providential action of God. In their union they had no ‘residual’ problems. It is difficult for us to conceive the incredible power and dimensions of utter innocence, the serenity and peace of a guiltless state, since only in such a state would true sociality be present.

### ***Man a Creature of Vocation and of Destiny***

The mandate of Genesis 1:28 means Man was intended to be a creature of vocation. To work out the vocation would require innumerable and varied vocations across the whole human race. The interrelationships of the whole human race would be essentially meaningful. To ‘fill up’ the earth points to a climactic completion of the task, and so to a *telos* or end–goal. Here there is more than a hint of destiny. As a whole the Scriptures point to a glorious destiny, and whilst this was not stated explicitly in the creation accounts, the

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. John 17:3 and I John 5:20 where life is said to be rich and intimate relationships. I John 3:14 indicates that one is alive when one loves the brethren.

whole of Scripture indicates Man will be admitted into the fellowship of the Triune Godhead.<sup>8</sup> Vocation is essential to Man being Man and provides a strong clue to us of the essential state of man. We must note that vocation<sup>9</sup> was in the context of marriage and family and so of true societal relationships (Gen. 1:28; 2:18–24). Vocation and destiny—rightly understood—are keys to understanding Man.

### ***The Unity of the Human Race***

Paul told the Greeks at Athens (Acts 17:26), ‘And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation . . .’ His statement in Romans 5:12ff. regarding the ‘one man’ includes all human beings in Him, as also does I Corinthians 15:22, 45–49. The solidary nature of the human race has long been the subject of theologians.<sup>10</sup> Paul links the solidary nature of the human race with the times and places of nations. John Donne in his poem ‘Devotion’, ‘No man is an Island entire of it self . . . any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in *Mankind*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell*

<sup>8</sup> The theme of Man’s fellowship with the living God is found in the creation account, but is explicitly stated in Romans 8:14–30. Present Man has fellowship with God as seen in Colossians 3:3; I Corinthians 1:9; I John 1:3; II Peter 1:4.

<sup>9</sup> We need to understand the doctrine of work and vocation as presented through the Scriptures. God has always been *the Worker* (John 5:17; cf. Ps. 8:3) and man—His image—is necessarily a worker. The doctrine of work in a fallen world is set out by Paul in Ephesians 4:28. It was Paul who said, ‘If any one will not work, let him not eat’ (II Thess. 3:10–11).

<sup>10</sup> See *Adam and the Family* (De Fraine) and *Man in Community* (R. P. Shedd) for an extension of this idea.

tolls; It tolls for *thee*.’ Even so, the solidary nature of the human race has vast implications for understanding sociality.

### ***The Powers Creating Man***

Genesis 1:1–3 informs us that God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth and present also was ‘the Spirit of *Elohim*’ who moved across the face of the waters. When God spoke He created by this means of His Word. John 1:1–3 tells us the Word (*Logos*) of God created all things and this is confirmed by Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2, but in both these contexts the Word is called ‘the Son’. In I Corinthians 8:6 the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of as creating all things with ‘the Father’. The Spirit of God is the creative Spirit in Job 33:4, and in Psalm 104:29–30, whilst in Romans 8:2 and II Corinthians 3:6 he is depicted as the Spirit of life, i.e. he gives life. In Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2 the Son upholds the creation, i.e. it derives its life continually from him. Likewise with the Spirit of life (Job 27:3; Ps. 104:29). Job said, ‘as long as my breath [*neshamah*] is in me, and the spirit [*ruach*] of God is in my nostrils.’

The conclusion we draw from this is that Man has been created by the Father, Son and Spirit in one dynamic and unified act. This assures us the creating of man is a wonderful thing. It underlines Acts 17:28, i.e. that in God, Man lives and moves and has his being. It also shows man is always dependent upon God for his life and action.

### ***The Value of Understanding Man as Created***

If we do not understand Man as created, then we will have no idea regarding his fallen state, and tensions in which he lives

because he is not whole, has lost innocency, has become emotionally and functionally awry. If we understand him as created we can see why his loss of glory and the wrong use of the *imago Dei* (image of God) cause him great suffering, anger—and so on. It could be that human beings do not wish to see Man in his state of innocence, bliss, serenity (etc.) because the contrast is too painful, and sensitizes afresh to guilt. The positive value of knowing what Man was—as created—is that we understand the nostalgia, the loss of self-esteem and similar matters.

### ***Man in Relation to God***

As we go on through our studies we will see that Man is (i) a creature to the Creator, God, (ii) a child to the Father, God, (iii) a subject to the King, God. His essential relationships come out of his essential being. To deny these relationships is to deny himself the fullness of his humanity.

### **A Conclusion as to Created Man**

We must recognize that our study on Man as created is a basic one, but that we have done it little justice in the simplified form here presented. However, we can come to certain (biblical) conclusions regarding man:

- (a) Man is fully Man only in relationship to God as Creator, Father and King.
- (b) Man's life is fully dependent upon God for continued existence, and for the supply of life and human powers.

He is a creature of glory, especially when in full relationship with God, fellow-creatures, creation and himself.

- (c) Man is a social creature knowing God and fellow-man: the human race is a solidary whole, all human beings being involved in all human beings.
- (d) Man is a male-female entity. Man always lives in hierarchical relationships, and these are authentic in love, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth. They are functional and teleological.
- (e) Man is a vocational creature working within God's mandate. Marriage is related to the mandate, and Man has a destiny which is linked with the mandate. His creation has eternity in sight and mind when he will constitute a 'kingdom of priests'.
- (f) Man is a creature yet 'God has put eternity into his heart'. Being in the image of God he cannot be satisfied with less than God and less than eternity.
- (g) Man is a creature of enormous intellectual power and capacity—such being required to rule over all creation. The Scriptures reveal him as ultimately ruling over the celestial creatures, and as a son of God being above all authorities, principalities and powers and 'every name that is named'. This is called his 'heritage' and will be his when he is admitted into the fellowship of the Godhead.

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Study Two:  
***Man in Falleness & Guilt***

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## Man Moral and Temptable

Man had been created without any flaw. Genesis 1:31 tells us God saw everything as good, i.e. functionally good. Bonhoeffer once said, 'Man can only be tempted where there is innocence. Where there is guilt sin has already gained power.' God had forbidden Man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was the word of the Lord. Another word came to Man from the serpent via the primal woman. In Genesis 3:1 (cf. Rev. 12:9) the serpent is depicted as 'the most subtle [i.e. crafty] of all the wild beasts'. His dialogue is perhaps referred to in John 10:10a, and in the Book of Revelation he is referred to as the one who deceives the whole world (12:9; 20:3, 10; cf. 13:14; 19:20). I Timothy 2:14 says 'the woman was deceived and became a transgressor'.

The woman was tricked into questioning the word of God in regard to the forbidden tree. Even so, she was responsible for being deceived (cf. James 1:13–15). She utilized her relationship with the primal man to have him join her in the rejection of God's word in favour of the serpent's word. I Timothy 2:12 rejects woman taking primacy in the creational, relational hierarchy of God,<sup>1</sup> man and

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<sup>1</sup> Some theologians have reasoned that Paul's refusal to allow women to have authority over men comes from seeing woman's part as a helpmeet to her husband in the hierarchy, the man is also to rule in the hierarchy, and the woman should depend upon the man for primary decisions which are moral and which affect relationships with God and fellow-humanity. If to be as God (*Elohim*) means 'as gods' then the woman would

woman—cf. Genesis 3:17, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife . . .'

The essence of the temptation was 'You shall be as God'. It could also have meant 'You shall be as gods', since the word for God was *Elohim* and can have a plural sense. The woman may have seen the hierarchical order change to an egalitarian one, i.e. she and the man would be gods, i.e. equal.<sup>2</sup> In any case Man to be *as* God would be vastly different from being *like* God. Man was made *like* God, but not *as* God. To be *as* God would mean equality with Him. It would mean autonomy.

### The Effects of Man's Rejection of God's Word, i.e. Rejection of God

Man had been warned this would be death (Gen. 2:17; 3:2–3) and so it was. Romans 5:12 indicates this to be the case but the death was primarily relational, i.e. a death to God (for the reverse of this see II Cor. 5:14, 15). This means man denied his being-in-God, and claimed a being-Man-in-himself, i.e. autonomous being, something impossible by nature of the case. He had been given freedom in choice but his wrong choice brought him into bondage (cf. John 8:34). By such choice he had alienated himself from God. He now had no word of God, and would have to do with the word of himself and the word of the serpent.<sup>3</sup>

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not be ruled over. The first experiment in egalitarian relationships would begin.

<sup>2</sup> This may not even be speculative, since the word 'desire' in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 may also be synonymous in use, i.e. both mean 'desire to rule over you'.

<sup>3</sup> John 1:1–3 says all things were created by the Word (the Logos). In that Word was life, and the life was the light of men, i.e. man was to be enlightened by the Word, to know what to do, how to live, and where to go. Bereft of this life Man became bereft of light and life.

Romans 1:18–32 is a key chapter to our present discussion. Man in knowing God refused to know Him—rejected knowledge of God—the results of which were:

- (a) He refused to honour God;
- (b) He refused to be thankful to Him;
- (c) His thinking became futile, i.e. his mind was darkened and he lost moral sensitivity (cf. Eph. 4:17–19);
- (d) He imagined his foolishness was wisdom and expressed this ‘wisdom’ by creating idols;

(e) Idolatry led to sexual immorality, and sexual immorality to sexual deviations,<sup>4</sup> the outcome of which was the development of a ‘base mind’, i.e. a reprobate mind which is a mind rejected by God, and which results in the repudiated one losing the last vestiges of moral discernment.<sup>5</sup> All we had described in this paragraph can be said to result from the loss of Man’s relationship with God, which in turn brought a fragmentation in all relationships.

The effects of the Fall in Genesis chapter 3—especially when

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<sup>4</sup> Some theologians see the events of Romans 1:20–32 as developing from point to point, i.e. successively. Thus rejection of God leads to idolatry, idolatry to sexual immorality—and so on. Other theologians see these all happening simultaneously. In any case the end result is the same.

<sup>5</sup> We will shortly be discussing the matter of man under wrath. Reprobation is part of this wrath, and in it man is abandoned to himself, a self which has come under the power of sin, so that all relationships are defective and indeed quite dangerous.

linked with Romans 1:18–32—can be summed up as follows:

- (a) Man lost relationship with God (cf. John 17:3; I John 5:20) and so came into death. This death was primarily relational but resulted eventually in physical death.<sup>6</sup> To lose relationship with God is to be alienated from Him and to be cut off from the constant source of true life (cf. Jer. 2:13). It is true that God sustains Man’s biological existence, but Man is ‘out of life’. Because a person has never had the richness of life in God, and knowing his being—and the Being of God—in communion, he does not know what he has missed.
- (b) Man lost relationship within the community of humanity (Gen. 3:12f.). The ‘one-flesh’ unity of the primal couple was divided, the man accusing the woman. The warmest and most intimate of relationships was denied the couple. The basis of familial relationships was attacked. The fruits of this broken relationship are seen in the children of the primal couple—one a murderer whilst the other was a prophet and a person of faith. To be guilty<sup>7</sup> before God is to be guilty before one

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<sup>6</sup> Death is primarily relational. At physical death one does not cease to exist but relationships with this world are broken. Man is spoken of as doing ‘dead works’ (Heb. 6:1; 9:14), i.e. the works of a dead person. Man is spoken of as being ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ (Eph. 2:1, 5) and the promiscuous widow is spoken of as being ‘dead even while she lives’ (I Tim. 5:6).

<sup>7</sup> We have to understand guilt in two ways, (i) Man’s existential guilt for *not* being what God has created him, i.e. for being autonomous, apart from God, and (ii) his legal guilt, i.e. for the acts he has committed against the law of God, or for the acts he has not committed which are required of him. Then we must recognize that there are two elements to guilt, the first being objective guilt, i.e. commensurate with the wrong done or the good not done, and then subjective guilt which is what we *feel*. Subjective guilt is no guide to our actual guilt since some have morbid or overriding consciences, and others have—it would seem—desensitized themselves to such feelings.

another (Gen. 3:8–10).

- (c) The way of man was now *in himself*—a state impossible to one who is a child to the Father, a creature to the Creator, and a servant to the King. These broken relationships bring terrible dislocation of spirit to the one rejecting God. Humanity lives asymmetrically, in awryness, disfunctionally, in what has been called existential misery. Being depraved, the heart is away from the mind of God. Being deprived of original glory the spirit feels the utter abjectness of being, and suffers from deep inferiority and the continuing sense of failure.
- (d) The human race is *without direction* when it rejects God's direction (e.g. the mandate, Gen. 1:28) as is indicated in Jeremiah 10:23. True vocation and true destiny are lost, and with them the true purpose of life, so that some lesser and other purpose has to be devised by Man.
- (e) Romans 5:12—a commentary on Genesis 3—tells us that two elements entered into man's life, (i) sin, and (ii) death. Paul—as did Christ—shows that sin and death are tyrants dominating Man, driving him into fear. Fear of death is perhaps the most prominent dread humanity knows.<sup>8</sup> The power, penalty, pollution and presence of sin are elements that humanity cannot combat. The high glory of humanity is fearfully

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<sup>8</sup> Whilst the thought of death and corruption of the body are distasteful to the human race, the fear of death is more than this. Often thought of as 'fear of the unknown' it is in fact fear of the known, i.e. fear of facing God, fear engendered by guilt and the fact of having lost original glory. It is fear of judgement itself in which we face the eyes of the Judge. So see Hebrews 2:14–15; 9:27; I John 4:16–18. Paul Tillich once said, 'Men are afraid of death, not because they *have* to die, but because they *deserve* to die.'

demeaned and defiled by the wretchedness and pollution of sin (cf. Isa. 1:3–6; Rom. 3:9–18).

- (f) Linked with the invasion of sin and death into humanity is also the power of Satan and his forces, including his 'world system'. Ephesians 2:1–3—with kindred passages (cf. Heb. 2:14–15; Col. 2:14–15; Jude 9)—shows that Man is in some way indebted to evil powers and is in bondage to them. Man, then, is not 'free' in the sense that he thought he would be when he shook himself free from God. His *guilt* holds him bound to enemies such as sin, death, the world, Satan, the flesh,<sup>9</sup> conscience, God's wrath and the law. We do not have space here to deal with each one exhaustively, but each adds to the burden and bondage of man separated from God.
- (g) Man in his rebellion against God is under the wrath of God because he 'holds down [suppresses] the truth in acts of unrighteousness' (Rom. 1:18). God's wrath in Romans 1:18–32 consists in God giving Man over to his guilt of sin. Verses 24, 26 and 28 say 'God gave them up to . . .' This was His judgement, for as their sin brought guilt, and their guilt had its effect on them so that they sinned more, so their guilt constantly compounding itself became the wrath of God. Thus we do not say that God's wrath is sin, but that the guilt of sin is God's wrath, for His personal judgement comes upon human beings in their guilt. God does not merely abandon them to 'stew in their own juice' but personally gives them over to (up to) their own evil. Examples of this can be

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<sup>9</sup> By 'flesh' we mean in this case humanity as it has been affected by sin. Not being in its original innocent state it is always rebellious to God and His law (cf. Rom. 3:5–8). Man is bound to live in this state.

found in Psalm 31:10; 32:3–4; 38:1–8; cf. 7:11. Another way of saying this is to speak of man's existential misery for this is the wrath of God, as the Psalms just cited indicate.

### **Man Under the Curse and Guilt**

Man was created by the hand of God and placed into a situation and state of blessedness. The Fall divided Man from God, the man from the woman, and each from himself or herself. Woman was not treated as foolish and ignorant person who had been victimized but as conscious and accountable person who had transgressed (cf. Gen. 3:13; I Tim. 2:14), and so was punished. The curse for her would mean pain in childbirth and the domination of her husband. For the husband it would mean the ground was so cursed that it would be difficult to earn a living from it. The serpent, too, was cursed by having to 'eat dust', and never being at peace, since from the seed of woman would come his destruction. The creation—of itself—was not evil but its destiny was linked with that of Man as is evident from Romans 8:18–25. Creation was subjected to emptiness or futility—unable to achieve its creational goals—and man also was caught in this 'bondage to corruption'.

Doubtless the curse contains all things relating to sickness, and what we might call 'creational aberrations'. These things are constant reminders to the human race of its rebellion against God. With the curse, Man also has to live under what we may call 'the dynamics of guilt', i.e. the actions of human beings as they live in guilt. These are things of anger, of the disquieted conscience, and which drive them to sinful and criminal acts. Wars may be said to be part of these. These things arise from the depravity of man whose evil is described in passages such as Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:1–4;

15:14; Psalm 10:3–9; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21–23; John 2: 24–25; Romans 1:29–32; 3:9–18; cf. Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 2:1–3; I Timothy 1:8–11. This depravity frightens those who see it in Man, and then see it, personally, in themselves.

Again Man was commanded in the creational mandate to move across the earth, share it, have good stewardship of it, and take responsibility for it. Murder by Cain, his ejection from the presence of God, his building a city, the building of kingdoms by Nimrod and his successors, as well as the blasphemy and arrogance of the building of Babel and its wall and tower,<sup>10</sup> all show that fallen Man lives contrary to God. Not having the ultimate goal in mind he is selfish and purposeless.

All humanity has to live within the welter of these things we have just stated. Such living seems impossible, so terrible are the circumstances and environment which man has called down upon himself by his separation from God.

### **A Commentary on the State of Fallen Man**

The three sections immediately above speak of the effects of Man's separating himself from God. Now we need to see some of the implications of these effects, and how a counsellor or helper can recognize the state and problems of the person needing help.

The first thing we must recognize is that every human being has had—by creation—deeply implanted within his or her self the knowledge of what a human being ought to be. This is sometimes

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<sup>10</sup> The account of Genesis 11:19 shows that this building was done in deliberate and flagrant opposition to the creational mandate.

called 'ontological necessity'.<sup>11</sup> Another way of saying this is that we all know the truth.<sup>12</sup> When in Romans 1:18 it is said that man suppresses the truth, then he surely infers that he knows what he is doing, i.e. in that sense he knows the truth.<sup>13</sup> Romans 1:19–25 tells us that man could know the truth but rejected that knowledge, and 1:28 confirms this. The truth—roughly speaking—is what we call theology, anthropology and cosmology. In order to reject this truth—inherent in Man—Man has to re-order the true order, i.e. *he has to devise a new and different theology, anthropology and cosmology*. Human history shows us the variety of Man's inventions on this score. These are seen in his religions, philosophies and ideologies.

Next we must recognize that what is not authentic (ontological) will not satisfy Man. The idols will never satisfy him, nor will his accompanying religious, philosophical and ideological rationalizations. So to speak, they will run out of 'puff', i.e. the power that ought to be innate to them. Take the three elements of Man which correspond to God's being as Creator, Father and King, i.e. creaturehood, sonship and servanthood: these will not find

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<sup>11</sup> Ontology is the study of being, i.e. of how persons and things subsist, or what they are essentially. Biblically, truth is God as He is and what He does, man is what he is and does, and the creation is what it is constituted to be and to do. This sense of the ontological nature of things in what we are saying is inherent in all creatures. Deviation from this 'order' brings existential guilt. Attacks upon this order bring objective guilt.

<sup>12</sup> By 'all the truth' we do not mean all the facts of God, humanity, creation, etc. but all elements of these things which are necessary for Man to know in order to proceed in living as Man. We have to keep seeing that all the facts knowable to man do not *per se* constitute truth.

<sup>13</sup> Later we will face the fact that human beings excuse their actions on the ground that they have been conditioned by a number of things such as parental up-bringing, heredity, circumstances and environment. Doubtless these have some effect upon us, but we are responsible for our reaction to them. We are not necessarily victims of these things.

ontological satisfaction. Ingenuity will have to devise surrogate creators, fathers and kings. Again autonomy of living will not be satisfactory since 'like calls to like' and 'deep calls to deep'. Lacking authentic affinity with relational reality, man will be lonely, alienated and have the abysmal horror that is depicted in many modern novels, films and plays, as also in grand opera—to say nothing of the soapies!

Further, we must understand why fallen humanity is basically angry—the paradigm of which is Cain. It does not appear at first sight that all human beings are angry, but a little research will show they are. How quick to be angry are those who are caught in—or even see—injustice.<sup>14</sup> Anger is closely related to guilt, and anger is generally directed at the one we have sinned against. This is especially in relation to God.<sup>15</sup> Primarily we are angry when we cannot get our own way, and this relates to our insistence upon our autonomy. One person's autonomy conflicts with another's: humanity cannot live autonomously. Anger is perhaps the most dangerous of all states of emotion. Most homicides take place within marital–familial situations.

There is also anger—which we euphemistically call 'frustration'—at unsatisfying vocation and unpromising destiny. By this we mean that in God we would have complete assurance of true

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<sup>14</sup> See my book *Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?*, and a smaller book *The Justice-Men & the Great Rage*. Christian theodicy is an attempt to justify God's sovereignty as authentic in a world of so much injustice and human suffering. Many readers of these books have confessed to surprise at discovering they were angry persons—chronically angry in fact.

<sup>15</sup> We hate God because we are guilty before Him (cf. Ps. 2:1–2; Rom. 1:30; 5:10; Col. 1:21) and we are most critical of a God Who has wrath! Doubtless it is partly because we know His wrath is justified because of our rebellion and evil, and partly because we are aghast at our (own) wrath, since it is rarely rational, and always dangerous. We fear it, and dread God acting as we act.



vocation. The loss of satisfying goal or *telos* keeps us uneasy. Every human being should have a bright ultimate goal shining in his/her spirit. There should be a consciousness of travelling towards a glorious climax which, itself, will resolve into the beginning of the new and eternal era. Man's spirit cannot be satisfied with less.

All these elements can be explained by the fact of 'the reversed image'. The image of God in man is the reflection of all that God is, the outshining of His nature in love, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth. In these elements or attributes—these dynamic issues—lies Man's fullness of being and doing. Meredith Kline<sup>16</sup> in commenting on Genesis 1:26 says, 'This divine image is neither losable nor reducible, but its ethical direction is reversible.' That is, all its elements now have the prefix 'self': so, self-love, self-righteousness, etc. all of which are dreadfully sinful.

This, then, explains Man's intense religious and moralistic drives. Two points need to be considered, (i) in every event of life human beings seek to justify themselves, and (ii) human beings are skilled at manipulating others by guilt. Both these endeavours are linked with the matter of the human conscience.<sup>17</sup> Self-justification is a never ending exercise, often involving intense religious endeavour and application, or involving constant cosmetic actions—all to show one is righteous. Guilt—manipulation of others is intended—whether consciously or unconsciously—to put others down so that one may be shown to be 'up'.

The drive to be 'right' in all things is rooted in the idea that if we are righteous then God will look favourably upon us, and even

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<sup>16</sup> Meredith G. Kline, 'Genesis' in *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (IVP, 1970, p. 83).

<sup>17</sup> All interested in human behaviour and all who seek to help their fellow-creatures should be fully acquainted with the human conscience. See my monograph on conscience.

the thought that we have earned Paradise will be present. Fear of judgement and punishment is a powerful drive. The desire for ultimate success, pleasure and security is no less strong a drive. If one has a brilliant *telos* before one, then he/she will work hard to achieve it. If, then, there is no *assurance* that one is right, that one will not come into judgement and that one will achieve the highest, then life will always be uncertain, troubled, restless—and so on.

These states which we have depicted in this study tell us how we must be understanding of them when we seek to help fallen Man. Fallen Man is not just the persons who are on skid row, who are evil, who are in crime, drugs, sexual immorality and the like, but everyone of Adam's tribe—i.e. all of us! If we can understand the fall of man, the consequent ejection from the garden, the curse, the depravity, the guilt, anger and continuous rebellion, then we are in a position to bring comfort to our fellow-creatures, especially if we have ourselves discovered the comfort of God.

### **The Prospect For Man in Fallenness and Guilt**

In Genesis 3:15 we have what has been called 'the Proto-Evangel', i.e. the first utterance of the gospel. By this gospel the serpent will be crushed. The prophecies which carry on this thought and give it wider and deeper dimensions are many, and they are encouraging. No less encouraging is the fact that from Abel onwards there have always been men and women of faith. Hebrews chapter 11 tells the remarkable story of their trust in God, their vision of the ultimate *telos*, and their persistence in faith. In regard to man all is not depravity. Man never loses the *imago Dei* no matter what happens. In fact his misery in sin could never be so intense were it not for the fact that he is in the image of God. Our conclusion, then, is that not

all is unrelieved darkness. There is hope from the beginning. God is trustworthy, and He is Love.

Study Three:  
***True Humanity & Its Dynamics***

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### **What is True Humanity?**

We are apt to think of our present humanity as true humanity. In doing so we include our fallenness and sin, our autonomy and all the problems that go with humanity as we know it. A common expression is, 'I am only human!' which means 'I am weak, prone to faults and lacking in total strength to accomplish all things, yet at the same time there is much I can accomplish which is on a high scale.' None of this is, in fact, true humanity. Perhaps our humanity before the Fall could be called true humanity, but even then it would not be complete humanity, i.e. humanity as it will finally be, particularly with regard to glorification (cf. I Cor. 2:6–10; Phil. 3:21). Man created is not Man completed. Maturation is a process requiring much time. Man, in that sense, is always a 'becoming' creature. We must always keep this in mind for purposes of counselling, since man always senses his incompleteness and is often dismayed by it.

Strictly, biblically speaking, true humanity will be that humanity which will have been glorified at the end-time. Ideally, if Man had not sinned, had continued to obey God, then he would have been ultimately glorified. Doubtless there would have been a transition point where he would have passed to a derived immortality. We say 'derived immortality' since God 'alone has

immortality' (I Tim. 6:16), and Man unfallen would have been granted immortality (cf. I Cor. 15:54), doubtless having eaten of the 'tree of life' (cf. Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2). Whatever we say about an unfallen humanity is hypothetical and therefore not conclusive. What we do know is Man did fall, that God has redeemed those who are his elect out of this fallen humanity, and has and will glorify them, in which case they will be 'true humanity'.

### **Man's Ontological Need for True Humanity**

Perhaps most human beings have—at one time or another—had a certain nostalgia for Eden.<sup>1</sup> Writers, poets and songsters often speak about it, and it seems to be continually in human thinking. Man knows he will not be happy in other than the true paradise. His endeavours to create Eden are only equalled by his attempts to get back to Eden even in the face of the prohibitive angel and the flaming turning sword.

Counsellors need to take this biblical anthropological fact into consideration when they meet persons disappointed in themselves and their environment. Guilt and the loss of Eden are closely linked, as also are guilt and perfectionism—the striving to make the new Eden.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It may well be that man dare not look back to Eden for if he were to see its beauty, purity and desirability, he might feel desperately ashamed of his present non-paradise situation. He might be fearfully ashamed. Has man indeed drawn down the blind in his memory, trying to blot out the original human failure which ejected them from the Garden? Certainly man has sought to reproduce his Eden in this world, on this earth, but no human paradise has ultimately proved satisfactory.

<sup>2</sup> This may well be an unconscious drive in conservationists and 'greenies' who are seeking to preserve the present creation. Sometimes such endeavours—commendable as they may be—have behind them a critical and judgemental spirit, and perhaps they are using the device of off-loading their own (existential) guilt on to others. It is remarkable how such people can castigate others, while themselves remaining smugly innocent.

### **Jesus the True Humanity**

Excepting Adam prior to his fall, Jesus is the only person who has had true humanity, who has been truly human, and for that matter still is. He is our exemplar and paradigm of true humanity.

*The extraordinary thing about his humanity was that it—he—came into a world in which there was sin and crime, whose human inhabitants were imperfect and faulty, a world under the curse and vastly troubled by the dynamics of guilt, and he lived out his humanity flawlessly in that situation and environment, even in the face of evil powers who powerfully opposed him. This means his was not a humanity which could only exist under ideal conditions, and it informs us that we too—especially as we are in him, and in faith—can succeed in such a situation.*

In this study we will not attempt to prove that he was genuinely a man, nor will we attempt to prove that he was not a man by virtue of his Deity. Traditional Christian orthodox belief is that he was wholly a man, and yet was the Son of God. His two natures—human and Divine—co-existed in harmony. Since such a union is unique we have no precedent and so cannot fully understand such unity of being, but non-understanding does not disprove reality. In no way did he draw upon his Deity in order to maintain, sustain, or effect his humanity. He was born of a woman, born under the law of Israel and God, born in the likeness of sinful flesh,<sup>3</sup> in every

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<sup>3</sup> He was not made in *sinful* flesh, but in the *likeness* of sinful flesh; he was not made in the *likeness* of flesh, but in actual flesh. This must mean he was truly human (to be truly human is to be sinless), and in some ways inherited the problems that came with sinful flesh, whilst himself not being sinful.

respect he was tempted as we have been, and he was made in every respect like his brethren (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3 ; Heb. 2:17; 4:15). *Thus he showed that sin is no true part of created Man, and Man can live without sin, and so can be free from all the troubles and tragedies that are known by sinful Man.* It is difficult for us to envisage what it is for a human being who does not sin.

### **God Becoming Man**

Not for nothing is Man described as ‘the image and glory of God’. He is closest of all creatures to God. For God to become Man is not to ‘un-God’ Himself, but is to reveal what it is to be God. Anselm said, ‘God became man that Man might become God.’ It could even be said that for God to be God means He must become Man, or that to be God is to become Man. This, of course, must be understood in the background of many things concerning God and Man. All of this must be understood in the light of Philippians 2:1–8. We see the following elements:

- (a) Christians are to live in a rich relationship with one another (vv. 1–2). They do not have to rise above being what is human in order to accomplish this.
- (b) They are not to do anything through selfishness or conceit (elements of the fallen nature) but in humility to count others better than themselves (v. 3). This seems a high demand, but it stands. Essentially its meaning is, ‘Put others before yourselves’. To do this is to be truly human.

- (c) Primarily all should look to the interests of others (v. 4). This means all are to be ‘others-centred’ or ‘others-concentred’. To be this way is not to go beyond their true humanity—especially as it is in Christ.

There is a *fourth element* but many readers seem to think it applies only to Christ himself. Christ, we are told, ‘though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross’. The term ‘emptied’ is known in Greek as *kenosis* and has occasioned interminable discussion. Some say he emptied himself of his glory, others of his prerogatives of Deity, and others of his actual Deity, but it is clear he could not empty himself of himself. In human terms when we wish to place another first, to be primarily interested in that one, then we have to empty ourselves of all those things which would prevent us serving the other. This Christ did, i.e. he placed us first beyond his own interests—whatever they may have been.

Some have spoken of this as ‘the Divine condescension’, or ‘the Divine humiliation’. The Son certainly did not condescend in the way that the word is presently understood. Nothing can humiliate the humble. He simply did what was consistent with his Godly being, and *this is what is commensurate with true human being*. In this sense he acted in his Deity, as Man ought to act in his humanity. We say again, ‘God made man in His own image so that He—God—could become Man, and so redeem Man.’ This may be difficult for us to absorb and comprehend, but this is essentially the love of God, and Man was created to reflect exactly that love. The implications of what we have just said are incredibly vast. If

counsellors cannot understand this they cannot understand true humanity.

### **The True Humanity Revealing the True God**

#### ***Jesus Showed Himself as True Man by being a Son, a Creature and a Servant***

*The first thing about Man as created was that he was a son of God* (Luke 3:38; Acts 17:28). We have said that created man—the image of God—reflected God as Creator by being creature, reflected Him as Father by being son, and reflected Him as the King by being His servant. This is exactly what Jesus did. He was essentially and uniquely the Son—the ‘only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’. John 1:18 says, ‘No man has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known’. Jesus told his disciples they were not to call any man ‘Father’, for they had one Father even the Father in heaven, i.e. they must never work from human fatherhood to Divine Fatherhood, but rather the other way. This is most important. Whatever is used as an analogue<sup>4</sup> must always portray the reality as less than it is. Jesus was not analogically the Son of the Father, but homologically so. So many passages show he was essentially the Son of the Father, and we should examine these in order to know anthropologically (ontologically) what is true sonship.<sup>5</sup> This is a vast subject into which we cannot

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<sup>4</sup> We say that analogically God is Father and we start with the analogy, Man. Since fallen Man—and even redeemed Man—is as yet so far away from the reality, then analogy must always be deficient, and may well be misleading.

<sup>5</sup> Elements of his Sonship were obedience (cf. John 5:19ff.; Phil. 2:8), working with the Father for His glory (John 5:17; 13:31–32), and taking responsibility for all things (John 3:35; Matt. 11:27). These are some of the elements of true human sonship.

now go, but sonship relates to ultimate inheritance (cf. Ps. 2:6–7).

*The second element of his becoming man was that he was a creature.* He showed his dependence upon the Father in all things. He refused to live in any other way than he prescribed for his fellow-creatures in the Sermon on the Mount, i.e. trust the heavenly Father for all things. His humanity was such that he became hungry, thirsty and tired, and needed to pray much to sustain this relationship. No one ever doubted his human creatureliness. Jesus was never ashamed of that creatureliness. There is nothing humiliating or weak about being a creature. Jesus was even crucified through creaturely weakness (cf. II Cor. 4:4).

*The third element—that of being a servant—is portrayed at all levels in Christ’s life.* (See Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27; Rom. 15:8; Phil. 2:7.) To be a servant is to be a worker, and God is the Great Worker of all. As Father, Son and Spirit the Triune God worked to create the world, worked in sustaining it, and worked towards redemption once Man sinned—though having planned such work prior to creation. Thus the Psalms say, ‘All thy works shall praise thee!’ Jesus said, ‘My Father has always been working and I go on working.’ ‘I must do the works of him that sent me, while it is day.’ He showed that he and the Father worked these works together (John 14:10). This means that doing true works is a part of true humanity (cf. Matt. 5:16). Only those works that are the will of God should Man do (Gen. 1:28).

*Works then are the essence of vocation.* We have spoken—and must speak often—of the vocation of Man. Each may have his own special vocation but such vocations must be within the creational vocation (Gen. 1:28). The Sermon on the Mount shows the way to

go about that vocation, but Jesus showed as a man that this is the true way of life as he practised what he preached. A counsellor must know how essential to true humanity it is to do the works which are the will of God being fulfilled—by Man—in the course of history.

***Jesus Showed Himself to be True Man  
by Other Elements***

Fallen man takes his fallenness to be part of essential humanity, but he is wrong in thinking this. What he thinks of as 'standard humanity' is 'sub-humanity'. He thinks of his humanity as 'normal' and of the humanity of Jesus as 'super-normal'. Jesus' humanity was simply normal. Thus when we now nominate elements of Jesus, and remember that he lived in a sinful world we must not consider these elements 'super-normal', but be grateful for the witness to true humanity that he brought:

- (a) He knew obedience to God without any problem (John 4:34; 10:17; 14:30–31).
- (b) He had a pure conscience: no one could accuse him of sin.
- (c) He had absolute purity; an absolutely free conscience so that he was never caught in the dynamics of guilt, of self-justification, or condemnation of others. He had no self-righteousness such as the Pharisees displayed.
- (d) He had an essential peace (John 14:27).
- (e) He had an essential joy (John 15:11).
- (f) He had true love which had no mixed motivation (John 15:9–10; 13:1).

- (g) He was a conqueror. He overcame evil<sup>6</sup> in all the forms in which it came to him.
- (h) He had the compassion which redeems that which is lost.

All would agree that the first seven elements nominated immediately above should be component elements of Man. In fact we have seen them all in other human beings from time to time, although they were always imperfect. We ask, however, whether it is part of True Man to have redemptive compassion. The creational situation of Man did not include the necessity for redeeming compassion. We can conclude that it is part of true human living when we hear Jesus' teaching. One extra-biblical witness to the compassion of Man is the vast social work, social action, and human aid which is given to fellow human beings when they have the distress brought by calamities of all kinds.

**God Being God Becomes Man so that Man Being Man  
Might Become as God**

Here we are on the edge of heresy. Man will never become God. He was created like God and will be like God fully one day. As created he had fellowship with God. As redeemed he has fellowship with the Father and the Son, has his life in God with Christ, and is a

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<sup>6</sup> We have to keep in mind that evil is not an abstract thing. It is always personal. Personal beings such as Satan, his principalities and powers, and other demonic creatures are not figments of human imagination. Jesus withstood Satan in the three temptations in the wilderness, and in the suggestion of Peter that he should not go to the Cross (Matt. 16:21–23). Finally he withstood him in his last hours before the Cross, as well as on the Cross (cf. John 12:31; 16:11; 14:30–31; cf. Luke 22:53; Heb. 2:14–15; Col. 2:14–15).

partaker of the Divine nature (I John 3:2; Col. 3:3; II Pet. 1:4). We assume that something similar obtained prior to his fall. Man's fall came from thinking 'the way of man is in himself. It is in man to direct his own footsteps' (cf. contra Jer. 10:23). He wanted to be *as* God but autonomously, which is an impossibility. One day he will be *as* God, but only *in* God as God will be *in* him. Man will be—as Man—admitted into the fellowship of the Godhead.

### ***Special Note for Counsellors***

We have by no means exhausted the true humanity of Christ in this brief study. We must keep in mind all the time that Jesus was *a man*, and fully so, and did not draw upon his Deity in order to be man and to do the things he did as man. He certainly drew upon the powers of the Father (cf. John 17:1ff.) and of the Holy Spirit: indeed he did all things by them, but then *as a man!* What is of value to us as counsellors is that we can see (i) what Man truly is,

(ii) what he *can* do if he will and if he depends upon God for his actions, and (iii) what he will truly be. This will help us to understand man's existential distress at not being what he ought to be, and will assist us to encourage him as to what he *can* be, and—in Christ—*will* inevitably be, one day.

## Study Four: ***Man Being Transformed***

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### **The Meaning and Matter of Transformation**

#### **The Meaning of Transformation**

Transformation (Gr. *metamorphoo*; cf. Matt. 17:2; Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 3:18) is the change from one form to another which in the N.T. is a change which begins within, in contrast to conformation (vb *suschematizo*; Rom. 12:2; I Pet. 1:14) which is being shaped from outside to be like another, but used in a bad sense in the N.T. Another verb 'to conform' is used in a good sense in the N.T. It is *summorphizomai* (Phil. 3:10, 21; Rom 8:29) 'to be shaped like'. We are thinking of Man being transformed from his sinful, rebellious, autonomous, self-centred state to a state such as the man Jesus portrayed, and perhaps such as the unfallen Man knew, i.e. the unfallen man and woman. The question is, 'How is Man transformed?'

#### **The Means of Transformation**

Obviously a radical transformation is necessary. A counsellor ought to be able to know what this is, what is required, how it happens,

and how it is effected. It is clear from the N.T. that such a transformation does take place—‘If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away. Behold! they have become new’ (II Cor. 5:17). The N.T. speaks of ‘new birth’, ‘new man’, ‘new creation’ and these are all linked with transformation. The N.T. speaks about Man-in-sin as being Adam, and all humanity as being in Adam’s loins (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12ff.), hence the solidary nature of humanity—Man. Man-in-Adam needs a new basis, a new creation, i.e. Man-in-Christ. Nothing but this will effect transformation.

Paul says ‘the *first man* was from the earth, a man of dust; the *second man* is from heaven’ (I Cor. 15:47). He adds, ‘As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust . . . we have borne the image of the man of dust.’ In the same breath he talks about ‘the last Adam’ who is ‘the second man,’ and he is ‘from heaven.’ He says, ‘Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man from heaven.’ This ‘last Adam’ and ‘second man’ is Jesus. In fact he is ‘the new man’ (cf. Eph. 2:15; 4:22–24; Col. 3:7–11). All who are in him are personally new creations, i.e. firstly creations by human birth—in Adam—but then, secondly, those who have been renewed by new birth—in Christ. How does this come about? The answer is that it is by the grace of the Triune God, Who—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—work to effect that transformation.

### **God Working to Effect Transformation**

The transformation—as we will see—comes through the work of the Cross and the Resurrection. We now look at the actions of the Persons of the Trinity in this work.

### ***The Father at Work For Man’s Transformation***

- (a) Before time the Father initiated the Cross (Acts 2:22–23; I Pet. 1:19–20; Rev. 13:8; II Tim. 1:9).
- (b) At the right time God sent His Son into the world (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; I John 4:14).
- (c) The Father gave His Son up for us all (John 3:16–18; Rom. 8:32; I John 4:9–10, 13–14).
- (d) The Father laid the sin of the world on the Son (Heb. 2:10; Isa. 53:6, 10–11).
- (e) The Father raised the Son from the dead, vindicating him as the Saviour of the world, and making him Lord over all (Acts 2:32–36; 5:31–32; Rom. 1:4; 6:3–5).
- (f) The Father was in the Son in all that he did (John 8:28–29; 14:10–11; II Cor. 5:19).

### ***The Son at Work For Man’s Transformation***

- (a) The Son in the counsel of God—before time—is willing and obedient to do this work of the Father (John 5:19f.; 4:34; 17:1–5; Phil. 2:5–11; Rev. 13:8).
- (b) The Son of God did the Father’s will in all things leading to the Cross (John 4:34; 8:28–29; 14:10–11; 17:4).
- (c) On the Cross Jesus *bore the sins of many* (Heb. 9:28), *bore all the sins* of the world (I Pet. 2:24), was *made to be sin* for mankind (II Cor. 5:21), he suffered the just for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18), and offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:12).



- (d) He defeated all the enemies of Man by (i) crucifying every person with himself (Gal. 2:20)<sup>1</sup>, (ii) crucifying the Adamic body of humanity (Rom. 6:6), (iii) crucifying the world and the flesh (Gal. 5:24; 6:14), thus (iv) defeating Satan and his powers (Heb. 2:14–15; Col. 2:14–15), and thus (v) bearing Man's guilt he freed Man from the doom of the law (Rom. 7:4) and the wrath of God (Rom. 3:24; I John 4:10), and so from judgement (Rom. 8:1–3; I John 4:18; cf. John 5:24).

### ***The Spirit at Work For Man's Transformation***

- (a) The Spirit combined with the Father and the Son in preparing Christ for the Cross. From his birth and baptism onwards everything that Christ did was in the power of the Spirit (Acts 10:38; cf. Matt. 3:16–17; 12:28; Heb. 9:14).
- (b) The Spirit with the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 8:11), and caused him to ascend (Eph. 1:19–20).
- (c) The Spirit applies the work of the Cross (Rom. 8:1–3; I Cor. 6:11; II Cor. 3:17; Titus 3:4–7). Without the Spirit nothing happens within the believer (Rom. 8:9–11) for by the Spirit what we call the conversion complex takes place in Man. Through the Spirit he repents and believes, receives forgiveness, justification, sanctification, regeneration, love and sonship.

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<sup>1</sup> This fact must be well understood—that the act of the crucifixion was not a blanket operation, a general act or a 'production line' action. It was personally intimate. Christ took the person on to the Cross, and totally 'recapitulated' that life, dealing with every minute detail as the crucifixion proceeded. That is why man is powerfully liberated through the atoning work. The idea of substitution without relational identification is a deficient one.

**Note:** *The work of the Cross by the death and resurrection of Christ is the most profound thing in human history. He recapitulated the history of the human race—from its beginning to its end—and in so doing also recapitulated the life of each person. This means that each believing person's past, present and future is not only known to Christ, but that he has relived it in his suffering on the Cross (cf. Gal. 2:20; I Pet. 2:24; II Cor. 5:21; etc.). Therapists who do not count on what has been done will thus be puzzled at the non-receptivity of a counsellee. As we will see in Study 6, a counsellee will be most helped by being reminded of what Christ has done for him, i.e. what the Father has effected through the Son, and what the Spirit applies in and to the person.*

The whole Godhead, then, is at work in man to transform him. It is essential for the counsellor to know two things, (i) the revealed and vast dimensions of transformation, so that the counsellor will not try to repeat or seek to effect what has already happened, but will count upon it in every way, and (ii) all that happens, happens *by faith*, and nothing of it *by sight* (II Cor. 5:7). We cannot concretize or absolutize what God has done and is doing.

## **Man Living the Life of Transformation**

### **Man Responding to God's Work of Transformation**

#### ***The Gospel the Dynamic Mystery in Changing Man***

The gospel is a mystery in that autonomous Man first thinks he has no need of God. We have to go back to the existential

situation of Man as we examined it in Study 2. If we compare fallen Man with the True Man, then the huge discrepancy in the former is discovered. It is in the preaching of the gospel that this discrepancy is discovered to fallen Man, but with it also the vastness and plenitude of God's grace and His love. This is unique to the Christian gospel. Grace aims to deal with everything in Man which is against God, the creation, his fellow-being and himself. It aims to utterly forgive, purify and cleanse, to justify, sanctify and ultimately glorify the whole being of every person who responds. Presently it gives the gift of sonship of God the Father—a direct sonship which places each person in immediate and full (and not figurative) relationship with God as Father.<sup>2</sup> This has far-reaching implications and ramifications for relationships and—as we will see in Study 5—for hope and heritage of the future.

### ***The Dynamics of the Gospel***

What happens to a person who is gripped by the gospel (II Cor. 5:14; I John 4:19), and responds to it, and is changed by it, resumes relationship with God as a son, a creature, and a servant? All these elements are renewed. Some of the elements of response and transformation are as follows:

- (a) Repentance is a complete change of mind, a new attitude, a new understanding so radical that the old is rejected.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> We know that almost all social troubles, hurts, angers, resentments and relational problems spring from the family. The new filial relationship of a person with the Father, and then with the Family, is something counsellors need to keep to the fore of their thinking and their ministry. In fact its importance is incalculable.

<sup>3</sup> Repentance is a gift and not a work which man exercises from himself (Acts 5:31; 11:18). Understanding of the depths of this gift are essential, otherwise the counsellee might be urged to repeat what is unrepeatable, i.e. the act of repentance is a once-for-all event, effecting a permanent change in the person. There is a very secondary sense in which repentance may be used to express sorrow for sin in the Christian life, but we must be wary that we do not make continuous penance a substitute for initial

- (b) Faith is the opposite of sin and rebellion. The subject is now at peace with God.<sup>4</sup> Faith effects confidence, a sense of security, an object in which to trust, a relationship of assurance and comfort in which to live.
- (c) Forgiveness<sup>5</sup> along with justification<sup>6</sup> removes all guilt, i.e. all objective guilt.<sup>7</sup> The person is freed from the domination of law<sup>8</sup> and God's wrath on sin as set out in Romans 1:18ff.<sup>9</sup>

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repentance.

<sup>4</sup> Faith is a gift of God (Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8–10). One appropriates the gospel of grace by faith (Rom. 1:16–17) and goes on living by faith (II Cor. 5:7). The whole battle against evil is by faith (I Pet. 5:8–9; I John 5:4). Faith brings peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

<sup>5</sup> Forgiveness is a personal act of God with the believer since all sins are committed against God Himself. It is a relational act, which restores fellowship with God. Not to be forgiven by God—i.e. not to accept forgiveness—is to be unable to forgive others. Forgiveness is a liberating thing.

<sup>6</sup> Justification is one of the most dynamic elements of the N.T. To be justified is to be acquitted forever of the charge and condemnation of sin. Psychologically it is the most liberating thing of all.

<sup>7</sup> We have to distinguish between objective guilt—a legal matter for sin or crime done—and subjective guilt, i.e. feelings of guilt which may have no objective basis but which often spring from cultural conditioning, social mores, etc. and have no true ontological basis.

<sup>8</sup> Freedom from law (cf. Rom. 3:21–26; Gal. 2:16–17; Rom. 7:1–7). When guilty people see the law (cf. I Tim. 1:8–11) they see it apart from God, and as such it is tyrannical, troubling the conscience and bringing dread to the person. Freedom from law (Rom. 8:1–3; Gal. 5:1f.) is an enriching experience. It is coupled with forgiveness (Rom. 4:25; Ps. 32:1–4). It liberates persons forever from having to justify themselves in *any* situation.

<sup>9</sup> In Romans 1:18ff. God's wrath is His deliberate giving up of men and women to the guilt of their sins, and it is this sense of heaviness, burden, condemnation, failure, confusion, rebellion, anger and shame which act as a fearful burden on the person. To be free of fear of wrath is to be free of fear of death and judgement. It is coming out into the sunshine after being in abject darkness—the black gloom of the soul. Counsellors should be highly aware of such things.

The fear of death—a powerful factor in all human living and experience—is taken away.<sup>10</sup>

- (d) Cleansing from sin purifies the whole person and in particular the conscience, i.e. a consciousness of dead works.<sup>11</sup> The state of purity is an actual gift of God. God gives back what the person has lost. Sanctification is that holiness God gives by cleansing us, by admitting us into His holy people—the Family of God and the church of Christ. It is holiness which is worked out by grace, and through the Spirit who is the sanctifier (I Pet. 1:2; II Thess. 2:13; I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 7:6).
- (e) The Family of which we spoke above (cf. Eph. 1:5; 3:14–15; 4:6; I Tim 3:15; Heb. 3:1–6; etc.) means that all redeemed persons are members of one Family (I John 3:10ff.) because they are the children of God (Gal. 3:26; 4:4–7; Rom.

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<sup>10</sup> The fear of death (cf. Heb. 2:14–15; I Cor. 15:55–56; I John 4:18) is a dominating factor in all human living. Human beings do everything to insure themselves against death. Competitiveness in life can be traced to this fear, as also self-justificatory living. The passing of this fear is most liberating. Jesus said, ‘He that believes on me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he who lives and believes in me *shall never die*.’ To show that one never actually faces death (one is already in life) makes ‘death’ a transition point to the glory which lies beyond (Phil. 1:21–23).

<sup>11</sup> Not enough research has been done on the conscience, especially as it is the sensitive area of human experience. Guilt, guilt-dread, and guilt manipulations are powerful factors in human living. The conscience which is apart from grace is a terrible tyrant, especially because it sees the law of God apart from God. I cite my monograph, *Conscience—Conquering or Conquered?*

8:14–17). There is no greater healing and social entity than this. Some talk of Family Therapy. I Thessalonians 4:9 shows that the brethren already know what it is to love—because the Father is in their midst (Eph. 4:6). Good family instructions are found in I Timothy 5:1f.

- (f) Linked with Family are the renewed marital, parental, familial relationships. In Christ, sexuality<sup>12</sup> is pure, of true love, so that marriages can be enriched and healed. Ephesians 5:20–31 (cf. Col. 3:16f.) is a passage based on true marriage, true relations of the Bride and the Lamb.
- (g) When true humanity is restored in Christ—the renewed or new humanity given as a gift—then the joy of being again one with God, with the creation, one’s fellow-beings and one’s self brings personal and social health. It is expressed best in I John 3:14—‘We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren’.<sup>13</sup> It is very like Romans 5:5—‘The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us’. Love brings service (Gal. 5:13) and this is satisfying. It is linked with vocation.

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<sup>12</sup> It is not that the curse is lifted in this age, but living in it is greatly transformed. The mutual love of the husband and wife makes marriage rich. It affects the attitudes of both spouses, and so of the members of the family. There is no such thing as *sex per se*, but there is only marriage.

<sup>13</sup> Here we should note that the love we speak of is God’s love, not human love. There is a kind of circuit of love established: God’s love comes down to us in personal expression. We love Him because He first loved us, but then we also love others with His love. There is then a circulatory movement of love—God to man; man to man; man to God. It all happens simultaneously. Love is most healing. It destroys the bad images we have of God, His creation, others and ourselves. New images appear: new joy at living in love through being loved by the Father.

- (h) Renewed persons are now participators in the New Man—Christ. They are new persons in the Person of Christ—they are his members and yet members of one another (cf. Eph. 2:11–22; Gal. 3:28; I Cor. 12:3–28, esp. vv. 12–13). They have the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16; cf. Phil. 2:5), and it is a mind which has been renewed and goes on being renewed (Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:23–24; Col. 3:9–10).

We can then sum up ‘Man Being Transformed’ by saying that the Fall is—so to speak—reversed. Man comes back to his true relationship with God, others, the creation and himself. Alienation from God changes to fellowship with Him (I John 1:3; I Cor. 1:9; Col. 3:3; II Pet. 1:4). The amazing thing is that God lives in Man—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20; John 14:15–16, 23; Rom. 8:9–11; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:16; Col. 1:27). Equally amazing is that Man lives in God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (I Thess. 1:1; II Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:3; Rom. 8:9–11; Gal. 5:22–26). In this new environment and relationship man is transformed. Initially—at conversion—he comes into a crisis of transformation. This is followed by a process of transformation (II Cor. 3:16; Heb. 12:2; Rom. 12:1; etc.). Ultimately he will come into the climax of transformation (Rom. 8:29–30; I John 3:3) in the glorification of Man (I Cor. 2:6–10), but much of this is the subject material of our next study.

**Note:** *Again we have to remind ourselves that in this present age nothing is immaculate, nothing succeeds perfectly. It is that everything redeemed Man does is strongly contested by powers of evil and the flesh. There are times of tragedy and times of triumph and it is in this tension believers live. This must be understood when we try to help one another. There are the weak and the strong in both faith*

*and conscience. Given in the conflicts and the tension, the new man in Christ is a remarkable creature, son and servant.*

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Study Five:  
***Man in Present Living  
 & Future Hope***

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### Where is This Person at Now?

We trust that with what we have seen of theological anthropology we will be able to recognize where any person is at, especially those who come to us for friendship and help. So far we have dealt with (i) the nature of created Man, (ii) the nature of fallen Man, and (iii) the nature of redeemed Man. We are now about to deal with Man in his present state, i.e. Man as he is now, but as a creature who lives between the past and the future. He will be fallen Man or redeemed Man when we meet him, but for certain reasons whether redeemed or not he may be puzzled by a number of factors which we now seek to understand. We will try here to deal with both the fallen Man and the redeemed Man in the present, as they live in the present, in the tension of being simultaneously creatures of their past and the present.

### The Fallen Man in His Present Tension

#### Fallen Man With a Memory of Innocence (Unfallenness)

The matter that confronts is, 'How will—how can—we recognize the point at which any person may now be, with whom we have to

deal? In what state will such a person be?' We will need to know in order to be helpful. Of course we will not meet one who is at the pure created state, but one who in Man unfallen was in that state of innocence, so that everyone we meet will have some regard, some memory and perhaps some nostalgia for that primal unfallen state. The primal ontology of it will be within all whom we meet. This 'primal ontology' is 'the truth' which Man-in-autonomy seeks to suppress (Rom. 1:18).<sup>1</sup>

#### Fallen Man and the Problem of Existential and Objective Guilt

One of the elements of *objective guilt* (which we will discuss below) is that Man is uneasy about judgement, and this uneasiness impairs his enjoyment of life, i.e. 'the wicked are like the restless sea . . . there is no peace says my God, for the wicked' (Isa. 57:20–21). *Existential guilt* exists because Man does not live in the fullness of the *imago Dei*, i.e. he does his own will and does not live in the serenity of doing the will of God, and of moving towards the very wonderful destiny God has for him (Rom. 8:28–30; Phil. 3:21; I John 3:1–3; cf. I Cor. 2:6–10). The dynamics of vocation are involved which are also the dynamics of hope. 'Having no hope and without God in the world' (Eph. 2:12) is a painful way to live.

It seems, then, that fallen Man will not be difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst a number of Scriptures seem to indicate that man does not know God (e.g. Ps. 14:1–3) Romans 1:19f. makes it clear that Man can know God if he will. It is not that the knowledge of God does not press in on him—it does—but that he must reject it as it comes (Rom. 1:28). It is logical, then, to say that Man knows what he wills not to know, i.e. the truth, otherwise he would not have anything to suppress.

recognize, especially if he/she has not yet been transformed by God and His gospel. The evidences of guilt will be about him/her if we listen patiently to what is said to us. We should refer to Study 2 to detect the state of that person. Study 4 and Study 6 will be helpful in dealing with fallen Man. We must not think of fallen Man as a stereotype.<sup>2</sup> Not only is every person unique, different from others, but in spite of statistics which would seem to say human actions and reactions are predictable, each person in fact reacts differently to the complex of life he/she meets. If no two fingerprints are alike then the differentiations are not only likely to be interesting, but they will need to be taken into account. The use of a theological grid is not called for as perhaps, similarly, a psychological grid should not see human conduct as stereotyped. What is common to all humans is existential guilt and objective guilt<sup>3</sup> but *this fact is not always known to the person*. What we need to see is that every human being is accountable for his/her actions. The counsellor will know from personal experience that all human beings often refuse to be wholly accountable for their

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<sup>2</sup> In this respect Psalm 139:13–18 is worthy of study. The Psalmist believes that God made him in particular—that he was not the result of a biological production line. God’s plan and concern for each person conceived is a warning against taking birth too lightly, and against taking any given person for granted. This intimacy of God with Man is shown in the choice of predestination—i.e. prior to time—and in the identification of Christ with every person—as shown in Galatians 2:20 and II Corinthians 5:14.

<sup>3</sup> We remind ourselves that existential guilt is man feeling wrong because he is not fulfilling that for which he has been created, not living consistently in creation and the world of humanity as a true human being, i.e. existent. See Proverbs 30:1–3 where the speaker realizes his deficiency as a human being. Rarely is he/she aware of the nature of human guilt and tends to relate it to some *act* he/she has done wrong. Objective guilt pertains to the acts a person does—acts which are wrong according to the law. Subjective guilt is a matter of feeling and may or may not be part of existential and objective guilt which themselves are not always attended with commensurate feelings.

states of being and action, preferring to blame what they call conditioning factors such as parental upbringing, heredity, environment and circumstances. Social renegades and criminals generally blame society.<sup>4</sup> What we need to keep in mind is that *Man under guilt is never secure, never at peace, and is compulsive in seeking to be justified*. This is the drive for almost everything a person seeks to do or attain.<sup>5</sup> This is why accountability is rejected in much of life.

The accountability<sup>6</sup> of human persons is set out in Ezekiel chapter 18 (cf. Jer. 31:27–30). Some Israelites had taken Exodus 20:4–6 and 34:7 to mean that inevitably and mechanistically the sins of the parents will be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation.<sup>7</sup> In fact the qualifying clause—‘them that hate me’—is linked

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<sup>4</sup> A remarkable case of this is the account of the two criminals crucified with Christ. The Gospel accounts show both criminals cursing and blaspheming and jeering at Jesus. In Luke 23:39f. a sudden change takes place in one of the criminals. Evidently understanding that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, that his plea for forgiveness was the sign of a great love and the unique understanding of sin, he rebukes his fellow-criminal saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ In a flash this man has recognized his accountability.

<sup>5</sup> What we must take into account is man’s fear of death, which is fear of judgement. Hence man—probably unconsciously—tries to keep himself ‘justified’ so as to face that judgement, since all men know there is judgement (Rom. 1:32). The accompanying fact of fear of death is the endeavour to secure living for as long as possible, i.e. the endeavour to have security. This lies behind most of the competitiveness of human beings.

<sup>6</sup> See the Essay ‘The Principle of Accountability’ in my book *For Pastors and the People* (pp. 359–367).

<sup>7</sup> There are certain therapies today based on the fact that a person is in bondage because of his past acts, even though he may be a Christian. I think I have refuted this misconception in my two booklets *The Cleansing of the Memories* and *If We Say We Have No Sin . . .* To take a person back into the past of their ancestors is to deny the effectiveness of the Cross. The N.T. makes it clear that the forgiveness of sins and justification utterly clear the believer from any entail of the past.

with the children, i.e. the nexus of judgemental visitation can be broken where the child (or the parent) turns to righteousness. That is, God does not cause the children to suffer if they refuse to go the way of their erring parents (Ezek. 18:14–24). Only the soul that sins shall die.<sup>8</sup> If there is not personal human responsibility for all actions<sup>9</sup> then human dignity is lost. In Ezekiel 18:25–32 God refutes the accusation that His way is not just. This transference of guilt by Man from himself to God is an ancient custom and device—part of human self-justification.

### **Fallen Man and Human Anger**

Anger<sup>10</sup> and guilt are linked together. Man who has broken the law of God is angry with God.<sup>11</sup> Fallen man is generally angry. Anger,

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 13:1ff. is a good example of this. Jesus' listeners were trying to show that God punished guilt by calamity, therefore when calamity came it would be because of guilt. Jesus refuted this, pointing out that no one should judge why a calamity had come, but had better make sure he himself was not a candidate for such a happening!

<sup>9</sup> Often the question of 'the age of responsibility' is raised. Jacob and Esau made decisions in their mother's womb (Gen. 25:19–27), for which it seems both were accountable. Jacob was said to be a rebel from his mother's womb (Isa. 48:8). Psalm 58:3 says, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies'. It seems from Genesis 8:21 and Psalm 25:7 (cf. Job 5:26) that youth was certainly a time of accountability. Under the covenant children could be stoned for incorrigible disobedience to their parents (Deut. 21:18–21). It seems significant that the men of the city were to carry out the stoning. It seems best to say that where there is a consciousness of choice there is accountability. In I Samuel 15 king Saul seeks to evade his responsibility and to make his people accountable for a certain sin.

<sup>10</sup> See my book *Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?* I believe this gives a fairly comprehensive coverage of the biblical material relating to human anger.

<sup>11</sup> In Colossians 1:21 the AV has, 'And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works . . .', i.e. by being guilty you felt enmity to God. This is seen vividly in Job 1:4–5 where Job offered propitiatory sacrifices to clear his children's guilt so that they would not curse God. This story was a favourite with the Puritans who were masters of the human conscience and of the cure of souls. Romans 1:30 speaks of sinners being 'haters of God', and Romans 5:10 'we were enemies,' i.e. of God.

like other sins<sup>12</sup> is self-concealing. Man deceiving himself that he is not angry. Human anger most quickly reveals itself when one cannot get one's own way. This is because (i) we wish to follow our own wills and not God's, (ii) we have guilt for following our own wills<sup>13</sup> and thus the guilt increases, and (iii) things and persons which prevent us carrying out our wills are often blamed, but the guilt attending states and acts of anger make persons uneasy, thus liable to compounded anger.

If we look at the lists of human sins in the Scriptures there are few of them which do not have anger at the back—or the front!—of them, e.g. Romans 1:29, 'They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless'. The danger of anger—as well as its evil nature—was clearly shown by Christ in Matthew 5:21–22:

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<sup>12</sup> Paul said, 'Be angry but do not sin' (Eph. 4:26; cf. 4:31; Col. 3:8). This indicates that it is possible to be angry and not sin, but not very likely that being angry we will escape sinning. The list of Scriptures quoting 'Angry Heart and Tranquil Mind' indicates that anger is an emotional condition we cannot afford. So-called 'righteous indignation' soon passes into self-righteous indignation. See my booklet, *The Justice-Men and the Great Rage*.

<sup>13</sup> There is plenty of leeway in being able to do our own wills, when we are within the will of God. Jesus showed perfectly that to do the will of God is essential freedom (e.g. John 4:34; Heb. 10:7; Ps. 40:6–8). The heart of the problem is the guilt at not doing what God has created us for, e.g. Genesis 1:28. This in turn involves vocation which in turn involves hope—the hope that is linked with the goal we are to reach, the goal of our glorification.

'You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, "You fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire.'<sup>14</sup>

It is true that this was spoken by Jesus to people under covenant, but its principles are also creational (cf. Gen. 4:10–12; 9:5–6). In any case anger is possibly the most dangerous human element in history. It certainly brings enormous suffering to marital and familial relationships.

### **Fallen Man and the Need for Emotional Fulfilment**

A general reading of the Psalms will show us that covenant persons knew the love of God.<sup>15</sup> The covenant itself demanded the person's love of God, love of neighbour and commensurate love of self. N.T. writers say that love is fulfilment of the law, and in particular love of one's neighbour. Unlike today's approach to love, the principle was not one of sentiment and romance. Love was an indispensable necessity for people in the wilderness or living in Palestine amongst and against enemies.<sup>16</sup> Doubtless, love was a

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<sup>14</sup> An explanation of this passage is important involving the principle of Genesis 9:5–6—the origin of capital punishment for striking at the image of God, i.e. Man—and I John 3:15, 'Any one who hates his brother is a murderer'. Anger is not an emotion we can afford!

<sup>15</sup> This may seem obvious but it is no small thing. That God is love is a revelation, since the image of God in Man's mind is not that of love. God had made a revelation of His love to Israel, and in the N.T. He reveals He is love through Jesus Christ (I John 4:7–10; Rom. 5:5–10).

<sup>16</sup> A reading of the covenantal law shows that love was a practical thing whether or not pity and compassion accompanied its fulfilment. Leviticus 19:9–35 is a good example of what we now call 'ethical behaviour' as it was demanded on the basis of loving one's neighbour. Even so, there is emotional fulfilment in doing good. Deuteronomy 30:6 speaks of God's action in causing persons to love Him. Knowing God as love is the basis for all loving as is shown by I John 4:19.

creational thing from the beginning (cf. I John 2:7f.; 3:10f.) because God is love, created in love, and structured man as a love-creature. Part of fallen Man's existential misery arises from his natural need of love being unfulfilled. The drive and search for fulfilment often causes immense pain and cruelty, especially in the area of sexuality.

Emotional fulfilment can be found only in God, in relationship with Him, in being in His presence,<sup>17</sup> His presence being with Man and in Man. The answer to emotional need lies, of course, in the gospel. It is helpful to read Jonathan Edwards' *A Treatise on the Religious Affections* (ed. John Smith, 1959). Edwards speak of 'affections' rather than 'emotions' and commencing with I Peter 1:8, speaking of Jesus Christ—'Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy'—he points out that no religion is true that does not have these deep affections. This is strongly supported in both the O.T. and the N.T.<sup>18</sup> Man is an affectional creature and must have emotional fulfilment or he will seek it in improper and

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<sup>17</sup> Cain found it intolerable, even though in anger with God, to be banned from His presence (Gen. 4:14, 16). Creationally the presence of God is essential to Man because he is not Man without God. See my *The Everlasting Presence*.

<sup>18</sup> The use of a Bible Concordance will show the great love of God for Man, of Man for God and of humans for one another. Statements such as 'I love thee, O Lord, my strength,' or 'I love the Lord,' (Ps. 18:1; 116:1) are many, and devotional passages are numerous that speak of fellowship with God. Likewise in the N.T. such as found in II Corinthians 5:14; Romans 8:28; I Corinthians 2:10; and James 2:5 show Man's deep love for God, but more numerous are the passages which speak of God's love for Man. Similarly in the O.T. God's love for His people causes the response of love in them.



perverse ways. If fallen Man cannot have love—fulfilment—along with peace and joy—he will have it from the idols he devises, the materialism in which he indulges himself, or sexual activity which is outside the true norm of sexuality.

### **Fallen Man and His Bondage to Many Enemies**

If Man were left to his own devices, his problems regarding the past and the future, his human condition would be difficult enough. As it is there are forces in the world which are adverse. He will often find opposition enough within his own family, community and elsewhere simply on the human level. The matter does not begin and end there. We have seen previously that Man who is apart from God faces the evil forces of Satan and his creatures.<sup>19</sup> Passages such as Ephesians 2:1–3; Hebrews 2:14–15; Colossians 2:14–15; II Timothy 2:26—amongst others—show us that evil powers hold Man in bondage through his guilt.

On the wider scale it can be shown that the creatures known as ‘principalities, authorities and powers’ are brilliant, have great intellectual powers and prowess, against which humans are defenceless when without God. Man’s fear of death through guilt is one area on which the powers work with pitiless accusation. It is this which further stirs up Man’s selfishness, his competitive–acquisitive spirit, his self–justifying actions and keeps him in fear of

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<sup>19</sup> I have not tried to unduly emphasize this matter of the power of evil forces in this paper but it is an important one, and should be pursued as a special study in Scripture. I have opened up the subject in *The Clash of the Kingdoms*. It is impossible to understand this theme fully outside of the Scriptures. Modern Man is not aware that he can be the plaything and victim of evil powers, which he rationalizes as an absurdity of religious minds.

death and judgement. In the Book of the Revelation the beasts emerge from the nations epitomizing and expressing their collective beastliness.

From every side—within and outside himself—fallen Man is beset with many and terrifying things.

### **Fallen Man and the Need For Hope, For the Authentic Goal and For Authentic Vocation**

We return to Jeremiah’s wise saying, ‘I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.’ Psalm 37 says, ‘The steps of a man are from the Lord, and he establishes him in whose way he delights’.<sup>20</sup> It could be shown that Man’s fallenness means he will go his own way which would not be the way of the Lord, but basically the verse indicates that Man must be in union with God before he can know the will of the Lord, and have the moral power to accomplish what God has for him. In the Scriptures ‘the way’ is the life, walk and character of a person, but God’s way and Man’s way differ greatly (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

That there has to be a way is evident. Man must have a way: he must go somewhere. Indeed he must arrive somewhere, for

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<sup>20</sup> Proverbs 20:24 says, ‘A man’s steps are ordered by the Lord; how then can man understand his way?’ Two thoughts are here, (i) in the end it will be God who has controlled a person, however independent of God he thought he was, and (ii) Man is led by God, since he cannot lead himself, and the mystery of all this is not known to him. The writer of Ecclesiastes insists that there is a time and a season for everything, whilst Proverbs 16:4 says, ‘The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. Innately man is incapable of devising his own destiny, and of effecting it.’

that is his destiny. On his own Man cannot devise the authentic way. The only hope is what he can accomplish. He must have hope of some sort or he is hopeless. In one sense his past drives him on, and in another it retards him. If his goal depends on himself many factors may impede his progress, and he may never arrive. What assurance does he have that his goal is worthwhile? What is his assurance of immortality and of a good immortality?

According to the Scripture God alone plans what is Man's goal (cf. Eph. 1:3–14; I Cor. 2:6–10) and so sets Man's hope (Eph. 1:18; I Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:17). From the cradle to the grave he is in the vocation God has given him. When he refuses this vocation to devise his own then he can have no assurance that it is the valid vocation. This is another cause of anxiety and distress: both the way and the goal are uncertain. This uneasiness is linked with anger. To be 'without hope and without God in the world' is a hopeless and empty life-condition.

With all these elements in mind we come to redeemed Man living in the tension of the past and the present.

## **The Transformed Man in His Present Tension**

### **Our Method of Study**

The simplest way for our study is to repeat the points we made concerning fallen Man, and in regard to redeemed Man observe the differences and the possible solutions of those problems.

## **Redeemed Man, His Present Tensions and Problems and Their Resolution**

It is true that redeemed Man has many problems, but they are not the precise problems of fallen Man, in that the former has surrendered his (imagined) autonomy, he is one with God and his situation is far different from that of his state as fallen Man.

In regard to *the memory of Eden, of primal paradisaical peace, innocence and joy* there is no need for pain in him since, through salvation and the fruit of the Spirit, he now has 'love, peace and joy'. Such a statement is no cliché since the redeemed person is now united with God. He has been granted a new innocence from guilt (Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 5:15–21; 8:1). The contrast with the past is no longer painful. He is a new creature (II Cor. 5:17).

Again, he does not have *the problem of existential guilt*, for though he is as yet imperfect in this world, he is accounted as justified, sanctified and glorified (cf. Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 6:11; I Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:3ff.). *As for objective guilt*—that has all been dealt with—past, present and future—on the Cross. God has made Christ to be sin, to bear the sins of the world, and to suffer as the just for the unjust. Again, justification and forgiveness has dealt with objective guilt.

*The causes of anger* have largely been removed. Redeemed Man can now move in the will of God, can be free from wanting his own way, can be free of anger that springs from enmity with God and his fellow-creatures. The great work of the Cross in removing the guilt of his sin has removed the basis of his enmity with God, and so with others. The new Man in Christ has a different outlook on life, and not being in competition with his fellow-creatures is largely able to accept without bitterness the opposition which may come against him.

The basic removal of anger comes through love.<sup>21</sup> *The new person in Christ finds emotional fulfilment.* This is because he is utterly warmed in the love of God the Father, his enmity melts away. He is open to the love of others, and pours out such love on them. Indeed love now becomes the most powerful constraining and motivating force (cf. John 14:21; II Cor. 5:14; I John 3:16; 4:19).

One of the greatest themes of the N.T. is the defeat by Christ of *all the enemies of Man*. They are the world with its fallen angelic, demonic powers, the flesh, the Devil, who is called 'the prince [god] of this world', death, the conscience-under-law, the terror of the law, the fear of God's wrath—and so on. When the guilt of sin was removed by the Cross the power of these enemies was destroyed in a moment. Redeemed Man lives without the fear of death and judgement. This further shows him the love of God.

Finally—in this set of comparisons—we see that the Christian believer is a creature of vocation since he now accepts the mandate given to him in Genesis 1:28, to which is added the mandate to preach the gospel to all others. Also he has been 'born anew to a living hope' (I Pet. 1:3). Christ in him is both the hope and assurance of glory (Col. 1:27). Through 'a spirit of wisdom and revelation' he knows 'what is the hope to which he has been called, and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints' (Eph. 1:18). Thus one looks forward in hope to being conformed to the image of God's Son, Christ (Rom. 8:30), and knows he/she will

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<sup>21</sup> Here the whole subject of love presents itself. It is indeed a rich and rewarding theme for biblical research. Endless books, countless hymns and songs have been composed on the theme. Amidst this welter of materials I cite my books *Liberating Love*, *Constraining Love* and *Where I Love I Live*, in which the principle runs (i) God loves us, (ii) we thus love Him, and (iii) we are constrained to love all others, not excluding our own selves. Primarily we see God's love at the Cross (I John 3:16; 4:10; cf. Rom. 5:5ff.).

share in the great heritage—God Himself—and the new heavens and the new earth. That each child of God will be completed as a person, and share in 'the liberty of the glory of the sons of God' (Rom. 8:21) is what gives him/her constant living hope. He/she has destiny—a glorious destiny—and nothing else matters.

### **The Tensions of Different Systems, Different Outlooks of Humanity**

It is obvious that the human race has within it a wide variety of persons and groups. For our purposes we have spoken of fallen Man and transformed Man, and that is probably an over-simplification. There are countless numbers who are moving towards God!—although we have quoted Psalm 14:1–3 and Romans 1:18ff. to show that this is not the case (cf. Acts 10:34). God is drawing to Himself His elect—chosen before time (Eph. 1:4–8; II Tim. 1:9), their names having been written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8; 20:15). Since we are never sure who is coming to God or has come (II Tim. 2:19), we do best not to make a hard and fast statement that there are two distinct and separate groups which can be fully discerned.

Again, Paul in Romans 14, 15, and I Corinthians 8 has shown us that in the Christian community there are those weak in faith, weak in conscience, and those who are strong in both. It would appear that the weak will always be weak and the strong, strong. The weak have to be considered by the strong. A counsellor will have to determine who is weak and who is strong.

Further, we have to consider the fact that Christians are often immature (cf. I Cor. 1:1–4; Hebrews 2:14—6:4)—even when they should be mature—are back-sliders, and whether weak or strong,

are constantly in a moral–spiritual battle which from time to time they may win or lose. The Christian faces both triumphs and tragedies, success and failure. Part of the reason for this is that the believer exists in two distinct situations. I Corinthians 10:11 says that ‘the end of the ages’ has come upon the believer. That is, he is in ‘the present evil age’ (cf. Gal. 1:4; I Cor. 1:20) but does not belong to it. The ‘age to come’ (Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:4–5) is holy, dynamic and eternal, as against this present age which is both corrupt and temporary (I Cor. 7:31; I John 2:17). The renewed person stands within the intersection of these two ages. Hence the conflict: hence the tensions.

The believer is always feeling sensitive to any moral or spiritual failure, and sometimes will be so self–critical or feeling helpless that it will be difficult to receive help. Christians are prone to all the ills and evils that Man can do, and must remember this.

### **Humanity and the Church of the Living God**

A full study of the church is outside the orbit of this paper. We must simply say that the church will always be an offence (John 15:18—16:4; Matt. 5:10–11) to society unless it shows reasons why it should not be. Sometimes the church tries to please the world, and that is not its task. For our purposes we mention the church primarily because it is the community in which the new person in Christ can grow, can find truth, fellowship, love, and opportunity for ministry. It is in this society that the person can be nurtured, strengthened, and have true social participation.

From the counsellor’s point of view there is no better community to recommend to both Man fallen and to Man redeemed. Indeed the counsellor will also be a member of that community. In

the church Man fallen can hear the message of the gospel which will continue to redeem and rehabilitate, and Man transformed can grow in fellowship and worship, and also take part in the proclamation of God’s transforming love which is for all the world—the love which has changed him into a new creature.

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Study Six:  
***A Theological Way  
of Counselling***

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### **The Value of Theological Anthropology**

All anthropology is valuable provided of course that it is authentic. The Bible may be a resource for anthropologists who wish to discover what Jews and Christians think about Man, just as other writings of any people may be useful. The humanistic scientist commences with his own presuppositions, and likewise the Christian—whether he be a scientist or not. We have said in our Introduction that the Bible has its own system, its own *ethos*, that it is a particular entity that must be studied for itself, and—in some sense—by itself. This does not mean that extra-biblical insights are invalid or valueless—to the contrary, for all insights may prove useful, one way or another.

The value to us is that we can discover the harmony of God, creation and Man, and can see that history is not simply a number of successive events but is God's action in time, which has its goal and consummation in eternity. Knowing what we can of God, of creation and of Man, we can understand what we call 'creational principles', i.e. principles of law and order and form and progress.

We can understand Man because we can understand God, i.e. as far as God's revelation permits. This assists us in comprehending relationships, and relationships are the essence of what we are about in theology and anthropology. When we see that creation is not part of God but that Man is part of creation, then we can discover the relationships Man has with God, creation, his fellow-creatures and himself. All of these are essential to our task of developing a *praxis* of help to our fellow-beings. At the same time we are learning to live in this universe.

In all this we assume that whilst the Scriptures communicate much that is plain to common sense and is indeed known outside the Scriptures, yet much of it is a revelation, and the revelation is needed since man unaided could not discover what has been disclosed. Man in separating from God denied himself that kind of knowledge which would be most valuable to him. As we have said, Man is not confined to being a behavioural creature responding to certain stimuli and developing certain reflexes, but he is an intelligent, contemplative creature who is said to have spirit or be a spirit rather than simply an animated body. We say—biblically—that he is a spiritual entity, and we may study him as such from the Scriptures. Since the same Scriptures reveal to us all the things we have considered in our previous five studies, we have endless material on which to work in regard to the internal Divine relations of the Triune God, the external relationships of the three Persons, and then the equivalent relationships of Man who was made in the image of God.

The application of these evinced principles belongs to the realm of applied theological anthropology, and it is a little of this which we seek to discuss in this present paper. We have noted in our brochure of this Course that work has already begun in this area.

### **The Root of the Matter: Man's Image and View of God**

Everything would seem to lie in the way a man views God. He has an image of God, of creation, of his fellow-creatures and himself which constitute his theology, his cosmology and his anthropology. These God-views, world-views, Man-views and self-views condition the way human beings act. It is fair enough to say that a person's theology, cosmology and anthropology will be consistent, i.e. will form a system which is harmonious—even if the whole is wrong from a biblical or scientific point of view. The question is whether a person has formed—or received—a correct view of God, i.e. a true image of Him.

#### ***Man and the Nature of God***

Since Man is made in the image of God we need to know the nature of God Himself. This is too vast a subject for us to undertake in this series of Studies<sup>1</sup>, but what we can do is assume the Christian view of the Trinity<sup>2</sup> since that takes a relational view of God, and so helps us to understand Man as a social-relational creature. If we take the Christian view of God as Triune then we will speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The early

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<sup>1</sup> Biblical theological materials on the nature of God are required and these are readily available in the form of Bible and theological dictionaries, as well as extensive writings.

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, a broad step to take at this point of our studies. I would also like to cite my own—as yet unpublished—doctoral thesis *The Glory of God and Human Relationships* which claims that the internal and external relationships of the Triune Godhead are those relationships which Man has within his society. The dissertation goes on to claim that ultimately (teleologically) Man will be admitted into the fellowship of the Triune Godhead. The implications of this for human relationships and human living are vast.

church creeds were generally formed by church Councils which took the view that the three Persons<sup>3</sup> of the Godhead were co-equal and 'of the one substance'. Whilst rejecting Tritheism—the view that each Person was a God in himself—the Councils averred that God is One, i.e. has one centre of consciousness and being—not three—and that this is expressed in the Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The view that God as one Person manifested Himself as Father, as Son and as Holy Spirit was the condemned heresy of Sabellianism.

Whilst we may not traverse all this theology now, we must see that God is a social being, i.e. has relationships within Himself, and so there is also a plural sense within His one being. This is important for us for it means that Man made in His image is made in the image of the Trinity and not just of one Person of that Godhead. The fact that Man can converse with himself, and that the man and the woman can be 'one flesh' indicates the strong sociality of humans. This derives from the sociality of the Persons. Each of the Persons has his differ-entiation since one is Father, one is Son and one is Holy Spirit.

One thing we need to keep in mind is the statement that 'God is love' (I John 4:8, 16). There is order in the Trinity, the Father being the origin and source of the Son. The Spirit is also from the Father through the Son, and the three together form a *hierarchy*, although no one Person preceded the other in the matter of time, seeing that God is eternal.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Discursus on Hierarchy***

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<sup>3</sup> Whilst we speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as 'Persons' we need to know that this term was one which gradually came to be used and understood. Whilst there is no need for us to go into details about the evolution of the word, it is helpful to read the history of the developments of the creeds, especially as they refer to the Trinity—a concept which puzzles many outside the Christian faith, and even many within it.

<sup>4</sup> Theologians say the Son came from the Father through eternal generation by the Father, and the Spirit proceeded from the Father through the Son. Such reasoning is not easy to grasp but means the three Persons have ever been one, i.e. one Godhead.

The term 'hierarchy' means 'A body of persons or things ranked in grades, orders, or classes one above the other' (*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). In these days of humanistic egalitarianism the idea of hierarchy is unacceptable mainly because human beings wish to be free of any restraint, any orders, and any submission. Rightly understood a hierarchy is a dynamic love entity of persons who are one for the sake of the goal to which they move and so the functions which they serve. All true hierarchies originate in God and are sustained and aided by Him and they move towards the goal designed for them. A perfect example of hierarchy is in I Corinthians 11:3 where the Father is the head of Christ, Christ the head of the man, and the man the head of the woman. In the Trinitarian hierarchy the Father is head of the Son, and the Spirit is subject to both. Since each is in the other then their sociality obtains from their mutuality. Likewise in the hierarchy of I Corinthians 11:3 the mutual inter-dwelling of the Father in the Son, of the Son and the man, of the man and the woman, means this hierarchy is a unified entity and as such most dynamic. There can be no question of domination in the whole order of relationships.

In the Divine hierarchy—or for that matter any authentic hierarchy—superordination does not mean superiority, or subordination inferiority. The Three are one in love, because God is love. In the N.T. it is discernible that each Person is centred in the others, each honours the other, each gives to the other (from the differentiations) and each serves the other.<sup>5</sup> These internal

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<sup>5</sup> For our purposes in this Study we will have to take these facts for granted, but they can be studied by anyone wishing to do so.

relationships are also expressed externally when God turns out to be the creation which He has made, and as He provides for it, rules it, and—where necessary—redeems and renews it.<sup>6</sup> It is through creation, providence, His good sovereignty, the work of salvation and the regeneration of the heavens and the earth—all described in the Scriptures—that we know God is love. If God is love then Man—made in His image—is a creature of love. Everything that is God is good, and so everything that is Man should be good—derived as it is.

### ***Man Knowing God's Image or Not Knowing it Properly***

From the biblical point of view a person gains his or her image of God from the parents.<sup>7</sup> This arises from Genesis 1:26–27, i.e. that Man is made in God's image, especially that Man is the man and the woman together, i.e. that as one ('one flesh', 'one being') they represent God to all who see them. So the male and female joined together form one entity as especially the *imago Dei*. This means that the children of parents will get their image of God from the parents. Here we face the following problems:

- (a) Fallen Man is imperfect, and will imperfectly represent God, for their image will be deficient. Paul said, 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). This means that we come short of the glory of Man when we come short of the glory of God.

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<sup>6</sup> This, too, is a vast subject for research and understanding, the Bible containing all that is necessary to understand these points.

<sup>7</sup> I have developed this idea more fully in some books on fatherhood. Two titles are available, *Oh Father! Our Father!* and *I Love the Father*.

- (b) Children born into this world do not come as perfect creatures. This is seen from Romans 5:12ff. and Psalm 51:5, 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me'. What is called 'original sin' has affected (i) the image of God, and (ii) humans fully seeing the true image. Children, because of their own innate rebellion, will not see their parents as perfect. They will have a defective image of God.
- (c) Since parents—and in particular the father—are seen to represent authority then the parents will be further prejudiced in the eyes of the children. They will not realize that in rebelling<sup>8</sup> against the earthly father they are really rebelling against God or the heavenly Father. They are 'fallen children'!

This means that children will project on to God the image their parents present to them. If a father is grim, remote, impersonal, highly demanding, and lacking warmth of affection the child will accordingly see God. Since the term 'father' is common both to God and the male parent, God will be seen to be exactly like the earthly father.<sup>9</sup> Again, because the father and mother represent authority,

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<sup>8</sup> It may be claimed that all children do not rebel against their parents. It would certainly be true that they do not rebel equally. Rebellion against authority may be manifested either in overt anger and disobedience, or in seeming compliance which is generally passive disobedience, hiding anger which then builds up and may result in worse overt disobedience than that of the direct rebel. It is clear from Hebrews 11:13ff. that there have always been persons of faith, and persons of faith are obedient to God. Yet persons of faith are such because of the grace of God. In Adam all sinned and in Adam will all die. It is just that grace has come by Jesus Christ and persons affected by it—sometimes even from the womb—do obey God and His laws. Others do not.

<sup>9</sup> Since the Son derives from the Father in the Godhead, then what derives is counted one with its origin-source. The woman derived from the male (at that time wholly the Man) hence she is one with her husband and so one as mother with the father of the children. It seems that is why, perhaps, the child looks to the father for its image of God.

the authority will be opposed. Again, another problem: if the relationships between the two parents are not good then the image of God will become further distorted. Some theologians have seen the *relationships* of the man and the woman to be the actual image of God, i.e. in God's case *love*.

It would appear that images become fixed very early in life. They may even be set before birth.<sup>10</sup> Deficient images will make for deficient understanding of God, of creation and of others. The pattern is set for life. One thing seems undeniable—it is *impossible to change the image of God as seen in the parents*.<sup>11</sup> It may well be that the child unconsciously fashions the image for its own benefit, either to protect it against having to accept and obey God and the parents, or to give it grounds of love for the parent.<sup>12</sup> It seems strange that children of caring parents sometimes are set bitterly against them, that children of neglectful parents often love them

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<sup>10</sup> If there is anything in the claim that children in the womb are conscious of what is going on around them and of the parental relationships, then this would make sense.

<sup>11</sup> One's own parents may well represent the primary image of God the child receives, but then other male-female unions will also represent God and may influence the mind of the child. It is just that the *intimate* image of God must come from within the family.

<sup>12</sup> The matter is certainly complicated. In life if we do not wish to obey a certain authority we often demean that authority, criticize it and claim we have no obligation to obey that one. On the other hand we may wish—for certain reasons—to obey an authority and may rationalize that one as obedience-worthy. In the case of those of humanity who are people of faith (cf. Heb. ch. 11) we might expect them to have been fairly obedient when in childhood, hence the fact that not all human beings are always wholly disobedient. It is strange that in one family different images are derived from the one set of parents.



deeply, and that in any one family children can take varying attitudes to their parents.

It also needs to be understood that the parents' relationships will greatly affect the children. If the parents do not have hierarchical harmony (see discursus on hierarchy above) then the children may be greatly affected. A nervous father may well produce a nervous child, who seeing his parent's fear may look upon the world about as a fear-inspiring thing. A weak father will represent a weak deity, or the deity will have to be feminine to be strong—and so on.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Affects of Various Images***

Created unfallen Man knew the true image of God and deliberately rejected it in favour of his own (imagined) godhead. Man as the image of God must be in union with Him to display the true image and to have genuine relationships with Him and others. We know that Man tries to shape images for worship and they will take the forms he most likes. Because he is disoriented from God, dislocated in being and awry in his universe he will have curious and bizarre shapes to his depictions, whether they be mental or material. He will not vary in his image of God. He convinces himself that God is such-and-such. His tragedies, his broken relationships, his depravity, his evil manifestations, his hatred, anger and rage, as well as his boredom, ennui, accidie and the like will spring from that image and the notions attached to it. Indeed all his

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<sup>13</sup> It is often thought that disobedience springs from the thought of authority, but this is not necessarily so. It may well spring from anger with the lack of true authority, where someone in authority is unable to exercise it by being weak or by a compensating dictatorial approach. Human beings do not feel secure when true authority is not being exercised. In any case rebels need genuine authority to make their rebellion authentic!

ills and spills flow from it.

Because he refuses God as his mentor, Lord, friend, lover, he is caught in the tyranny of his own 'freedom' (licence), he has to take the intolerable load of his own autonomy. He is left to himself, and in himself cannot go beyond himself. He lives under the doom and gloom of Divine wrath (Rom. 1:18). He is under the bondage of evil powers. He blames his state on the four factors which he complains have made him what he is, namely heredity, parental upbringing, environment and circumstances. He does not see himself responsible for these and so blames them on to (an uncaring) God. James Denney once said, 'Heredity fixes not our fate but our trial.' In other words we are not fated by any of the four factors. It is our reaction or response to them which conditions us—not the things themselves. Helen Keller is a famous example of one who had so many adversities but gained character from them, rather than being destroyed by them.

### **True Theological Counselling: Changing the Fixed Image**

We come now to the heart of our series of Studies. Basically it is to change the fixed image of the person outside of God, by giving a rich revelation of the pure nature and character of God. When that image changes everything changes: such as the person's theology, cosmology and anthropology. This is what is called repentance and faith. This is what brings about the conversion complex in which are forgiveness of sins, total purification of their pollution, justification, sanctification, sonship of the Father, the gift of love and the Spirit in the heart, union with Christ as Lord and Saviour, acceptance by the Father along with the promise of glorification.

It is not by promising any or all of these elements that the image changes. They come with that change of image, but the change must come first. It will only come from the revelation of God Himself as love, as the Forgiver, as the Liberator, as the dear Father.

### ***Bringing the Revelation of God as Father and as Love***

Revelation is a work of God (John 6:44, 45, 65; Matt. 16:17), of the Son who came to reveal Him (John 1:18; 14:6; Matt. 11:27) and the Spirit who reveals both the Father and the Son (John 16:12–15; I Cor. 2:10–14). ‘Flesh and blood’ (i.e. humanity) cannot do this (Matt. 16:17). How, then, does a person so reveal God as love that the image of another person changes? The answer is that this is humanly impossible, but possible as the word of God is brought to someone. That one must himself/herself already have that revelation.<sup>14</sup> In fact, one is more a witness to the truth than one who can reveal. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer, yet he uses human beings to speak the word. The idea of ‘gut communication’ is present: what is alive to one inwardly will communicate itself strongly to another’s inner being. This does not mean bypassing the intelligence, but it means the communication is not just noetic, i.e. of the mind.<sup>15</sup> It is a heart matter also. Hence Jesus

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<sup>14</sup> We must insist that the revelation is not something hidden, esoteric, mystical or mysterious. The form of it can be simply stated and explained but as ‘the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit’ (I Cor. 2:14), and ‘except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God’, and ‘unless a man be born of the water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3–6), the eyes—and heart—of the listener will have to be opened spiritually by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>15</sup> The Hebrew idea of Man being essentially heart meant that the will, mind and emotions—to take a modern way of seeing Man—were one, and these elements were not separated. What is truth to the heart will show itself to others, even if those others do not agree with the communication. Jesus taught time and again that only the one who had an ear to hear would really hear. Communication cannot be made uniformly and be received evenly across any given audience.

said, ‘Out of your inner being shall flow rivers of living water’ (John 7:38). Of course everything must also be received by the mind.

### ***A Particular Way of Bringing the Revelation***

If we are agreed that it requires a revelation to show God and to evoke a response to that revelation, then teacher/counsellors will go about it differently. I take it that all counsellors listen patiently whilst the person describes his or her problems, so that hearing them the counsellor can detect the symptoms which then help to develop the diagnosis. I am speaking here of theological counselling and not of other non-biblical investigation. I wish to share the way I do it so that the listener/reader can pick up the *principle* if not the *method*. Having heard the counsellee through to a useful point the principle then is to speak and to show the nature of wrath, its effects upon the person, and then to describe how God has dealt with that wrath so that the person is free from it,<sup>16</sup> and consequently free from all enemies, and is now ready to be transformed. This is the revelation of love—a love into which the person can immediately

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<sup>16</sup> It is the wrath of God which folk fear and either try to rationalize it away as unreal or unfair, or they shrink from it in terror having been confirmed in their minds that God is grim, vengeful and judgemental, punishing as He wishes, and not letting off anyone. This, of course, is not the case. God is love, not wrath. Whilst He can be provoked to wrath by evil, His judgements are ‘righteous and true altogether’ as the Scriptures often state. It is His love that he saves us from deserved wrath, i.e. deserved judgement.

enter. Here—immediately below—is the format, but it is set out ideally, i.e. I have filled out the correct content of the answers. It will take time to get a person to respond in just this way, hence the need for patience.

- (a) **Q.** What does a person feel or sense when that one has committed sin? **A.** One experiences a sense of guilt.
- (b) **Q.** What elements or components are present in guilt? **A.** A sense of failure, of wrongness, of confusion, of anger, of pollution, of the shame of defilement, a heaviness, inner pain, a feeling of sickness at one's self, fear and dread of retribution, lostness, insecurity—and so on.<sup>17</sup> We have pointed out that these elements are shown in Psalm 31:10; 32:3–4; 38:1–8.
- (c) The counsellor then tries to show that God *personally* abandons the person to this guilt (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28) since He is angry with sin (cf. Ps. 7:11). The experience of wrath is not just a mechanical being given over by God to the consequences of our sins. (The heart of suffering is that we are made in the image of God and have lost what constituted true living, and are receiving the dire results in ourselves.) The giving over by God is intimately personal—His is personal wrath,<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Not all counselees respond this way but whether they do or not such things are present wherever there is guilt. The main thing for the counsellor to do is to show the terrible burden guilt represents and to show it is the natural outcome of our sin.

<sup>18</sup> Some teachers and theologians wish to escape what they think is the 'scandal' of an angry God and so they portray Him as love, not worrying about His law, not demanding righteous living, but kindly and accommodating in these matters. Doubtless that kind of counsellor thinks he is doing well but *God's love cannot be seen apart from His wrath*. We must take our listeners over the hump of this offence until the wonder of guilt-bearing love is revealed. In one sense we have to *seem* cruel in order to be kind.

not just the desire for retribution, avengement and justice.

- (d) **Q.** How can you get rid of your guilt? **A.** I have tried but there is no way. Here the counsellor agrees. He asks, 'Then is it not true that all of us are left with our guilt, and must ever bear it?' It would seem to be that way.
- (e) The counsellor explains that guilt is a *human* thing, and must be born in a *human* being in a *human* way, which would seem to be forever. He then explains that the Son of God became truly human (what love!) in order to deal with human guilt, and to bear every detail of it to the last drop—so to speak. He came to bear it by taking upon himself all that we described above as the experience of guilt, i.e. 'A sense of failure, of wrongness, of confusion, of anger, of pollution, of the shame of defilement, a heaviness, inner pain, a feeling of sickness at one's self, fear and dread of retribution, lostness, insecurity —and so on'. It is here that the counsellor must share utterly the revelation that has come to him along such lines, i.e. the inexpressibly painful and lacerating experience of Christ on the Cross: not just the nails in hands and feet, the crown of thorns, the buffetings and scornings, but the entire weight of all man's evil and its guilt in the hours of darkness on the Cross. Painfully, slowly he expended the wrath by bearing it. His most terrible cry, 'My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?' must be presented with the explanation that that is the uttermost in the suffering of wrath—to be rejected and

cast out into the limbo of the lost—that that is where he went and what happened to him,<sup>19</sup> but having borne and expended all human guilt, he returned to offer accomplished pardon to the sinner. His cry of triumph, ‘It is finished!’ assures us he was victorious over sin, guilt, wrath and death, and his final committal of himself to the Father was the sign of his being received by the Father as His most glorious Saviour and Lord.

**Note:** *This is the point where God is shown as the Father and as love, and the point where the fixed image of God can be utterly changed and the person become transformed. In fairness, much will depend upon the quality of the revelation given by the counsellor. If he lacks this theological anthropology himself then he must first try to attain it before he uses it.*

- (f) The counsellor must now point to the offer of the forgiveness of sins and justification from the law and wrath. He may not have to do this as the person may just be flooded with the knowledge of God’s love and receive it volitionally and spontaneously. Even so, it must be explained that forgiveness of sins has come as a gift, purification from sin’s pollution has been effected, freedom from its power has happened, and God has received the person as His child, and that that one is now in the Family of God. It is important to show that

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<sup>19</sup> To some this still seems too terrible just for sins humans have committed. Man’s evil does not warrant such cruel suffering: it is so outrageous. The answer must be that it is, that every sin is an outraging of the holiness of God and is a violation of His righteous being. Thus the suffering of the Cross is an act of pure and glorious grace—totally undeserved by any human being.

the past has been utterly dealt with, that the present is one of genuine freedom and the future is assured.

### **Following Through With Theological Anthropology**

In one sense we have reached our goal, i.e. the knowledge of Man created, fallen, on his way to transformation, transformed and moving towards ultimate maturation in glorification. If we return to look at Study 5 we can see there how the elements that trouble Man fallen, have been dealt with in the salvation of the person. Even so, much needs to be undertaken.

### ***The Person in the Church and the Triune God***

The first thing to keep in mind is that a transformed person is a member of Christ’s body the church. This is the *habitat* of the transformed one. The early church lived as a community of love and that is how it should be today. In fact single counsellors—as such—were not part of that body. It had pastors who as a group shepherded the flock. The members of the church saw themselves as members one of another. They were organically one. The people of God were in the Father as the One ‘above all, and through all, and in all’. They were in the Son as their Saviour and Lord, and in the Spirit as their Guide and Enabler in all things. N.T. Scriptures speak of the believer indwelling the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and of having these Three indwell him.

In that sense there is no need for special counsellors. The gospel is health-giving, and releases the person utterly from his past, but there will be continuous need to keep emphasizing this. Evil forces will come to destroy the new person, will try to sow

seeds of doubt, will seek to bring accusations of all kinds so that constant teaching concerning the irreversible nature of God's grace and love will always be valuable.

The healthy way of the life of the whole community will be that which keeps the new person in mental and spiritual health. The power of love, fellowship and unity is felt uniquely in the community of Christ. There, too, the riches of worship and prayer are unspeakably valuable. The sharing of the new liberty, and the release into freedom of the whole person, is the modern miracle that outspans any other.

### **The Continuing Battle**

We must not idealize what has happened in transforming the Man fallen, any more than we should minimize it. The elements of which we spoke in Study 5—memory, existential and objective guilt, human anger, emotional fulfilment, the enemies, goal, hope and vocation—have all be dealt with in the transformation by love. Even so, these are the things which will come to mind from time to time, and often the person will be tempted to think they have not been dealt with in finality. Again, we saw the tension of the two ages or aeons in which we live. We saw also that some Christians seem to have weak faith and a weak conscience whilst others seem strong.

It is in the context of the church that these things can be worked through. The ministries and gifts have been given by God for that purpose. Even so, it is not one long, hard and unremitting battle. So many encouragements are given, so many assurances that we shall all know victory both here and beyond, and above all there is the grand tug of 'things to come'—that pointing to the time when we shall all be glorified so that the long haul of history will prove

worthwhile in the long run.

These are some of the things of theological anthropology. They are no burden to know and to carry. They are extremely helpful in the business of personal living, and in the giving of aid to others.

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Study Seven:  
***Human Identity in Divine Relationships***

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**The Matter of Identity**

The word ‘identity’ derives from *idem* ‘the same’ and *entitas* from which we have our word ‘entity’, i.e. a thing as it essentially is, hence ‘the quality of condition of being the same; absolute or essential sameness’ (*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). Toffler’s book *Future Shock* shows the difficulty human beings have in working out their identity in this age in which so many changes are taking place, and at such an accelerated momentum. In particular the rapid changes one person may have to experience in vocation and in location from time to time are bewildering. ‘Identity crisis’ is a well-known term today. Doubtless none of this is entirely new: Cain had to face a more difficult vocation and a terrifying location. Abraham was uprooted from his former culture and opted for a nomadic life (cf. Heb. 11:8–10). Nomadic tribes have an exacting culture and a disciplined way of life under the constant threat of losing their basic identity, e.g. the Gypsies and the Bedouins. The industrial revolution of the 19th and 20th centuries has forced human beings and even their cultures to learn to adapt to changing conditions. The rapid advance of technology and the shrinking of the world to a global village via modern media means that the human race is presented with ever-changing conditions and situations, the question being

whether it adapts quickly enough to retain sanity, good mental health, and a communal and personal sense of identity. The crises of famines, earthquakes, plagues, wars, and even genocides are a few of the tragedies which face mankind continually. Even so, the human race seems to be incredibly resilient and adaptive to the changes it has known in its history.

**Personal Human Identity From a Biblical Perspective**

What concerns us in this study are the biblical principles of personal identity in the face of Divine and human relationships.<sup>1</sup> Whatever more secular disciplines may tell us regarding human personality identity—and they tell us much—there is something about the creation of Man, the fall and restoration of Man, and the final Destiny of redeemed Man which is of great importance to our subject. The identity of Man<sup>2</sup> not only as an abstract entity, but as an intimate personal entity is something that we can learn best from Scripture, i.e. Man being created in the image of God, and the implications and ramifications of that act, as also his continuance in the presence of God. Briefly we here set out these relationships

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper we assume that the relationships of the Triune God both internal and external are ontologically the relationships humans ought to have with God, with others, and with themselves.

<sup>2</sup> The present *psychological* search for identity which some undertake cannot be entirely satisfactory, since man is more than a psychological entity. Identity is determined by many things, namely the various elements with which one is identified by God, and with which the person seeks to identify his/her self. It seems obvious that the less self-consciousness there is concerning identity the more simple and real will be a person’s true identity. The very fact that we seek to know our identity tells us a story, namely that we are unsure of ourselves as persons.

as we assess their nature by the biblical descriptions of creation, the Fall, and through present salvation and ultimate adoption of sons, i.e. the ultimate redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23; cf. Phil. 3:21).

- (a) By creation, Man being made in God's image has total affinity with Him. In him is that which on the human level corresponds with God on the Divine level. Man—man—woman, one—flesh—is a pluralistic entity corresponding to God's innate plurality. Just as Father, Son and Holy Spirit have differentiation, so do man and woman—as Man. Each person is in some sense pluralistic—i.e. self-conscious, able to ruminate with and within his/her self, and each person has remarkable differentiation.
- (b) By the Fall this total relationship was broken between Man and God, Man within the race (as male—female) and each person within him/her self. Even so, all human beings 'live and move and have [their] being' in God (Acts 17:28). This fact is important, as no one can 'have being' outside of God, i.e. have true being.
- (c) By salvation Man is reconciled, the male—female entity resumes true relationships and the 'divided self'<sup>3</sup> of a person is brought to unity. Even so, the renewed identity in God is in the context of a curse yet unremoved or not rescinded, and the powers of evil are present and seek continually to bring disharmony. This is aided by their attempts to rouse

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965.

the flesh into producing the old patterns of the old humanity, e.g. anger, division etc.—such as in 'the works of the flesh'.<sup>4</sup>

- (d) Relating to '(iii)' Man now has his identity in God, in the community of the church, as the renewed 'male—female, one—flesh entity', and a changed relationship with society and the whole creation. We will seek shortly to develop all aspects of this renewed identity.
- (e) In the new world—the new heaven and the new earth—i.e. in the new age, every person's identity will be total, each having come to full maturity in glorification,<sup>5</sup> in having received the heritage of all things (Rev. 21:7), being in the family of God and the holy city, and in being a member of the 'kingdom of priests unto God'. This new identity which we may call a *revealed* identity is promised in Scripture, e.g. I Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 2:17; 3:12; Hebrews 11:39–40; Philippians 3:21; I John 3:2; II Corinthians 4:16; cf. 3:18.

We will need to develop some of these ideas we have just set out.

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<sup>4</sup> Technically, theologically, the 'old humanity' and its equivalent 'the flesh' have been put out of action (destroyed) by the work of the Cross in 'regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:5). In practical experience they can be seen to be stimulated by evil powers (cf. Gal. 5:16–21) but defeated by the present action of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16–18, 20–26).

<sup>5</sup> Man does not achieve—or receive—his full identity until glorified (cf. Rev. 2:17; 3:12). It is then that it be revealed to the person.

## **Man's Identity in God**

Man is not truly Man without God. When he broke off relationship with God (i.e. 'died to God and came alive to himself') he ceased to be fully human, in that he had 'died'. In one sense he is never fully without God (Acts 17:28; but cf. Eph. 2:12; Ps. 14:1–2) but in another sense he is. Cain, though cast out from the presence<sup>6</sup> of God, could still exist. Abel who was equally a fallen creature is numbered with those who lived 'by faith' (cf. Heb. 11:4–40) and so related to God, though not by sight. Man in this state cannot be aware of his true identity. Every person has, of course, self-consciousness, but self-consciousness does not necessarily mean true awareness of one's identity. Self-consciousness in some cases can retard knowledge of identity, as each person needs the aid of others in understanding him/her self.

### ***Identity Lies in Relational Hierarchy***<sup>7</sup>

This is not immediately apparent. Most hold the idea that to be autonomous is to assure self-identity, but biblically identity obtains only in relationship with God, others and oneself. The statement of Romans 14:7—'None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself'—is not necessarily an anthropological one, but ultimately it

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<sup>6</sup> We need to know what *presence* means in Gen. 4:14, 16. Ps. 139 insists that there is nowhere where God is not, but even there the idea is not primarily geographic or locational but 'present to' in the relational sense and in the sense of providential care. In Matt. 5:43–48 Jesus is saying that God is always present in the providential sense to all sinners as well as to His children. On the whole matter of *presence* see my *The Everlasting Presence* (NCPI, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> For an extended presentation of the matter of hierarchy see my paper 'The Matter of Hierarchy—Functional and Relational' (NCTM Pastors' Study Group, 6th August, 1990).

amounts to one of that order. Jeremiah 10:23 says the way of man is not in himself, i.e. it is in him only in relationship with God. Not fully knowing God prevents us from fully being human (Prov. 30:1–4). However, as we examine the nature of God we see that He has His unity in three Persons, and that these three are in hierarchical order of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,<sup>8</sup> as is evident from the New Testament. Man, being in the image of God, must reflect the Divine hierarchy. Certainly it is clear that since God created Man he is in hierarchical order with God. The position of the man before woman was created from him means that the woman is in hierarchical relationship with him. Just as in the Godhead hierarchy does not mean that the descending order of ordination infers a descending order of superiority, so in the man-and-woman hierarchy there is none. It is a matter of function and not of nature or essence.

In I Corinthians 11:3 Paul speaks of the hierarchy of the Father, of Christ, of the man and of the woman. *Each hierarchy is a dynamic social entity of love which is purposive and functional in the will of God so that all relationships are in unity and are essential to the true working of the entity and the fulfilment of the will of the God.* It is in this relationship and this vocation that true human identity has both its origin and being. Hierarchy also relates to sociality both human and Divine, and in turn to the law of God. There is no room inside a hierarchy for the autonomous independence of any member from the others, for all are bound together. The beauty of true hierarchy is that every member is not only interrelated with all, but is centred on every other member,

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<sup>8</sup> We will not endeavour to work this out now, but see the Pastors' Group study for the month of August entitled 'The Matter of Hierarchy—Functional and Relational'. This contains a full description of hierarchy, including the Divine hierarchy. See also my Thesis yet to be published entitled *The Glory of God and Human Relationships*.



and indeed the identity of each is wholly dependent upon this hierarchical relationship. This mutuality preserves the hierarchy from individualistic domination by one of the other. Of course this cannot happen if the mutuality is not that of Divine love. Only in mutuality is true sociality: only in true sociality is mutuality. The love that a person has for God or a fellow person must be Divine *agape*, and that *agape* has its circulatory movement throughout the hierarchy in what has been called *perichoresis* and *circumincessio*.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Authority, Law and Human Identity***

If we understand hierarchy we will see it is wholly against anarchy or forms of government which are independent of the Divine order.<sup>10</sup> Since all true hierarchy is rooted in God—i.e. comes down from above—so we must see it is linked with authority and law. We must not understand authority as being authoritarian—i.e. authority for its own sake—but as being for the sake of those others who are under its hierarchical direction.<sup>11</sup> The law of God

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<sup>9</sup> These two terms cover the assertion of John of Damascus (7th century A.D.) that the three Persons of the Trinity interpenetrate each other, and that relationally there is a circulatory movement of giving and receiving of the differentiations within the mutuality of the three persons.

<sup>10</sup> By the statement ‘wholly against anarchy, etc.’ we simply mean that the only ontological order is that which God brought into being. In history there have been many forms of government, of law and of order and probably none of these even approximates to the ontological order. Even so, these operate within the sovereignty of God, so that they are ‘allowed’ (cf. Rev. 13:7; Dan. 7:23–27) but they cannot prevail because of their innate fallibility.

<sup>11</sup> Here we have the revelation of Jesus that all the law and prophets depended upon the two-fold command to love God with all one’s being and—consequently—one’s neighbour as oneself. Paul and James see the law of God and the law of Christ as being wholly the law of love (Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:13–14; James 1:22–25; 2:8–13).

must ultimately be seen to be the law of love, and nothing else. Love is commanded as both Jesus and John insist (John 13:34; 15:12; I John 2:7ff.; 3:11ff.; 5:2–3). As we have seen, the whole hierarchy is a dynamic entity of love, and since love is the fulfilling of the law there can be no talk of domination within the hierarchy, i.e. no one has dominion over the sovereignty of other persons (cf. II Cor. 1:24; I Pet. 5:3). It is clear from I Thessalonians 5:12 and Hebrews 13:7, 17 (cf. I Tim. 3:1–7; 5:17; Titus 1:7–9; I Pet. 5:1–5) that leadership is a matter of love. It is clear that the one who would be first must be servant, as Jesus so clearly intimated.

We conclude, then, that authority, law, order and hierarchy are the environment and context in which the identity of persons has its full liberty and development.

### **The Community of Christ and the Identity of Its Members**

We come now to the heart of the matter. Each person has his or her full identity in God. Reconciliation with God through the gospel (Rom. 5:1, 2, 10, 11; II Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:14–18; Col. 1:19–22) is sacramentally effected through baptism as believers are ‘called into the fellowship of his Son’ (I Cor. 1:9), i.e. are baptized into the Tri–unity of the Name (Matt. 28:19)<sup>12</sup> and into the one body by the

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<sup>12</sup> Note that in this reference (Matt. 28:19) it is into ‘the name’ and not ‘the names’ that the nations are to be baptized. Man being created in the image of God and brought into being through the three Persons must have meant that the Fall brought a break in relationship to the three Persons. Baptism brings the baptized person back into relationship with the Father, the Son and the Spirit. This must mean a wholesome reunification of ‘the divided self’ as the person becomes one with the Triune God.

Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) and so partake of the seven elements of unity as set forth in Ephesians 4:1–6 (cf. Phil. 2:1–7). The New Testament teaches that the three Persons of the Godhead dwell in the church—the community of the Father, the Son and the Spirit—and that each person of that community dwells in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. This is variously described as ‘abiding’,<sup>13</sup> ‘fellowship with God’<sup>14</sup> and ‘partaking of the divine nature’.<sup>15</sup>

Human identity—as we have said—derives from being one (identified) with God. The order of *nature* is that God creates us and makes us one with Him for He has determined to be with one with us. The order of *grace* is that God identifies with us in Jesus Christ who is ‘Immanuel’ (cf. Matt. 1:21–23; Isa. 7:14; cf. Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14) since he ‘tabernacled amongst us’ (John 1:14). This identification *with us* (cf. II Cor. 5:14, 21) was also *for us* (Rom. 8:1–3; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; etc.), so that we might be one *with Him*

(II Cor. 5:14). Thus—we repeat—the union of His elect people with Him means we have come to our true identity *in Him*. The identification of ‘*in Christ*’ releases from the identification of ‘*in Adam*’.<sup>16</sup> To be *in Christ* has both personal and corporate connotation. To be *in Christ* and to have Christ *in us* (Gal. 2:20)<sup>17</sup> makes us one with

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Abiding’, ‘indwelling’, ‘living in’, ‘making home in’ are synonymous. The ideas and verbs can be found in such scriptures as John 14:17, 23; 15:1–11; 17:21; Rom. 8:9–11; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:3ff.; 2:22; 4:6; Col. 1:27; 3:3; I John 2:27; 3:24; 4:13, 15, 16.

<sup>14</sup> I John 1:3.

<sup>15</sup> II Pet 1:4 (cf. I Cor. 1:9).

<sup>16</sup> Rom. 5:12–21 with I Cor. 15:22, 45–49 is important as our true identification, not only eschatologically but also in the present.

<sup>17</sup> Gal. 2:20, ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me’, is the end of the individualism which stemmed from the Fall. Total identification with Christ and union with him are the one, and the basis and source of an entirely new life.

one another since we are ‘members one of another’,<sup>18</sup> i.e. we are organically members joined in a more-than-human mutuality, and this effected by the seven unifying elements of Ephesians 4:1–6. The Spirit is the spirit of unity of love and of fellowship, so he enables us to have our identity in identification with all others.

We conclude then that our identity derives from being one with God, one with others, one with creation and one with one’s self. Notice we say ‘derives from’ because just the relationships are not our identity. As we will see, each of us is unique, and is a person and a vital one at that. We now look at the things with which we are identified and which enable us to realize who we are.

### **The Person Subsisting and Functioning**

If we look at God in whose image we are made, we see theologically that God subsists—His ontological Being—and acts—His economic or revelational Being. This theological description must include the fact that God is One, and One as both subsisting and acting. God cannot be without doing. The statement ‘who was and is and is to come’ is not a statement of His continuity in time, but of His never-ceasing action, the action itself being purposive and *telos*-oriented.

Man being ‘the image and glory of God’ both subsists and acts. He subsists in God and he acts in God. His identity is then a being and doing entity. As created, Man is always developing as he moves towards his destined maturation, i.e. the glorification God will give to him. This drive for the goal of maturity is an often

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<sup>18</sup> See I Cor. 12:12–27; Eph. 2:16–22; 4:15, 16, 25; I Pet. 2:4–10 which show the unity and the oneness of the brethren and the inter-relatedness of everyone.

mentioned one in the N.T. Again, subsisting and acting are two sides of the one coin—so to speak. All true action is in God and stems from the indwelling of the Persons in the person and the person indwelling them. In particular the person works with the whole community of Christ. This community is at once *royal* (i.e. of the Kingdom of God; cf. Exod. 19:6; I Pet. 2:9–10), *priestly* (I Pet. 2:4–10)<sup>19</sup> and *prophetic* (Acts 2:17–18; Joel 2:28–32; cf. Num. 11:29).<sup>20</sup> It is this because Christ is Prophet, Priest and King so that the ‘not I, but Christ who lives in me’ has its outworking in the Person of Christ. Since these three offices are *acting* ones, the person in Christ—along with all the community of Christ—will be doing what Christ is doing. *In the being and the doing in Christ the identity of the person is being realized.* That is, the innate identity of any person—the particular combination of all things which pertain to that one, which constitutes his/her uniqueness in the given sovereignty of that person’s being—is only realized in the progressive fulfilment of that person as he or she lives within the will and

### **The Ultimate Identity of the Person**

For Paul his ‘I’ was not an egotistical<sup>21</sup> entity. To say ‘the Son of purpose of God. In this sense identity is teleological.

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<sup>19</sup> Note that the doctrine of ‘the priesthood of *all* believers’ is not the doctrine of ‘the priesthood of *every* believer’. In the N.T. church no one person is a priest in the ministry of the church, but all are involved together as participators in ‘a kingdom of priests’ (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; cf. Isa. 61:6).

<sup>20</sup> We do not have time here to develop the prophetic, priestly and kingly character and role of the people of God. See *Christ’s People in Today’s World* (NCPI, 1985, Sec. 3, pp. 71–141).

<sup>21</sup> Literally the ‘I’ which constitutes a person is egotistical, but here we mean that when one—e.g. St Paul—is not ego-centred then that one is not egotistical. The ego (‘I’) of a person is not realized in and by ego-centricity but its essential being is total and healthy when it is ‘other-person centred’, i.e. ‘other-person centred’.

God who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*’ set his ‘I’ out as distinctive. His personality is not lost or homogenized in the community of Christ, but rather is etched more strongly. Whilst Paul is a person for all persons, and is by no means an individualist, yet he is clearly one conscious of having his own identity, and faces both the responsibility and the joy that it brings. Christ’s use of the ‘I’ is numerous and significant, and none of it is ego-centric. No one was more self-conscious—in the good sense of that term—and yet none was so self-giving for others than he. It is difficult to describe his identity apart from his relationship with the Father and the Spirit and this relationship does not so much identify him by use of the terms ‘Son’, ‘servant’, ‘Lord’ (etc.) as he gives meaning, content and colour to those terms. It is thus difficult in relationship to him—and for that matter, anyone—to describe his identity. Even so, that identity is remarkably evident and is not liable to be confused with the identity of any other.

When we go to the passage of Psalm 139:13–18 we have the reality of personal identity expounded. Science tells us that the DNA of a given person is different from all others, as also that person’s fingerprints, and—in fact—the personal combination of weight, height, physical dimensions; and this being so, each person is unique. No two persons are ever identical in these regards. The Psalmist says it was God who gave the proportions of the person to the person, and it was God who formed the days of that person ‘when as yet there was none of them’. Is this then why each person delights in what he or she is, and can never surrender that reality—not even under the most terrible pressure? What is clear from this

Psalm is that *identity and destiny are inseparably bound together*. Indeed they are the one.

This remarkable fact is borne out in Revelation 2:17 and 3:12.<sup>22</sup> Revelation 2:17 says, ‘To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.’ Commentators are divided as to whether this ‘new name’ is that of Christ or the recipient of the white stone. Revelation 3:12 speaks of the person having ‘the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God . . . and my own new name’, i.e. the name means the *identity* of ‘my God’, of ‘the city of my God’ and of ‘me’—meaning Christ. It seems reasonable to say that it is the name of the recipient of the white stone, which some think to be an invitation to the wedding feast of the Bride and the Lamb. It is a sort of ‘identity card’. H. Hoeksema (*An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, 1969, p. 94) says, ‘He shall be given a new name expressive of his new and eternal being, a name which he alone shall be able to know, a name that determines his personal place in that blessed throng that shall once gather around the throne of God and the Lamb and reveal in all its fulness the splendour and image of God.’ Some other commentators say similar things. Commentators on Revelation 3:12 see ‘the new name’ in the same light—i.e. the identity of God, of the holy city and of Christ.

What is significant is that no one knows the name written on the white stone except the one who receives it, so that if it is that

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<sup>22</sup> In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 there are seven promises given to the conqueror or overcomer, and to these is added Revelation 21:7. These 8 promises relate to the person’s destiny and thus to that one’s identity. They are all keys to the person, and keys to any one’s destiny. Both identity and destiny are gifts of God.

person’s name then now has something been revealed to him or her which was not previously known. It would appear that one at last will know him/her self, i.e. the personal identity and all that it implies. If it is the name of Christ that is meant in 2:17 then it would amount to the same thing since in the light of I Corinthians 13:12 and I John 3:2 where to see Christ in the ultimate is to be truly like him, and to know him as one also is known by him.

The rich and wonderful conclusion that we draw is that *each person has his or her unique identity, that it is significant for one’s being and doing, and that eventually one will know truly who one is, and what one is about both in time and eternity*. The pastoral and counselling value of this cannot be computed.

### **The Matter of Human Identity in Pastoral and Counselling Ministry**

So much lies at the root of human inferiority,<sup>23</sup> anger about that state, and reactions to hierarchy, authority and law, which is failure to see the extraordinary worth of a human being. The evaluation humanism places on a human being is not realistic. The exaggerated and false value that ego-centricity places on one’s self is dangerous and leads to mental ill-health and often also to anti-sociality. Personal worth in identity makes no place for the person being lost or

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<sup>23</sup> We need to see that not all human beings are equal—a fact which would require homogeneity to make us so—but that all human beings are equally human. Inferiority springs from existential guilt, and existential guilt springs from the Fall—‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’, which means we have come short of the glory of Man. Nothing can alter the matter of this guilt or the self-depreciation which springs from it, and self-atonement which the human person is compelled to attempt in order to achieve self-justification.

merged into society, any more than it gives credence to individualism. True social being stems from the sociality of the Triune Godhead, and gives value to the differentiations that persons have in the economy of God. The reality of God's love for human beings, without conditions, does not mean Man is loved because he is valuable, or even valuable because he is loved. The reason lies in creation. Man has been created with thought, in wisdom, and each person has been given an identity which is unique, is functional, and is essential to the plan and purpose of God, so that vocation and destiny<sup>24</sup> are one with identity.

The communication of this truth by persons of faith to persons in need means the release of them from bondage, and entrance into fellowship with God and the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.

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<sup>24</sup> Destiny, rightly understood, is a most powerful force for motivation and accomplishment. It gives reason for being, and hope for the endeavour.

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### **Notes on the Bibliography**

The reading on the subject of Man is a vast one. A quite limited bibliography is included here, and readers may care to refer to me or some other theologian regarding their choice of reading. I have put asterisks against a few of the books for immediate reading, but need to say that they do not necessarily have greater value than others in the list. I have not listed many Bible or Theological Dictionaries and Encyclopedia but articles in these are generally most useful. Unfortunately at the time of printing one or two details of books have not been completed, but these will later be supplied. I would suggest the use of my *I, The Man* as an introduction to the Doctrine of Man, and then Philip Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man* for a broader introduction. The first volume of Helmut Thielecke's *Ethics* would then be greatly helpful. After that judicious selection of other books could proceed.

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