

PRACTICAL
CHRISTIAN
COUNSELLING

BY GEOFFREY BINGHAM

FOREWORD BY JOHN COURT

Practical Christian Counselling

by
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FOREWORD

Counselling is a highly idiosyncratic activity. From the mine of belief, reading and experience each counsellor must quarry that which will meet the needs of those who come for help. While text books and manuals abound, this contribution is not ‘just another’ one. Geoff Bingham takes his readers behind the scenes of actual practice to get down to fundamental assumptions, beliefs and attitudes. This is unusual, but helpful in showing how they lead to the style of counselling which follows.

There is a strongly didactic approach here, in contrast to the recently-popular but now passing ‘non-directive’ fashion in counselling. There is a blending of head and heart with primary emphasis on Biblical wisdom and true love. Hence, counselling becomes the communication of foundational Biblical truths to be received and accepted. This transmission of truth depends on the counsellor having a full experience, as well as clear understanding of theological principles.

This is a radical approach to counselling in the true sense of radical—getting to the root of the matter.

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THE QUALITY OF THE COUNSELLOR AND HIS COUNSELLING

A Preface to the Second Edition of this Book

When we pick up a book on a certain subject we naturally expect to find material which will be immediately helpful. It is to be hoped that this book will be useful for Christian counsellors who read it. Written originally in the years 1978 and 1979, and published as a whole in 1981, it has given me, the writer, years in which to consider the material I have compiled into this book. One gains new insights and revised views in five years, and this I have certainly done with the matter included in this present volume. Certainly I should rewrite it. In fact I ought to write another book, so many are the new materials which have presented themselves. At the moment, pressures of various kinds preclude me from doing this. Even so I owe it to readers to give a shortened form of the ideas which have come to me and which I think ought to be shared.

Current Therapies

Because this volume seeks to be Biblical it does not name and explain many of the (so-called) secular therapies which counsellors have available for them. Yet, by the same token, there are many therapies which claim to be Biblical, and which are being used widely. Doubtless many of them bring certain useful results, and results which are immediate in their effects. They may or may not be good. Who can say? We are too busy to analyse and decide their value. Whatever the therapy may be, it must be subject to one definite criterion, namely, 'Is it truly Biblical?' We have pointed out in these pages that many therapies called Biblical are really reductionist, i.e. the

therapist sees all Scripture through one theme - even one basic reference - such as 'love', 'truth', 'forgiveness', or 'exhortation'. Others seize on principles such as 'healing of the memories', 'inner healing', and 'deliverance'. They structure their therapy according to their understanding of the particular principle they are using.

The question we must ask ourselves is, 'Am I a Christian who counsels, or am I a truly Christian counsellor?' A Christian who uses secular counselling principles is a Christian who counsels. He may or may not consider he is counselling in a Christian way, but at least he knows his counselling does not come primarily from the Scriptures, even though it may accord with many Biblical principles. The one about whom I am uneasy is the reductionist Christian who chooses one or more things from the Bible, shapes it into a workable therapy, and then calls it 'Christian'.

My plea is for a truly Biblical approach. Even as I write this I realise it is a statement which is so general that I can be accused of demanding what cannot possibly be supplied, i.e. 'Who is truly Biblical?' I agree that no person will ever be found who is wholly Biblical, but that does not invalidate my demand. Whilst agreeing that many insights of Scripture can be of immense practical value, I insist doggedly that there is a unity in the Bible, an ethos which is regular, and that the Christian mind, when fully informed, will sense when it is regular or irregular in its use of Scripture. For example, I cannot accept that many current therapies are truly Biblical. Without doubt - at least to my mind - the quality of the Christian counsellor and his counselling depend upon whether or not he is wholly faithful to the Scriptures.

What Kind of Gospel? Horizontal or Vertical, or Both?

What concerns me is the man-oriented nature of much of our counselling. This, I believe, has resulted from the man-orientated nature of much of our

preaching and teaching. We seek to show people that they have much to gain from the Gospel, such as peace, joy, love, betterment of human relationships and the like - all of which is quite true - but that is not the way the Scriptures primarily present it. They think in terms of the loftiness of God, His creatorial greatness, His high righteousness and justice. Indeed they show God's indignation at sin and evil, and His anger upon it - points at which few of us would commence counselling. Whilst the message 'God is love' is at the heart of Biblical thought and our counselling, yet it is not apart from the wrath of God on evil. It is not apart from the sinfulness of man set against the holiness of God.

If we reserve the vertical insights concerning God in the hope that we will attract persons to God, then we are making a mistake. A purely horizontal gospel has nothing of true value to offer to man. On this level he is apt to see himself as the victim of heredity, parental training, environment and circumstances. Since these four elements occupy man in his anger and protest, and since he believes he is the victim of these things, he cannot be brought by sympathy to find the solution to his problems. Not until he honestly accepts his responsibility for his choices in these four fundamental things will he be free. To put it in other words, not until man sees and admits to being sinful in all his experiences of life can he be emancipated from their iron grip. 'More sinned against than sinning' is not really the story of any human being, though it may at first sight appear to be so. Man must be counselled in the context of God's holiness, righteousness, goodness, truthfulness and love, before the dynamic grace of God can be made known and effective.

Internal Theological Data

Even as I write these words I smile, albeit ruefully. Recently our company bought a new word processor in which is contained an entire Webster's

Dictionary, of some 26, 000 words. At the touch of a code key we can correct the spelling of every word on the floppy disk. How marvellous for us to have a similar theological data bank whereby we can correct every false or inadequate theological fact! Yet in one sense that is the principle of this present volume: know your Biblical theology and see man's needs and God's action towards man to fulfil those needs. On the horizontal level I would see man's needs as lying in emotional, relational and vocational fulfilment. Man seeks to effect such fulfilment by his own efforts, and inevitably collides with other human beings who are on the same quest. Biblically man can only come to such fulfilment by the action of God's grace. Always there will have to be a downward action of God to transform man, do him good, and keep him in that good. Sometimes a person will agree with that principle, but his agreement is something like this: 'Oh yes, God must help me. Only He can do that, but then it is what He ought to do. I need it; He should do it. After all, in His creation, I have come to where I am because things have been adverse to me.' By saying this he has completely denied the principle of grace. Grace is that action of God which man does not deserve. In no sense is God obligated to do anything for man. A graceless Gospel makes God an aide to man. **He is only doing what He ought to do!** **The deeper questions of man's evil, his rebellion, his total moral** inability to either will to effect his salvation or to actually effect it, are set aside. Thus we have a weak counselling ethos.

This book seeks to disclose some theology, that which immediately helps the counsellor to see where a man is at, and to know his needs, and to talk from the great grace of God in His love for lost humanity. Only then will counselling be truly effective, and be of lasting usefulness.

God is Always Working

Jesus said, 'My Father is always working, and I

go on working'. He must have meant that God worked in creation, is continually so concerned with creation that He upholds it so that it does not fail, and in redemption - the advent of Christ into the world and his work to save it - He cares for it in love. More than that He communicates that love in the Gospel by the work of the Holy Spirit. He cares enough to take redeemed man on in holiness of life, and bring him to total maturation, thus ultimately glorifying him. This is the gamut of His love, but it requires *a present working of grace*. God, here and now, will do something for the needy person, especially as he responds in faith to that promise.

When I counsel a person I notice that he generally sees himself as caught in the past like a squirrel in a steel cage. His conscience keeps him troubled. He tends to think he is a victim of the past. Any recycling of that past seems to bring him to deeper distress. The blunt facts of grace surprise him with their simplicity, so much so that he may shrink from them. He be totally forgiven, totally cleansed, totally freed from guilt? That seems impossible? ' Yet such a sense of God's love cannot spring from a horizontal gospel. The downward action of God towards him -and this without condescension - seems impossible. That is why he must see the culpable nature of his own evil, the holiness of God, and the love that is unconditional and wholly redeeming. He must also see that the grace of God continues working in every detail of his life, that 'great grace' is across undeserving mankind.

The greatest weakness I see in much therapy is pity for the troubled counsellee. I am not saying we should not have pity, but not the kind of pity that tells the person he has been badly done by, that he is the victim of others, of circumstances and the like. By doing this we take away the dignity and honour of human beings. We relieve them of what is most essential to them - their independence of choice, their right to choose, whatever may be the consequences.

That involves their total responsibility for the actions they take. Only the Cross can be the answer to their dilemma. I see all forms of humanism invading the strong teaching of God's grace. Mistakenly, in our pity for man, we withhold the reality of grace. 'By the grace of God I am what I am'. Of what value is a partial repentance and a tentative faith?

Quick Ways to Heal

Most therapists would be the first to admit the failure rate they know in healing. The heal-quick counsellors often are pragmatic. They appear to achieve immediate results, but these do not necessarily last. If we are to be Biblical in our counselling we must be Biblical in our theology, our knowledge, our thinking and our practice. Every Biblical insight gained will be useful-even precious -for our counselees. We do not need a horizontal gospel, nor even a directly vertical gospel, but the true Gospel which is first vertical, then horizontal, and so, both.

*Geoff Bingham,
Coromandel East, 1984.*

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SECTION ONE

THE BIBLICAL BASES OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING

Introduction

As we will see, this volume seeks only to provide a Biblical basis and background for Christian counselling of those in need. Those who apply for counselling may feel their need to be mental, or they may see it as a need which is not confined to the mental areas of living, but rather a whole, overall need. Some may be inclined to speak of their need as ‘spiritual’. Whatever that need, apart from organic sickness which requires direct medical care, we seek to see the basis of these needs, and the way in which Biblical truth can bring help.

Many counsellors are skilled in secular disciplines in psychology, and have a knowledge also of Biblical truth, and they seek to use both sets of knowledge in order to help. Whether or not this can be accomplished wholly is not the subject of this book. What this book seeks to do—and no doubt does it very sketchily—is to seek to work within the perimeter of the Scriptures. It does not propose a syncretism of Bible truth, psychology, and psychotherapy.

Doubtless we need to study the Scriptures continually, and in doing so to know them holistically. We need to work Scripturally in both our understanding of truth, and in applying it. This goes for all of life, and not just for the matter of counselling. What is in the first section of this book is the writer’s attempt to

give a general view of the theology of God, creation, and man. It is obvious this attempt must be very sketchy. For this reason counsellors should develop a whole theology which will assist them in their work.

This first section then, although including an element of applicatory advice, leaves the actual application of the principles it sets out, to the second section, namely the practice of counselling. Doubtless the reader will seek, as he reads the first section, to see how it could be applied. This will make his reading to be even more valuable.

CHAPTER ONE

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT COUNSELLING

(i) Introduction: What is Counselling?

What is counselling? It is, simply put, the giving of advice. This is advice which is helpful. It can be instructive (teaching), preventative (prophylactic), and remedial. Counselling can relate to all areas of life, for example in regard to living within a family or community. It can relate to the various stages of human growth and development. It may pertain to relationships, vocation, the effects of the past presently upon a person, and it may relate to the future. In fact it may relate to every area of life. Seen in that light the counsellor would need to be a person of knowledge and wisdom, particularly in the areas which required helpful advice. It goes without saying that the giving of advice may take various modes. Certainly advice must be given graciously, without patronage, and even without appearing to do so.

What is *Christian* counselling? Presumably it is the giving of advice by a Christian. More particularly it would be the giving of Christian advice. Some would prefer to say it is the giving of Biblical advice. They would mean by this that it is the impartation of that wisdom which Scripture contains. Since the Scripture is so wide in its wisdom, the application of that wisdom would require first of all a very wide knowledge of what is written, and then a special ability to both impart and apply that same wisdom.

So far most would agree. What, however, complicates the term 'Christian counselling' is the fact that there is a scientific discipline called psychology. Associated with this are kindred disciplines such as psychiatry,

psychotherapy, sociology, and so on. Many Christians study these in order to enhance what wisdom they have. They absorb insights from these disciplines, and utilise them in their Christian counselling. For them it must be an arduous, and often a difficult task to distinguish between what is basically Christian and what is not. In fact in most cases it is an almost impossible task.

Again there are Christian counsellors who, having been trained in a discipline or school (say) of psychology, find that its epistemology¹ is acceptable or convenient to use. Hence they base their giving of advice on that particular school of knowledge. In doing so they seek to keep in mind the Christian bases of truth. It may even be said that they 'Christianise' that school of teaching.²

Still further there are those counsellors who seek to see the truths they know from Scripture in the light of the discipline they have obtained. It may also be that they may seek to see what they have learned from their school of thinking in the light of Scripture. All such counsellors would call their counselling 'Christian'. In this they are surely correct. Recognising the fact that God is Creator and King of all the earth, it must mean that wherever research has examined the true phenomenology of the created world, and tested its conclusions, that such facts must be part of the whole truth of the universe. Of course such research must be holistic and not simply reductionist. In this sense all facts and truth discovered must be utilised by Christian people insofar as their gifts and capacities enable them to do so. The wisdom they would obtain would equip them for counselling, and, we could say, Christian counselling. Having said these things, is there an alternative which might not require such specialisation? To put it simply, is there such a thing as Biblical counselling which can also claim to be Christian counselling?

In order to answer that question we must seek to look at what we will call Christian Biblical Counselling.

(ii) Christian Biblical Counselling: What Is It?

There are those who are called to give counselling such as clergy, pastors and teachers, elders and other layfolk who do not have the time or opportunity to study within the disciplines we have mentioned. Some are trained in seminaries and colleges and some have had courses of psychology contained within their general tertiary training, but they would be only a few of the large group faced with counselling. Is it then possible for them to learn a wisdom from Scripture which would be sufficient for their ministry?

It is difficult to give a clear answer to that question since so much depends upon the grasp of Scripture by any given counsellor and his native, as well as acquired, ability to use the wisdom obtained or available to him. What is clear is that the moral and the spiritual are not apart from the physical and the mental elements constituting humanity and its operations. This would mean that what involves medical understanding and treatment is generally outside the wisdom of the non-medical counsellor. Again, when it comes to the realm of mental health the counsellor untrained in this discipline would have to be sure that he was not giving advice without true knowledge. In other words, a Christian counsellor could only proceed with Biblical Christian counselling insofar as he was capable of applying the wisdom he had acquired. He would have to recognise his limits.

What, then, is Christian Biblical Counselling? The answer is that *the Scriptures constitute the revelational wisdom of God*. This wisdom does not include all scientific knowledge which can be obtained. However, it is that wisdom which reveals to us the nature — of God, the nature of man, and the nature of creation. In the reductionist sense it does not contain certain elements of knowledge. However, what it does contain is a revelation of man's nature as created, as fallen, as redeemed, as regenerated and sanctified, and as, finally, glorified. It tells us what creation, was, why

it is in its present state, and what will be its ultimate nature and function. It tells us the telos, the end and goal of history. It takes up the themes of function and purpose, of things which are relevant to truly understanding God, man, and the universe. Thus the discipline of theology³ is not only germane to true counselling, but is in fact essential to all who are Christians and who counsel. This goes for the specialist psychiatrist, psychologist, psycho-therapist and sociologist, as well as the social or welfare worker. By rights, then, this book, to be complete, should embrace the entirety of theology. Obviously, this it cannot do. What it can do, nevertheless, is to give those broad lines which can be helpful as pointers to all who are counsellors, especially the ones prepared to do their homework!

Finally, let us observe that Christian Biblical Counselling is not intended (a) To be a substitute for disciplines already formed, (b) To induce laziness so that Christians do not seek to learn from all such disciplines, or (c) To be a methodology so formed that it is a discipline in itself. The reason for this lies in the two words 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' which we will presently proceed to examine. However, let us try to define Christian Biblical Counselling.

Christian Biblical Counselling is the obtaining of that wisdom supplied by the Scriptures concerning God, man, and creation, and the consequent useful application of that wisdom to the needs of persons and human situations. Such wisdom may be informative, prophylactic, or remedial in nature. Generally it is aimed at bringing persons to maturation of-life, whilst dealing with the personal matters (and problem) of human relationships with God, man, and the universe. In the course of this work such wisdom has to be obtained from God and His Word, especially by the aid of the Holy Spirit, that matters of the love of God, the love of man, human guilt, forgiveness both divine and human, as also the whole scope of relationships (vertical, horizontal and inward) are embraced. In addition,

the eternal verities must be understood such as immediate vocation and its ultimate goal, man's person and dignity in the light of the Kingdom of God, and his own glorification. The obtaining of such wisdom is one thing, and the application or use of it another.

What is insisted on in such counselling is knowledge of the fact that man apart from spiritual regeneration will not possess those presuppositions concerning God, man, and the universe which obtain in Scripture and which are indispensable to counselling, in the ultimate.' By nature of the case the natural man (secular man?!) cannot have or work from an eternal perspective, hence the need for Biblical knowledge, perspective and consequent applicative wisdom.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUESTION OF WISDOM

Wisdom, according to the *Oxford Dictionary* is, 'Being wise, (possession of) experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically, sagacity, prudence, commonsense...'. Since wisdom is essential to the giving of useful advice it is imperative that we obtain it. Knowledge is not *per se* wisdom. Someone has suggested that wisdom is the true use of knowledge obtained. What concerns us of course is the wisdom we obtain from God both through His word and Spirit, as well as the processes of life, and the knowledge available to us in His world.

(i) The Need for Biblical Wisdom

For those who see the Scriptures as authoritative for the life of faith and obedience it is clear that the Scriptures reveal certain truths which man cannot otherwise know. For example, the story of man's rebellion recorded in Genesis 3 and enlarged upon in Romans 1 tells us that man has refused true knowledge of God. As a result of this man's mind has become darkened. He has had to re-rationalise three elements :*(a)* God, *(b)* Man, and *(c)* The creation. Hence all his so-called knowledge will be slanted along a certain bias. Whilst his *capacity* to think is the same, his *thrust* in thinking has a bias. Because the great themes of God, man, and creation are what everything is about, sinful man's approach to them must be influenced by his deliberate ignorance of God. Hence he needs a revelation. Otherwise he will never come to essential truth. This does not mean that he cannot observe phenomena, and research his world and find

out facts, especially functional facts, but he will be halted there. He needs a revelation of the origins and purpose of the universe in order to understand the purpose of man within that universe, and indeed not only within time but also within eternity. Without the Scripture he cannot obtain this wisdom.

So much for the natural man. What then of the regenerated man? Does he need wisdom? The answer is, 'Yes: he needs wisdom.' He needs it because he has not yet obtained full maturation. He is not yet glorified. Also, within this universe are dark and evil powers which seek to distract him from wisdom, if only to attempt to frighten, confuse or seduce him. Hence the need for wisdom, if only to complete his own spiritual pilgrimage. We conclude then, that there is a wisdom within the Scriptures that cannot be found outside the Scriptures, although many elements of knowledge within the Scriptures may correlate with those outside it.

Finally, it is an axiom of Christian theology that God reveals Himself, and from the beginning has done so by various media such as prophets, angels, sacred writings, theophanies, His acts, His incarnate Son Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the community of His people both of Israel and the church. From these revelations one may come to know that wisdom which is indispensable to true living and ultimate maturation.

(ii) Wisdom is a Gift

In the Scriptures there is a number of ways in which wisdom is gained or received. We will look at these ways :-

(a) Wisdom is a Gift, a Charisma.

When Jesus knew the woman at the well (John 4) had had five husbands he was either speaking generally, or knew the exact details. We presume he had a word of wisdom which a person may be given by God, in His love, to meet a particular need. In I Corinthians

12:8 we read, 'To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.' This charisma (grace gift) is dependent not upon natural insight, but an appropriate wisdom given at a particular moment, and by the Holy Spirit himself. One could not counsel solely on the expectation of such a charisma, although it would be excessively valuable, should it be given.

(b) Wisdom is a Gift to Meet a Need.

In James 3:13-18 the writer describes very forcefully the nature of true godly wisdom. In 1:5 he says, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously, and without reproaching, and it will be given him.' This wisdom seems to be not just for one special occasion, but for a wise approach to many situations, in fact, a general wisdom. One should ask in faith, knowing that God desires to give such wisdom to men, especially when they have need of it. The classic example of this is recounted in I Kings 3, Here Solomon desires above all else to know wisdom. He cannot possibly rule a nation without it. He says he is a little child, and asks 'that I may discern between good and evil'. God is pleased with this and says, 'I will give you a wise and discerning mind.'

(c) Wisdom is Sometimes a Given Ability.

Wisdom in the O.T. is often represented as a skill. This is so with the artisans who made the priests' clothes (Exodus 28: 3) and those who helped to construct the tabernacle, especially its furniture (Exodus 31:1-11). In the latter case Bezalel is actually anointed with the Spirit, who is proverbially the Spirit of wisdom. The artisans need not only manual skill but understanding of what they are making since it is highly significant. Doubtless counselling is an acquired skill, needing great wisdom, and may well also be a gift given, even without the asking. Asking and receiving is a principle of Scripture. Habituating the

skill we have is a matter of will and application.

(iii) Wisdom is Gained by Learning and Application

It is helpful to read the book of Ecclesiastes. The writer constantly speaks of *applying* his *heart to wisdom*. He seeks to learn. In the book of Proverbs the writer urges his listeners to *hear wisdom*. 'Mind' is one of the elements by which a man loves God. It is linked with the 'heart' and the 'will', and by these wisdom is learned. In Proverbs 8 wisdom is personified and speaks as a person. In fact many have linked the Logos (Word) of John chapter 1 with this same person, One learns by listening as one is taught, hence one gains wisdom.

It' is important to remember that knowledge per se (as we have said) is not wisdom. In I Corinthians 8:1 Paul says, "'Knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.' However, in the Scriptures knowledge and wisdom are often used synonymously, for true knowing is primarily a relational thing such as 'knowing God' (John 17: 3), Also the N .T , uses the terms knowledge and knowing to imply real understanding in depth, which, after all, is true wisdom.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WISDOM WE NEED TO GAIN

(i) The Wisdom of God Himself

In the OT the wisdom of God includes a number of things such as ability, skill, prophetic insight, knowledge of the law, practical understanding and application of the principles of life. It also includes action which is pious, along with ethical and moral conduct. It is also sagacity, that is the knowledge and functions of things as they really are, along with the ability to discern the false, and that which is not according to the truth. Time and again the point is stressed that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, strength, success, and victory. Doubtless this means that the accumulated wisdom of the fathers, through the saga-like history of Israel, as well as genuine debate and personal insights shared, brings that clear understanding which is wisdom. Hence one receives (or, gives) advice on how to act, as also on how not to act!

In the NT all of these elements seen in the OT are accepted and present. However, the subject widens. The wisdom of God is not only epitomised in Christ. He is, in fact, the whole wisdom of God incarnate. This is quite amazing. We will proceed to see how this is so. In Isaiah 11:1-4 it is seen that Messiah will be anointed with the seven-fold Spirit, including, 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.' Out of this Spirit he will judge, decide with equity for the meek of the earth, and bring judgement where it is necessary. He is, in fact, the Counsellor *par excellence* (cf. Isaiah 9:6).

This helps us to understand his baptism (Acts 10: 38). In Luke 2:40 and 52 Jesus is said to be ‘filled with wisdom’ and to have ‘increased in wisdom’ In Mark 6: 2 it is asked by the people, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him?’ (cf. Matt. 13:54).

When, then, he ministers he has to rebuke the rejection of his wisdom. He castigates the cities of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin in Galilee, but says their judgement by God is correct. God has hidden the true wisdom from ‘the wise and prudent’, and He has revealed it unto babes. In speaking of Israel’s rejection of him he says, ‘Wisdom is justified by her children’ (Luke 7:35, cf. Matt. 11:19). The wisdom of the world rejects the wisdom of God, as we have seen.

Paul claims simply that Christ is the wisdom of God. This is stated in I Corinthians 1:24 and 30 ‘Christ the wisdom of God...’, ‘Christ is made unto us wisdom...’. In Colossians 2:3 he says that in Christ are hidden ‘all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ However, in Romans 11:33-36 he makes it clear that the wisdom of God is the Gospel, indeed is the whole process of salvation history, and this through Christ. This includes not only the personal salvation of man, but the redemption of His people as a whole. In this sense Christ not only *contains* the wisdom of God, but in him it is *actional* and *operative*. Because of this Paul sees two kinds of wisdom—the wisdom of this world (I Cor. 1:17—2:5) which is no true wisdom, and the wisdom of God with which no one should tamper. Hence the apostles must teach in all wisdom (I Cor. 2:13, II Cor. 1:12). This is because ‘he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will’ (Ephes. 1: 9). Hence many of Paul’s prayers ask for wisdom for his converts (eg. Ephes. 1:17), and they are to know the will of God in all wisdom (Col. 1:9, Ephes. 5:17) and so are to ‘let the word of God dwell richly within you, in all wisdom’ (Col. 3: 16), and are to walk in wisdom.

From this very brief sketch of wisdom within the

Scriptures we can see that true wisdom is knowing the mind, will, and actions of God. Man's rebellion makes it impossible for him to do this, so that he, in re-rationalising the functional created universe must thus develop his own wisdom. This false wisdom is brilliantly conceived, so much so that it is found in a variety and diversity of philosophies, religions and secular schemes, not excluding political ideologies. It is this wisdom which God brings to nothing (I Cor. 1:19) for this 'wisdom of the world is foolishness' (I Cor. 3: 19). Hence we conclude that the man who is equipped with the wisdom of God will be able to counsel man. How to be equipped with this is the core of the matter.

(ii) The Obtaining of General Biblical Wisdom

It is obvious that part of the obtaining of this wisdom is through the accumulation of knowledge. Without this basis wisdom has no substance. Hence *the reading and study of the Scriptures is essential*. This reading and study may take many forms and methods and each reader must work these out for himself. As we know, classes, literature, and facilities of many kinds are available.

At the same time, reading and study of themselves may not necessarily produce the wisdom required. It is clear that Messiah needed 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord'. So do we. Hence Paul's prayers in Ephesians 1:17-18 and Colossians 1:9 for the 'spirit of wisdom' Whenever 'the spirit of...' is used in the N .T. it means that through the Holy Spirit one has come to habituate that particular spirit in one's life and experience. Hence 'a spirit of faith', 'a spirit of sonship', 'a spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind.' So one can habituate 'a spirit of wisdom' through the Holy Spirit, that is by the exercise of the will and constant application. It goes without saying (cf. John 3:3f, I Cor. 2:10-14) that spiritual wisdom cannot be

‘understood or obtained apart from the Holy Spirit himself. We conclude then that the Scriptures are understood and *wisdom obtained* from them *by the agency of the Holy Spirit*. This is why John says, ‘You have been anointed by the Holy One and you all know (or, you know all things)’, and ‘His anointing teaches you about everything’ (I John 2:20, 27).

Linked with this is of course spiritual maturation. Paul agrees that knowledge may merely puff up, whereas love, in every sense, builds up. In I Corinthians 3:1ff, the apostle complains about failure to grow and develop. In Galatians 3:1-5 he speaks of having begun in the Spirit but then of having failed to go on in maturity by the Spirit. Instead there has been a reversion to the flesh. In Colossians 1:28-29 he says all his energies are used to ‘present every man mature in Christ.’ The writer of Hebrews complains of readers who ought to be teachers, but still need to be taught. They cannot eat the foods of the mature. He urges them to leave behind elementary principles and go on to maturity. Spiritual maturation, according to I Corinthians 13, is through the action of love, subserved of course by faith and hope. One leaves behind infantile patterns and *progresses* to maturity, this obviously climaxing in the eschaton. The same principle is expressed in Ephesians 3: 14-19. One is filled unto all the fulness of God only when one has come to know the love of God, but this is not possible except ‘together with all saints’. (Cf. Ephes. 4: 10-16—one matures along with, and by the aid of, all members.) *One is rooted and grounded in love only in that context*—i.e. ‘with all the saints’. *Maturation, then, is not merely intellectual endeavour but relational fulness.* This of course only obtains out of relational interaction, learned mutuality, and so on.

We may sum up, then, by saying that wisdom is needed for true counselling. That wisdom is obtained as a gift for those who genuinely desire it. Counselling in the ultimate is not merely a taught skill based on models or cases, but is an ability acquired through

the gift of a power given. This gift is most useful when it is undergirded by true knowledge acquired through patient study, experience, and formulation. In the context of good social growth in relationships and maturation of the person and character by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and enlightenment, of the Word, one obtains a useful wisdom which is, however, never wholly complete. At times God is pleased to aid this habituated skill with certain supplementary gifts of wisdom, especially as they are immediately needed in special cases. Nothing, however, can substitute for the truth of the Word, and the revelation of the Spirit.

It goes without saying that such wisdom is obtained in the context of obedience towards God. Even so, where there is failure God is pleased, by His grace, to use the experience of failure also to add to one's wisdom, especially where the heart is humble and penitent, and willing to receive instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STRUCTURE OF BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE—I

KNOWING GOD AND CREATION

By this we mean that structure which indicates to us the functional nature of creation, and so the functional nature of man. We mean that knowledge of God which helps us to know things as they really are, both in creation and grace. Knowing this scheme we can thus come to know man.

(i) Knowing God

The knowledge⁴ of God is a vast subject, yet we must know who God is, and also know Him personally in order to obtain true wisdom. Not to know God is not to know wisdom. The Scriptures make it clear that to know God is life eternal (John 17:3). This is possible through His Son, Jesus Christ. We come to know God through him (I John 5: 20). In the Scriptures men and women are said to have come to know God (of. I John 1:3, 2:3-6, 4:7-10, etc.).

We can of course learn much about God through theology which is itself the study of God. Of course theology is reflection upon the materials available, namely the Scriptures, by which we may know God. There are various credal statements which have been shaped from the Scriptures. We learn much about God in the Scriptures, that is about His qualities or attributes, and again these have been formalised in various systematic theologies. Primarily we learn from what He has done, is doing, and will do (the latter revealed in prophecies and other intimations), that is we learn of God from His acts.

The acts of God in the Scriptures fall roughly into three categories :-

(i) His acts concerning the initiation, preservation, and ultimate renewal of creation.

(ii) His acts concerning the redemption of fallen mankind, especially those whom He calls His elect

(iii) The (yet) future acts of God when He will renew His creation, and glorify it, including His elect people, the true community of God.

It is from a study of these acts and various Biblical comments and interpretations concerning them that we see God's attributes as love, goodness, holiness, righteousness and truth. In another sense they are not so much His attributes as they are Him. Within them we see those elements which are creational, redemptional and restorational (of man and the universe). Hence we speak of the grace of God.

We also gather that God is not constituted of a monolithic oneness, but of a social unity. He is the triune God but never tri-theistic. His unity can only be understood on the basis of His being as love. Hence Father, Son and Spirit are one, one Godhead, one unity.

There are many other elements we gather about the nature and action of God. For example we see He is purposive and not arbitrary in His actions. We discover that He is Creator of the creation, King of all the world, and Father of His people. Yet in all His offices and operations He works in the context of Fatherhood, Sonship and Spirithood.

All these points of knowledge are obtained from the Scriptures, for they are quite foolish to non-Scriptural ways of thinking. Knowing God is essential to knowing man since man is made in the image of God. Also the entire creation reveals the nature of God and

so shows forth His glory in its various aspects. See in this regard Romans 1:20, Psalm 19:1ff, etc.

(ii) Knowing the Creation

The creation of the world as described in Genesis 1 shows us that its component elements were progressively brought into being and were 'good'. When all was completed it was 'very good'. That is the creation was not merely morally good (without blemish) but it was functionally good, i.e. its functions were perfect and significant. This is reinforced by such statements as 'all things created by God are good' (I Tim. 4: 4, cf. 6:17), 'You have made everything appropriate (beautiful) in its own time' (Eccles. 3: 11). The creation is dynamic (vital, not merely a static artefact, cf. Rom. 1: 20) and is purposive. It shows forth the glory of God, even now (Psa. 19:1f), and will show it perfectly (Rom. 8:18-25, cf. Isa. 11, 65:17f, 66:22f, Rev. 21:1ff, etc.). When man is included in the creation—for he is essentially part of it—then the glory is shown also through and with man (Isa. 43:6-7, Rom. 8:28-30, I John 3:1-3, Ephes. 1:11-14).

It has to be recognised that the functional order of the creation is generally 'fixed'. This is the thrust of Genesis 1 and the explicit statement of Jeremiah 31: 35-36, Psalm 89:36-37 (Eccles. 3:1-11, Psa. 104). Nevertheless John 1: 1-3, Colossians 1: 15-17, I Corinthians 8:6 and Hebrews 2:10 indicate that creation is contingent upon God, and is created for the Father and the Son, as well as by them. The fulness of creation is the Lord's (I Cor. 10:26) and is for Him. At the same time man is given lordship over, and stewardship of, creation (Gen. 1:26ff, cf. 9:1ff). Just as man cannot be understood apart from creation, neither can creation be understood apart from man. We may, then, proceed to look at man.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRUCTURE OF BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE—II

KNOWING MAN AS CREATED

(i) Introduction: Man is in Stages

As we have said, it is impossible to know man without knowing God. We may gather much material about the acts and operations of man. We may formulate an anthropology. We may even develop a phenomenology of man, but that does not ensure we truly know man, i.e. how and what he is. This can only be known in reference to God. This is because man is made in the image of God and is the glory of God (Gen. 1:26ff, 9:6, I Cor. 11:7, cf. Psa. 8:3-8, Eccles. 3:11, 7:29, etc.). We cannot of course, within this book, map out a full Biblical anthropology, but the counsellor must continually research such, adding all the time to his perspectives of man.

For our purposes we will have to seek to fill in the following:-

- (a) Man as created.
- (b) Man as fallen.
- (c) Man as redeemed, but not yet glorified.
- (d) Man glorified.

If, for example, we meet a man who is a fallen person, an unredeemed sinner, then we will counsel him in a manner different from that which we use to counsel a redeemed person. In the case of the latter we will take various elements into consideration, eg. his progress in sanctification, his vocation in Christ, his context of living (such as the church and the world), and his goal of glorification. Understanding

glorified man is essential for filling out the doctrine of hope and using its dynamic for certain useful purposes. All this speaks of the value of a Biblical anthropology which is firmly related to a Biblical theology, and is, indeed, part of it.

One final thing; we must have a cosmology, a world view, an understanding of creation, and so of redemption, and the ultimate liberation of creation in the freedom of the sons of God. Without a knowledge of creation, its functional operations and its goal we will have a deficient view of man. We then proceed to creation in order to see the context in which man must be understood.

(ii) Man as Created

He is in the image of God. *God is actional, dynamic, vital.* He is the Fountain of living waters, which means (1) He gives life creationally and sustains it providentially. (2) He is actional, always working, ever doing something. Thus we see man is a living being, contingent for life upon God, and he is the dynamic image of God in that he, too, always works and is active. *That God is purposive* is implied in Genesis 1:26ff, and is explicit in Ephesians 1:3-14, and other places (cf. Acts 3:21, Rev. 10:1-7, etc.). Man, then, as His image is also purposive. This is one of the most vital of revelations concerning man.

Man of course is not created as a basic viable entity in himself, but *is truly man only in contingency upon God.* He is so related to God as to correlate with the elements which are God. That is, where God is Creator, *man is creature.* Where God is King, *man is servant (subject).* Where God is Father, *man is son*⁵. If these three elements are understood then we begin to get a view of what creational man truly was.

Again we must understand what created man is as the image of God. He is the dynamic (actional) reflection of the living (acting) God. This has two elements to be considered :-

(i) Everything that God is man is like that, but anything that God is man is none of that.

(ii) God within the unity of the Persons is relational, i.e. there is internal social mutuality whilst no Person loses his unique discreteness.

Man, being in the image of God, must have

- (1) his own inner unity and integrity for he is in the image of the Triune God, and not only of the Creator—Father.
- (2) His true being must demand mutuality of relationships across the human corpus, as well as personal relationship with the Triune God. Knowing that we know an enormous amount about man.

When we add to this the vocation and purposiveness of man we will see that man reflects God in his vocational and purposive actions. Wherever he refuses these elements or fails to function according to them he is that much less being truly man. He ‘unmans’ himself, or ‘de-mans’ himself, and therefore causes conflict within himself. It is these conflicts which we must know by wisdom if we are to help the unredeemed person.

One final element remains to be discussed, and its discussion is difficult, because, we shall see, there are certain emotive aspects to it. It concerns the ‘one-flesh’ concept of Genesis 2:24 and its concomitants. There is certainly current theological debate about the nature of man, especially as the roles of man and woman are concerned. It is seen that these roles will spring from the origins and purposes of the male and female, especially as they are man and wife and subsequently father and mother.

One view is that when God created man generically, man constituted the image of God, i.e. ‘in His image created He him’. This accords with Paul’s exposition in I Corinthians 11. The text adds, ‘male and female created He them’. The creational mandate is then given *to them* to multiply, fill up the earth,

subdue it and have dominion over it. From this it would be possible to draw one of two conclusions -

(a) *That man as male is the image of God and the woman is contained within that image, so that when the image is seen it is seen primarily in the man, yet totally in the two as 'one flesh'.*

(b) *That each constitutes the image of God.*

If the account of the formation of woman from Genesis 2 is really a commentary on 'male and female made He them' of Genesis 1:27, then it would mean man is the image, and woman not, but that woman with man helps to constitute the entire image. I Corinthians 11 seems to say that man is the glory (image) of God and woman the glory of man. Whilst either conclusion has certain problems it seems these can only be resolved where the true and full principle of 'one flesh' is established. Of this we shall speak later.

Even so, it is important to note that certain theologians take the view that the relational coupling of the man and woman is what really constitutes the image of God, that is, that God's relational being is reflected in their relational union.

The whole question of man-in-community we will have to leave. It is a far wider issue than 'one flesh' for it must mean 'one family'. Having mentioned it we will eventually return to it, since it is most important for wise counselling.

CHAPTER SIX

MAN AS FALLEN

(i) How Man Fell

The account of the Fall in Genesis 3, and of man's chronic rebellion against God in Romans 1: 18-32, speak of man as becoming out of context and harmony .with (1) God, (2) himself, and (3) his universe. If all things are functional and (presumably) harmonious, then for man to deny things-as-they-really-are, and make them as-they-are-really-not is to bring dislocation, disjunction and existential anguish.

We must understand that the fall brought man to death. The outcome of this death is ultimate death from his world, but without doubt man died the day he rebelled. Romans 5:12ff includes all men in this 'all sinned'. That is in Adam they sinned as one solidary body, so that Adamic guilt is accounted to humanity. Difficult as it is to understand this, the accounting of Christ's obedience to all (who are in Christ) would be invalidated if this were not so. What then was Adam's sin? It was refusal to be contingent upon God, and decision to fulfil his own programme without conformity to the will of God, and (so) dependence upon Him. It was then *a death in relationships*. The exact reverse is seen in II Corinthians 5: 15.

Adam's sin shifted man out of his true creational perspective and context. Whilst his normal faculties did not really vary, his bias or thrust certainly did. Hence the statement, 'The image of God in man is irreducible, but reversible.' The Scripture does not say that the image faded, was defaced, or destroyed. I Corinthians 11:7 with Genesis 9:6 insists that man is the image of God. At the same time passages like Jeremiah 17:9,

Mark 7:20-23, and Romans 3:23 speak of a reversal of the true image.

(ii) The State of Fallen Man

What concerns us is the *state* in which the fallen man lives, or rather, exists. Whilst recognising it as depraved, we must also see it as deprived. It is deprived of the full relationship with God, others, and self, and such deprivation is part of the ‘unmanning’ of the person. It is this loss which causes dislocation, disjunction and the like. It would be impossible to describe the enormous inner anguish of the human person caused by rebellion against God, and so against man’s essential humanity and the true creation. His relational dislocation affects his view of others, and his truly functional way of life. Another way of saying these things is that it is traumatic for man, created by the God of love to be a creature of love, to find that there is hatred, enmity, bitterness, deceit and the like in his universe. Even more devastating is his discovery that he himself is capable of the same things and in fact does them.

When, then, the counsellor faces realistically the fact of fallen man he has acquired that kind of wisdom which is rare upon the earth—a non-cynical unembittered, unfrightened comprehension of what a fallen man is. When he realises that God loves all human creatures no matter what the degree or manifestation of their depravity may be, then he is on the way to being able to apply wisely the knowledge given to him. This is particularly so when he knows also that God is ‘the God of all grace’, which is another way of saying that ‘God is love’. Man’s sin and sinfulness does not then shock, alarm or repel. The counsellor can love, and so seek to redeem or aid the needy person.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAN REDEEMED AND GLORIFIED

(i) Man Redeemed

Without doubt the redeemed man *is one whose objective guilt has been erased*. The death of Christ has dealt with his guilt, effected his cleansing from the pollution of sin, and so brought him to forgiveness and justification. The means by which forgiveness, cleansing and justification are obtained are repentance and faith. Yet *repentance and faith are themselves gifts* (Acts 5:31, 11:18, Ephes. 2:8-10, Phil. 1:29), though doubtless these gifts have to be exercised. Man has to obey the Gospel. Having done so he is liberated from the penalty and power of sin. He is thus released from the fear of death and the bondage of Satan and his world-system. He is reconciled to God, and now lives to serve God (II Cor. 5:16-21). This also means he now loves the brethren (I John 3:14). In simple words:- The bias which he has against God is reversed. He has left his rebellion. He has a new view of God, man, and the universe. The tension and anguish of personal disjunction, dislocation, and all functional perversion is now released. Thus he is a new creation.

The counsellor who obtains this knowledge can work wisely. The fallen person has denied his creational creaturehood, servanthip and sonship. The redeemed person is a new creature, a willing slave of God, and truly a son. He is now contingent upon God. The new life he lives is by the enabling grace of God, the dwelling within him of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This being so we might ask the questions, 'What problems, then, would the redeemed man

experience? With this conversion, and with liberation from guilt and its entanglements, is not the redeemed man without basic problems? Seeing he has the Lordship of Christ, the Fatherhood of God, and the enabling moral and spiritual power of the Spirit, does he then need counselling?'

The answer is that redeemed man does not live in a moral vacuum, nor in a moral zone which has been demilitarised. He is now faced by all the forces of evil. He has been launched into sanctification but must go through its processes. He is not yet glorified, and since his life depends upon his union with God and contingency upon His power he is, of himself, an essentially weak person. Romans 7:13-25 is the classical passage which deals with this fact. When we say, 'He is not yet glorified', we mean that *man is ever in the process of becoming* (II Cor. 3:18, I John 3:1-3). This must be taken into consideration by the wise counsellor who is himself in the very same state. The need for advice is seen in the epistles written by the apostolic writers to the church. In these they teach, inform, explain, rebuke, discipline and encourage their readers, In other words, the wise counsellor must know a host of things about what it is to be a redeemed man.

(ii) Man as Glorified

It is clear from passages such as Ephesians 1:4-14, I Corinthians 2:6-14, I John 3:1-3 and others, that God had planned man's sonship in terms of Christ and not of Adam. He had planned man's glorification prior to creation, and in this sense man created, whilst perfect as a created being, was not really complete in that he was designed for glorification. Likewise man redeemed is really 'man becoming'. In some sense he is incomplete until he is glorified. This fact must have tremendous effects. On the one hand he has to live in hope, so that whilst hope sustains him he also has to live with the anguish of sinful conflict

in a world which is 'subject to vanity', and has to fight, dally, the battle with sin which dwells within him. Romans 8:18-25 depicts his anguish as being not yet glorified, whilst Romans 7:13-25 shows him longing for deliverance from 'this body of death'. Hope, however, is a dynamic of glory and aids him to live in this imperfect world-situation.

Most of all, goal end purpose constitute a great dynamic for current action, and ethical operations. The one who walks in the will of God sees its end of glory. He has purpose. He lives within the powerful actions of simple obedience. He acts as he does in the light of the end God has designed for him, and for which he hopes and longs. It is the assurance that he will one day be complete and glorified which stimulates him, and motivates him to true obedience. The true counsellor will see that being a redeemed person is not simply living a morally good life, and going through religious exercises, but is rather the recognition of one's deliverance, and the right experience of obedience within the plan of God.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL CONCLUSION TO BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

(i) The Value of Knowledge

Knowing God, knowing man, and knowing creation enable the counsellor to know the purpose and operations of God, and so to discover the essential created structure of humanity, as also the context in which man lives and the goal for which he is headed. This knowledge is invaluable. The counsellor can see where man's problems lie as an unrepentant sinner, a converted person, and a 'becoming' person in the sense that man is fulfilled only in the eschaton. If, however, the counsellor is occupied primarily with the symptoms of man's unredeemed state, or the difficulties the redeemed person faces, then he may never perceive the causes of the troubled mind and heart, and so will not apply the remedies prescribed in the Scripture. Also he may fall to either rebuke or encourage where such is required.

What is also essential for wise counselling is an understanding of creation and history. Without this man will not really know who he is and where he is, and where he is going. Let us look at creation and history as the Bible depicts them.

(ii) Man, Creation, and History

Without going into the modes of creation—although these are most important in order to understand the functional natures of man and his universe we must see :-

(a) The purposes of creation in order to have a rationale to history, and

(b) We must understand man's part in God's history (salvation history: *heilsgeschichte*) in order to understand the nature of man, and so help him.

(c) *The Kingdom of God* which is the rule of God and so depicts His sovereignty, since that rule is always there, over all history. With this is closely allied -

(d) *The people of God*, for by knowing the people of God we can truly context redeemed-sanctified-glorified man, and understand the nature of God as the covenant-Head-and-Father of His people, which in turn helps us to understand elect man in his richest context of being.

What must be understood is that the four points here nominated are the context in which we can truly understand man. For example, if we think of salvation as merely individualistic then we are out of perspective. It is personal, yet it is in the context of the people of God. If we think of salvation as only corporate and not personal then we miss the transforming dynamic of the Gospel within the person of each man. Again, if we see history as other than the rule of God then we fail to understand the sovereignty of God. Likewise if we fail to see man, especially redeemed man, apart from the fact of the people of God, and the people of God not only at one point of history but in its saga-like dimensions, then we are not seeing salvation holistically. It is only in this broad perspective that we can understand man, know where he is at, and see his problems. *This is the wider wisdom we must obtain,*

In regard to creation, man's part in it, and the climaxing of the eschaton, we must realise that the initial creation by God was with a view to its end-climax. We must never think of the fall of man and the subjection

of the creation to vanity (emptiness, futility) as a regrettable contingency which arose and for which God had an expedient at hand. Rather we must see that creation is dynamic, purposeful, and always moving towards its destined end, which is its true destiny. Hence we must see man also in this movement and understand him as such.

CHAPTER NINE

COUNSELLING FALLEN MAN

(i) Introduction

We have insisted that a wide knowledge of Scripture leads us to wisdom. That is we can understand, increasingly, the nature of God, man, and the universe. Also we can see the *functional* order of creation, and the functional order of created humanity. By this we mean that when man is in true relationship with God and the creation, then he is a man who is functioning normally, and so would be without a troubled mind, a rebellious heart, and a guilty conscience. However, the Fall has brought him into a state of functional dislocation and disjunction. That is he is malfunctional for the most part; he is sinful. The counsellor needs to study :-

- (a) The effects of the Fall, as set out in Genesis, chapter 3.
- (b) The stages and effects of man's rebellion against God as set out in Romans 1:20-32, and
- (c) The situation of man in sin and death as set out in Romans 5:12ff.

In the light of these passages man's bondage to Satan (Ephes. 2:1-3, I John 5:19, Heb. 2:14-15), the world (Gal. 1:4), sin (Rom. 3:9, John 8:31-36), death (I Cor. 15:55-56, Heb. 2:14-15), as also his oppression through judgement (Rom. 1:18, I Thess. 1:10, Ephes. 5: 6, etc.) will give us the knowledge of, and impact of man's rebellion against God. Not to see

these elements as primary in the case of a troubled mind is to miss the primary and basic causes of human distress. The attempt to meet needs of man by seeking to treat his symptoms is to miss what is basic in man's predicament. Unless we recognise God's moral law demands upon all human creatures as well as His vocational demands (Gen. 1:28ff) then we do not realise the moral pressure man experiences. Add to this (a) man's moral impotency and (b) his dynamic guilt for failure in both *being* and *doing*, and we begin to realise the vast dimensions of his problems as a person.

Only on this basis may we proceed to counsel him effectively for permanent healing and personal wholeness.

(ii) Elements for Counselling

Only by knowing what man is *unfallen* can we see his loss through the Fall. We have noted that he has *three relational elements* which constitute his true created being. They are (a) Creaturehood, (b) Servantship, and (c) Sonship. These correlate with God's Creatorhood, (b) God's Kingship, and (c) God's Fatherhood.⁶ Innately then man's deepest need can only be met when he relates to God as a person in the three elements nominated. His is a serious breach of his created being when he denies his creaturehood by assuming independence, when he refuses to obey as the servant of the King, and when he abdicates from his created sonship. Here is his existential anguish. His guilt is primarily for not being what he essentially is by creation. Secondarily he has guilts for objective acts of sins.

The enormous dynamic of guilt is probably beyond the ability of any human person to assess. Its subjective effects upon the human structure are also massive. It is in the context of these, and some understanding of their operations that the counsellor must seek to effect the cure of the soul. When to

these elements are added the destructive and enslaving powers of personal evil forces (Satan, principalities and powers, demons and disease), then man's situation is seen to be dreadful.

The counsellor then must know something of the process by which the Holy Spirit and the Word act upon the human personality. The Law brings knowledge of sin (Rom. 3: 20). The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin (John 16:7-11). The Cross and the Resurrection have effected the defeat of sin, death, Satan, evil powers, the world, and the flesh. They have also delivered repentant man who has faith from the coming wrath, the judgement of the law, the fear of death and the tyranny of the defiled conscience. The evangelist or teacher or counsellor must bring this good news effectively to the person in need. Yet the impact of this must not merely be to gain an intellectual assent and acceptance of these (Biblical) facts. Through the Spirit the Gospel must penetrate every level of human experience, consciousness, and of course unconsciousness. The following elements must be understood and experienced.

(a) The Totality of Forgiveness.

A half-forgiveness, or a forgiveness-on-the-installment-system, i.e. a 'dribs-and-dribs forgiveness' will be disastrous. In this case the love of God will not be experienced in fulness, and deliverance from sin's power will not be realised. A deficient sense and experience of grace will still leave the subject linked to his past in some measure, and cut him off from effecting full forgiveness of others in the present, in which case the relational changes needed will not take place.

(b) The Totality of Cleansing.

Passages such as I Corinthians 6:9-11, Hebrews 9:14, cf. Hebrews 1:3, Acts 22:16, Titus 3:5 indicate that the cleansing of man from moral pollution is total. Without this man still has the shame of his defilement

with him (eg. Psa. 51:6, 7, 10, Ezek. 36:24-28). He will be unable to see God (Matt. 5: 8) and to relate fully to others.

(c) The Totality of Reconciliation.

II Corinthians 5:19-21 (cf. Col. 1:19-22) indicates that man is totally reconciled to God. The impediment of sin and guilt (Isa. 59: 1-2) is removed.

He has access to God. This access (Rom. 5:2, Ephes. 2:18, 3:11) is the equivalent to entering the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. It is ‘the new and living way’ (Hebrew chs. 9-10). Such complete reconciliation now allows and motivates the redeemed person to be reconciled with all men.

(d) Man has Total Relationship with God.

John 17:3, I John 1:3 and I John 5:20 indicate man now relates to God. This is life; it is eternal life. Matthew 28:19 indicates that man is baptised into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This means he is relationally joined to the triune God. The effects of this are far-reaching. The relationship broken at the Fall is restored (cf. II Cor. 5: 15) with the added ‘plus’ of the grace of God and His redeeming love.

(e) The Gift of the Holy Spirit and Love: the New Life.

Romans 5:5 and I John 4:7-19 indicate that the gift of the Holy Spirit brings the experience of the gift of love. This means that man’s needs in relationships vertical, horizontal and inward are fully met. In other words, man redeemed, although living in the midst of an aeon in which evil is working, is nevertheless at peace, personally, existentially. Many of his ‘ills and spills’—the spin-off of his sinful alienation from God and man are now healed in the process of redemption. Their causes have been dealt with when guilt and defilement have been eliminated in the act of repentance-faith-forgiveness-cleansing-justification-

sanctification-conversion.

It goes without saying that if the counsellor does not see the totality of this work of the Spirit, then he himself will be deficient in experience, and so in communication of the great grace of God.

Finally let us look at *the effects of redemption*. They are :-

- (i) Man is forgiven, reconciled to God and his fellow man.
- (ii) He is restored to the three relational elements denied in the Fall (*a*) Creaturehood, (*b*) Servanthood, and (*c*) Sonship. Whilst recognising that he has a *new* creaturehood (II Cor. 5:17) and a *new* servanthood (Rom. 7:6), we must see how dynamically new is his *new* sonship. This is seen in Galatians 3:26—4:6 and Romans 8:14-25, amongst other passages. I John 3:14 says we know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. Hence man is in the true family of God (cf. Ephes. 2:18ff, 3:14-19, 4:1-6, I John 3: 10-17, etc.).
- (iii) Man is restored to (*a*) The creational mandate of Genesis 1:28ff, and (*b*) The redemptional mandate of Matthew 28: 18-20, Luke 24:44ff, John 20:21-23, Mark 11:15f, and Acts 1:8. That is man now has goal and purpose. Presumably he resumes his relationships in the context of the authorities God has set in the world, i.e. authorities in the mundane and the ecclesiastical spheres.

CHAPTER TEN

COUNSELLING REDEEMED MAN—I

One would think that redeemed man would require little or no counselling seeing his redemption is so full. If, then, man could see what we have outlined immediately above then surely he would have little of a troubled mind or heart. The facts are that often Christians seem more troubled than some other non-Christians. The impact of redemption seems to be so little and the effects of the Gospel seem to be so limited.

(i) The Context of the New Life

If the redeemed are inducted into the new life by *faith*, they are justified by faith (cf. Rom. 5:1, 3:24-26, Gal. 2:16-21, etc.), then it is also true that the justified shall go on living by faith. The ‘utterness’ of forgiveness, justification, cleansing and the like will only be known at the end-time (e. g. Gal. 5: 5). The truth and fruits of redemption are incessantly challenged and attacked by evil powers. The world-system in which man lives is basically that described in Romans 1:20-32 and it denies the validity of the true creational order, let alone the new redemptional schema. Hence forgiveness, cleansing, the gifts of love and the Spirit, and the new life are unceasingly denied and mocked. The new man must live by faith. Only by faith does he know the fulness of the redemption we have described. He is constantly in danger of idols (cf. I John 5:21), or pride (Gal. 6:14), and of evil living (Ephes. 5:1ff).

As we will see, the new man must live in faith, hope and love. When he weakens in regard of these,

then he may be visited or re-visited by many troubles. How then do we counsel him?

(ii) The New Life and Faith

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as ‘the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’. Faith then presupposes the need for assurance, the context of not seeing. This is the case. Hence for man to live in faith is to believe what the Word tells him. Hence the new man must go on believing—in the face of seeming contrary facts and feelings—that he is washed, cleansed, sanctified and justified. The battle of faith is not to get to this place but to realise one is already there. Any suggestion that God’s forgiveness is limited, or is conditional upon man’s goodness, even redeemed man’s goodness, is to cut the nerve of the dynamic of grace. It is grace and love which induce obedience and holiness (II Cor. 5: 14, Titus 2:11f, Rom. 6:12-14, etc.).

Most Christian counsellors would agree that redeemed persons sag morally when doubtful of the fulness of forgiveness and the love of God. The sense of defilement is deeply demoralising, and the sense of loneliness and alienation which comes from guilt and Satanic accusation is paralysing. The resumption, after conversion, of a ‘works-righteousness’ dogs a large proportion of believers. The ministry of the counsellor is to strengthen man in faith, and in utilising the gifts of grace for the life of purpose, meaning and obedience.

(iii) The New Life and Hope

Hope is a powerful dynamic. Paul expounds it in Romans 8: 18-30. He points out that what will be fully complete in the eschaton is not yet fully complete, hence the anguish of even the elect. He also says that in all the contrary things God is working to effect our conformity to the image of the Son. In I Corinthians 13:7

love hopes as well as believes. Hence faith, hope and love abide, the former two subserving the latter. Living in hope presupposes belief in the promises of God, and so having meaning, purpose and a goal. The dynamic of these must be understood. For many Christians living a morally good life, and going through the exercises of prayer, Bible-reading, tithing and similar operations constitute the Christian life. Whilst these are certainly related to such a life they are the accompaniments, and not the whole of it. Obedience to the commands of Christ means witness, evangelism, living in loving community, fighting against evil and moving towards the consummation. Man lives all these in hope.

The teacher and counsellor must encourage men and women to *vocation* and *vocation-in-hope*.

(iv) The New Life and Love

If faith and hope subserve love, then love must be the great motivating and enabling force of the believer. Someone has said, 'Love is the most theological thing of all.' This must be true since 'God is love.' Creation is the expression of that love, and the inherent nature of all things must constitute love. Hence the anguish when man denies these things. Redemption is the revelation and actuation of the love of God. When man is restored to God, in love, he loves (I John 4: 19). This is the heart of all true discipleship (John 13: 34), and indeed the heart of everything for the believer. Only he who loves knows God, and he who does not love does not know God (I John 4:7-10).

This brings us to the crux of counselling. A deficient view or experience of the love of God in a conditioned forgiveness, cleansing from sin, justification and sanctification (i.e. being included in the true people of God) will bring a deficient obedience (cf. John 14:15, II Cor. 5:14, I John 4:19, and 4:10). That is, 'he who is forgiven little loves little' and so

obeys 'little'. Faith presupposes obedience as obedience-in-action presupposes faith. Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). When then there is a weakness in love, obedience to God, and relationships with God and man, man must suffer. *It is in the realm of relationships that man's problems obtain and worsen.* Normally speaking, the Gospel launches man into the life and experience of love. This, of course, is through the power and operation of the Spirit (Rom. 5:5, 15:30, Gal. 5:22-23, Col. 1:8).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

COUNSELLING REDEEMED MAN—II

(i) The Context of Love

It is clear from the book of Acts that the early believers immediately launched into practical love. This is seen in their ‘one-heart, one-soul, one-mind’ relationship which must have been stunning. Doubtless this resulted from the erasure of their guilt and so of their relational differences. Their love worked out in caring for the widows and the poor and in giving hospitality to the persecuted, the indigent, and in aiding the prisoners. It worked out in the proclamation of the Gospel to the lost. In this living context love was alive and practical.

It was worked out in the context of the community of the people of God. It is difficult for us to understand how much ‘family’ and ‘community’ meant to them. We do not at all ally this with current community concepts or operations. The church was the closely-knitted body of Christ, and whilst located in a city or village was not a communal situation. It had its face to the world—to redeem it! We cannot compute the enormous dynamic of social love and mutual encouragement, since our churches, through the centuries, have often taken on other forms and structures.

(ii) The Counsellors of Love

The people of God was a functional community. Known as ‘the household of God’ it saw its being in the saga of the people of faith, stretching back to Abraham and forward to the consummation of unity in

the eschaton. It was not individualistic, and knew only spiritual health in the context of the entire community. It was constituted a functional entity, a social unity. It had the gifts of Christ—apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher—to bring it to the maturity; but note *the maturity of love* (Ephes. 4:10-16, cf. 3:14-19). From the Acts and the pastoral epistles we can see that *elders* were of the esse of the true community. The modern concept of counsellors such as we have would have been wholly foreign to the early community. There were elders who lived in the midst of the community and served it. Even their teaching was not as such theology but the practical teaching and application in life of the apostolic doctrine. We mean that it related to where people were, and where their problems were.

It would seem that much current counselling would take on a different nature from that of ‘specialist’ counselling were the eldership oversight renewed and strengthened. The idea of going to a special person away from the locality and living context of the assembly would have been utterly foreign to the New Testament community of faith.

(iii) The Necessity and Modes of Love

Christian love was not, for the early Christians a spiritual optional or an emotional luxury. It was the heart of the matter. By love their relational problems were healed. By love the community lived, and by love it proclaimed the Gospel. Loving was seen and experienced by both subject and object in caring, sharing, giving, forgiving in mutual interpenetration of being. Such is described in Acts 2: 44- 46, 4: 32- 35, and the Johannine epistles amongst others. The exhortation, warnings, rebukes and encouragement of the epistles are prolific in the matter of love. We repeat, it was in this whole and wholesome context that the problems of troubled minds and hearts were worked out. It did not spring from analysis, techniques,

diagnosis and specifics in treatment so much as in the whole context and atmosphere of the corporate loving community. Problems began and multiplied in that community when love receded (see Rev. 2:1-5, cf. I John 2:7ff, 3:10ff, 4:7ff). Love recedes when the love of God in the Gospel and in life is hedged about with conditions and minimised in its operations.

(iv) The New Life and Obedience

We have already referred to the fact that Christian living is in the context of obedience. We have emphasised that moral obedience is not the Christian's primary goal. Doing the will of God is his goal, and the matters of holiness of life will follow. Hence to see the people of God as God's ambassadors in the world, and even more to see them as the militant force of God in proclaiming the Gospel and overcoming evil is essential to healthy living. This proclamation is the thrust of what has been called 'the great commission'. Unfortunately the contemporary approach to the function of the church as that of a clinic for moral and spiritual cripples is hindering the acceleration of purposive action. It surely springs from a man-oriented programme based on the assumption that man is at the centre of the universe and to aid him is the church's primary function and purpose.

A current problem is *vocational uncertainty*. 'Calling' (vocation) is one of the central themes of all Scripture. This is a theme which counsellors need to understand deeply. The vacuum in the mind and heart, and the uncertainty of the spirit contributes to many personal ills. Linked with this counselling will be the counselling of hope of the eschaton, that is the fulfilment of man in glorification. If vocation is sighted only to goals within time then an essential dimension is missing and so will fail to correlate with the true destiny God has set for His people. Obedience is greatly stimulated by the end-goals (I John 3:1-3, II Peter 3:10ff, etc.).

(v) Conclusion

We have barely touched on the essentials for counselling Christian people with troubled minds. In our following section we will deal practically with situations where we are currently, but we need to stress the return to true community within our churches and the use of the gifts given by God to His community to bring not only healing of problems, but health for action.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE FACTS OF AUTHORITY & RELATIONSHIPS—I

What we have not examined to date is the actual functional nature of the creation. We have said that in accordance with statements from Genesis 1:31, Ecclesiastes 3:11, I Timothy 4:4, I Corinthians 10:26 and other Scriptures, the world operates according to certain basic functional laws and principles. Scripture indicates that these laws and principles operate within the context of an hierarchy of authority.⁷ It is claimed by some scholars that the whole matter of authority and obedience did not exist prior to the Fall, and that divine and human government, as such, were made necessary by the Fall and man's rebellion. This is not Biblically viable, since such statements as Genesis 1:16-18 speak of 'greater' lights and 'lesser' lights and of their 'ruling' over the day and the night. Nevertheless the Fall must have enormously altered man's *attitude* to creational authority. It is also clear from Colossians 1:15-17 that in the Son all authorities were created. This indicates that the authority-hierarchy was prior to the Fall.

(i) The Fact and Principle of Authority

Of Jesus it was said, 'Never man spoke like this man.' It was also said, 'For he taught them as one who had authority' (Matt. 7: 28). In Luke 7: 8 the centurion says to Jesus, 'I also⁸ am a man under authority,' inferring that Jesus is under authority. In Luke 9:1-2 Jesus gives his authority to the twelve disciples to heal diseases and exorcise demons. He himself, as Son of man, claims he has authority to forgive sins and to be lord of the Sabbath. Finally, following

his resurrection he says, 'All authority is given unto me' (Matt. 28: 18-20). In the book of Acts the apostles and others preach, teach, heal, and give commands in the authority of the name of Jesus, and in practice they are effective.

Without doubt the exercise of authority in certain *forms* is a result of the fall of man and the rebellion of Satan. In other words, the manner in which created authorities exercise their given authority has many elements and nuances which could not be present had Satan and his host not rebelled against God, and had not man also rebelled. In other words, the matter of authority is put in a different light altogether because of rebellion. That is why the word 'authority' is repugnant to a great part of the world. It may even be that no human creature—not even the most practised saint—is ever free, in this world, from some abhorrence of the principle of authority. *Counsellors may yet discover it is the basic root, cause, and conditioning fact of all man's troubles.*

Because the very word 'authority' is emotive its reality must come revelationally. Mere explanatory theology will not grip man where the impact is needed. We must therefore seek to understand this word shorn of 'authoritarian' elements. By 'authoritarian' we mean 'authority for authority's sake'. Such so-called exercise of authority has little to do with its intended, innate functional nature. Such exercise is generally operative out of pride, insecurity, the desire to dominate, and so on. What then is authority?

The word 'authority' derives from 'author' and an author is someone who originates, 'or causes something to proceed forth. God is the Author of creation. Hence He 'owns' creation. Paul quotes a Greek poet as saying, 'We are *His* offspring'. He infers that because we are *His* then we ought to act accordingly.

We *belong* to Him. This is again inferred in Ephesians 4:6, 'There is one God and Father of us all who is *above* air. 'Above' presupposes authority. At the same time God is 'through all and in air, presupposing

strong relational ties, and indeed deep affectional elements. This is the way authority should be understood. What is created must be cared for by the creator. Whatever goals the originator has for his originated work he must see those goals are reached. Hence in God's case His authority is directive, corrective, protective, provisory, supportive and maturative, amongst many other things. Likewise authority, wherever it is exercised must, if it operates properly, have these functions.

Because of man's initial rebellion and his guilt he is alienated from God and a true acceptance of the proper authorities. The problem is compounded cause :-

(a) Man, wherever he is in authority, is unable to exercise such authority purely, thereby further confounding the true principle of authority in the eyes of (fallen) man, who is himself innately incapable of accepting authority.

(b) Satan and his principalities (authorities) have abused their given authority, and again, further confuse the issue of pure authority. It is well nigh impossible for fallen humanity to recognise, and come to terms with, authority.

Wise indeed is the counsellor who can encourage a person to genuine submission of the heart (e. g. Rom. 6: 17).

(ii) Authority & Power: Their Functional Operations

In the N .T . two words are translated 'power' in English, i.e. *dunamis* and *exousia*. The first is 'ability' or 'actual power' and the second 'authority'. The two are related although different. The *dunamis* of God creates the universe. He sets *authorities* over it for its functional working, and with a view to its

reaching the destined goal set for it. Hence authority is never set simply for maintaining a static *status quo*, but rather its direction, correction, protection, are for onward moving action as the created universe (including man) moves to maturation. Salvation history shows that the same authority is not only providential but redemptional, and in the ultimate maturative when the creation is glorified. It is not exaggeration to say that *true authority and true love are exactly and utterly the one*. Fallen man will fiercely debate this conclusion for he sees his goal as individualistic freedom, and this is actually a contradiction in terms. Individualism is really one over and against and utterly distinct from the rest.. Its opposite is authoritarianism.

Since ail authorities are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1ff) then they are not simply of the *bene esse* of creation but are of the *esse* of creation. Their abuse of their designated use of authority does not invalidate the fact or principle of true authority. It still obtains. The deepest problem man has is to align himself with, and submit to, these authorities.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FACTS OF AUTHORITY & RELATIONSHIPS—II

(i) Authority and Law

We noted some elements in the astral hierarchy of creation (Gen. 1:16-18). Others are implied or stated within the creational order. Man is created prior to woman. Woman is then created from man. She is to be his helpmeet. *Both*, together, are to fulfil the creational mandate of Genesis 1:28ff. Paul's exposition of I Corinthians 11 leaves no doubt that these two are *interdependent*. It is exceedingly difficult to approach an exegesis of Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:18ff. The key of the matter, however, lies in (a) The 'one-flesh' of Genesis 2:24, and (b) The relationship of bride and bridegroom as indicated in Ephesians 5:21ff. In the latter the Bridegroom, Christ, is the Lord. The Bride, the church, is submitted to him. Both, together, fulfil the will of the Father. Unfortunately certain elements have been admitted to this discussion on authority. They are equality and inequality, inferiority and superiority. The modern mind (sic!) seems incapable of thinking in terms of *function* rather than the awkward 'equality-inequality' idea. It necessarily equates *subordination* with *inferiority*. Hence the painful rationalisations which attempt to speak of equality, and to deny that the Son was in any sense subordinate to the Father.

If the concept of authoritarianism can be eliminated, and if *sewing* can be seen. to be the highest order, then the fixation regarding office will be dissolved. The Father serves His creation by bringing it into being, by providing for it, by redeeming it, and by bringing it to its maturative goal (glorification)

The Son serves in all of these elements and so does the Spirit. God is the Worker-Serving God!

This kind of authority presupposes laws and principles. Both OT and NT combine to show us that the functional laws of the creation (which are at the same time moral) are love. Love is both the essence (Gk. *pleroma*, fulness) of the law, as well as the actual outworking, functionally, of that law. Love without authority is jaws without teeth, and authority without love is demonic. Hebrews 12 shows that love must chastise, and a brilliant case can be made out for the fact that love without wrath against evil is no love, whilst wrath without love is not true wrath. Whilst God is moving His creation towards its prophetically-proclaimed goals law can never be a mere legalism. It is, as we have described it, the dynamic working of love.

At the same time, we must recognise that to rebellious man law is simply the source of limitation of his ego, and the fountainhead of all guilt and guilts. Hence he hates it and opposes it. It is natural therefore that when the orders of authority are linked with law there will be a deep rejection of both. Rejection of both springs from rejection of God, as rejection of God springs from rejection of them both.

(ii) Love, Authority, and Counselling

God is love. His creation is ordered and structured in love. Only man's rebellion gives it a perverse rationale. Created by Father, Son and Spirit, the 'imprint' of the Triune God-Creator is set upon all God's works. They clearly tell Him as He is (Rom. 1: 19f, Psa. 19:1, etc.). Colossians 1:15-17 speaks of *celestial authorities*, and other Scriptures (eg. Dan. chs. 10-11) speak of the authority of angels over human affairs. In *the earthly scene* there are authorities (Rom. 13:1ff, cf. I Pet. 2: 13-17). In I Corinthians 11 the order is God, Christ, man (husband), woman (wife). In Ephesians 5:20ff it is husband,

wife; parents, children; masters, servants, and so on. There are also orders civil and orders ecclesiastical. Apostles have special authority. So do prophets. Presumably this is the case with evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Elders have authority. The NT church requires this hierarchy of offices, gifts and workings (cf. I Cor. chs. 12-14 and the pastoral Epistles). The church is under the authority of its Lord, Jesus Christ. Christ is under the Lordship of the Father (cf. 1Cor. 15:24-28, Phil. 2:9-11, etc.). It should be no more difficult for the wife to call her husband 'Lord!' (I Pet. 3:6) than for the church to call her Husband 'Lord!' (1Cor. 12:1-2).

We must recognise that the fact of authority is deeply debated. We also recognise that current humanism, and an exegetical re-shuffling of hitherto accepted presuppositions related to law, authority, and submission all outmode, for example, the Pauline view of love, authority, submission and law. This revolution of exegesis is gaining momentum and it is not difficult to predict its outcome. Nevertheless the counsellor must be sure that such exegesis is viable, and not given away to the prevalent ground-swell simply because it is present. It is clear that counselling must take place *on one or other* of two premises :-

(a) The world is functional. Love is its functional outworking. Authority and relationships are indissolubly linked, and submission is required.

(b) Any hierarchical order is the result of sin, and man to be truly free must transcend orders and laws. Man and woman are equal. There are no essential authorities which require submission. Submission is enslaving and demeaning. True love transcends such.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE FACTS OF AUTHORITY & RELATIONSHIPS—III

The True Orders and Functions

(a) Creation and Orders.

- (i) *God is Creator, and Lord over all.* He is love and plans to bring His creation to its ordained destiny. He is Father-Redeemer. He is essentially Father to His Son, but He is also Father to His (elect) family. All Fatherhood or Familyhood in heaven and earth is named (or, derived) from Him. In this regard He is above all, through all, and in all (the family). His is the authority.
- (ii) *The Eternal Son is Creator and (so) Lord.* His eternal Sonship, indicated in Hebrews 1:1-2 and other passages must mean he has deity. His participation in the work of creation gives him inherent Lordship. All orders which he created as Creator-Mediator must be subject to him. That is, there is nothing which is not subject to him.
- (iii) *The Holy Spirit is Creator and Lord.* The Holy Spirit is the Creator-Agent of all things. This is seen from Genesis 1:1-3, Psalm 104:29-30, Job 27:3, 33:4, Ezekiel 37, Isaiah 32:15f, etc. In the NT the man Jesus is subject to the Spirit, that is he is led by him in all that he does. This is the norm for human growth, subjection to the Holy Spirit. The whole creation must be subject continually to him for life (Psa. 104:29-30).
- (iv) *Within the creational order God is Father, the Word is Son, and the Spirit is the 'Go-Between' God.* We mean that God who is essentially Father does not create merely as Creator, nor does the Son mediate creation without being the Son. Again the

Spirit is Agent of creation as the personal Spirit. The Godhead then creates so that Father, Son and Spirit set their imprint upon the creation, and relate to it in the true nature of the discrete being of each Member of that Godhead. This means that true authority is personal, and that creation in its constituent parts relates after this manner. We mean that Fatherhood, Sonship and Spirithood are personal and relational in their creative work, hence submission to authority is personal and of the true order of things.

- (v) *Celestial and terrestrial orders are under Divine Lordship.* Creationally all orders of the universe are under the authority of God. Whilst it is true that at least a third of these celestial authorities has rebelled, it is still a fact that they are under the authority of God, even if they reject that authority and seek to disobey it. Passages such as II Peter 2:4ff, and Jude 6 show that the rebellious celestial powers are ‘kept in chains’, i.e. limited in their effects, whilst the Book of the Revelation shows (of. ch. 13) that evil powers can only do that for which they are given authority. Under the sovereign God all powers will work and be used to fulfil the (ultimate) will and plan of God.

Likewise in the human scene *earthly powers*⁹ have their authority from God as we have seen in Romans 13:1ff, I Peter 2:13ff. Daniel 2:21 shows that it is God’s prerogative to set up kings and remove them. This means the changing of authorities is not man’s but God’s prerogative. We assume that when man rebels and changes authorities he cannot claim the right to do so legitimately, but his rebellion may well be the means by which God chooses to accomplish this. This, nevertheless, does not authenticate rebellion. For those in authority responsibility is greater, and so judgement will be greater (James 3:1). All authorities must give an account of their exercise of authority.

We conclude by observing that since there are creational orders stemming from the nature of God ex-

pressed in creation, then *a creature of any order will be at peace only when the functional order of creation is observed*, and especially when it is observed by him. The key to man's distortion of mind and spirit, as well as of body, lies in his refusal to harmonise with God and His creation by obedience from the heart. This goes for both celestial and terrestrial creatures, and especially, in our case, man.

(b) Redemption and Orders.

If in the order of creation the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord, then this is no less true under redemption. The Son has come to reveal the fact and fulness of God's Fatherhood. Hence the Lordship of the Father reveals the rich nature of authority. Likewise the redemptive work of the Son shows him as the way to the Father as also the life and truth of the Father. Hence obedience to Jesus who is Lord is no authoritarian imposition, but is the loving response to his love. Furthermore, the Spirit who is Lord of life actually dwells in the believer, so that as many as are led by the Spirit of God know themselves to be the sons of God and are grateful for the leadership and Lordship of the Spirit.

The redeemed man has been re-created, and is now the true applicant for obedience. He should know love, joy and peace in obedience, even though evil powers may set themselves against him as never before. He, by revelation, now knows that God is his Father, the Son is his Lord, and the Holy Spirit is his Comforter and Guide. He comes under the loving Lordship of Father, Son, and Spirit. His guilt is erased, and so the impediment to reconciliation—his objective and subjective guilt—is also removed. He is free now to obey, through love. (See John 14:15, II Cor. 5:14, I John 5:3,)

The acceptance of the authority of God is in love. Hence acceptance will be extended to all creational orders. That is all civil powers, authorities under which one works, and the authorities which exist in

the family and the community. Whilst we do not anticipate total perfection in obedience we are sure it is functional for the new man in Christ to exercise this obedience. We recognise the faultiness¹⁰ of the persons or authorities under whom he is placed, as also his own imperfection in exercising the authority which is his. Nevertheless a new situation obtains for the child of God within the family of God's community.

(c) Glorification and Orders.

As we have observed, the child of God is a person who is in the process of becoming what he ultimately will be. We have seen that he lives in hope, as also he lives in faith. Primarily he lives in love. He knows that what he will eventually become must determine his present activities. Hence he sees the functional orders of this world in the light of the age to come. His motivation to obedience is powerful. 'Not everyone that saith unto me, "Lord! Lord!" shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.' We should therefore point out that it is the revelation of the Fatherhood of God which reveals the true Lordship of the Son and the Spirit, and which leads to an understanding of all authority and an acceptance of it. The willingness to obey then follows.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AUTHORITY & THE COUNSELLING OF MAN

Views—False or True—in Regard to Authority

A Biblical wisdom which is acquired will be holistic. As we have observed, it will see man in the context of creation, redemption and glorification with the concomitants of love, authority, relationships and destiny. From a study of Romans 1 it will be able to discern the disjunction and anguish of rebellious man. From a study of redemption it will be able to see man reconciled to God and His true creational order. From glorification it will be able to encourage the new man with the fact of goal, purpose and destiny. From the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit it will be able to direct man to new relationships with God and his fellow man, and so further encourage the new experience of love, joy and peace.

The subject of authority has always been the problem of man. This is basic to his sinfulness. It has been observed by many that the elements described in I Corinthians 6:9-10 relate to rejection of authority. Those who are illicitly sexual, who are idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, greedy persons, drunkards, revilers, and robbers are all those who:

(a) Have an anti-authority bias and are deliberate law-breakers of creational functional laws, and

(b) Have developed dependencies¹¹ which are not easily repudiated, and from which they cannot easily escape. Romans 1:20ff makes it clear that they initially reject the authority of God. It follows that they reject basic authorities. In counselling such the basic roots of authority-rejection must be sought. The problem must be healed. How can this be brought about ?

If it is recognised that the rejection of God is basic to the rejection of authority then the counsellor must seek to lead the counsellee to acceptance of God. Such acceptance will require (a) *Revelation of the true nature of God as Creator, Redeemer and Father.* (b) *The experience by the counsellee of repentance, faith, and the forgiveness of sins.* To bring such revelation is no small task because the counsellee will have many deep problems which themselves militate against seeing God as He is. Only the Word and the Spirit can bring such revelation. Man has generally rationalised his rebellion as justified, and indeed as being no rebellion at all. He sees God as deficient, and as One who has not ordered His universe very well. He is, of course, rationalising his rebellion this way. How then does one go about disabusing these misconceptions? The answer lies in understanding the origins of rebellion against God. We reason as follows:-

- (1) Man is in Adam and so rebels. He has accounted guilt (Rom. 5:12ff. Not all agree with this dogma but it is difficult to see how they can then accept Christ's accounted obedience implied in the same passage if it is not a parallel.) and he has the guilt of his own sins, as well as the fact of his being a sinful person. These elements of accounted and actual guilt raise a relational barrier between man and God.
- (2) Since rebellion is against God it is also against the order of His universe. It is to be expected that such rebellion will express itself against the constituted authorities.
- (3) The first authorities the new-born person faces (normally) will be his parents. According to Genesis 1:26-27 the following emerges:- (i) Man constitutes the image of God. That means the child will see God through his father.

Man and woman together constitute the image of God. That is he will derive his view of God from both parents. The (so-called) element of masculinity and femininity of God¹² from which man and woman are derived, will, together, constitute the image of God, and from these the child will form his image of God. Hence if there are deficiencies in either or both parents—as there are bound to be—the child will have a deficient view of God. (iii) It is not father and mother separately who each constitute the image of God as such, or together form the image of God. It is primarily *in their relationships* that the nature of God is portrayed, i.e. as love or otherwise, as authoritative or otherwise, as purposive or otherwise, and so on. In other words it is the actions and intimations of the father and mother who should be ‘one-flesh’ (and who often are not) which teach the child his image/s of God. The incalculable element of any given child (which we must take into consideration) is his negativity or positivity or proportionate admixture of both. For example, why does one child emerge as basically negative in attitude and another as basically positive, whilst yet others seem ambivalent? This is a factor which needs to be researched *from the Scriptures*.¹³

Finally we must observe that man lives with the images or concepts he has acquired in his life experience. It is little to be wondered at that man, by birth, is opposed to God. Hence we do not expect him to build a good image of God. In the process of history, from generation to generation, man does not express the full image of God, and so from birth children will develop deficient images of God from their parents. If there is an element of negativity then they will develop an even more detrimental image. This image will obtain, no matter what the circumstances. Merely telling the child (or the adult) that God is not like

that will not change the image. It is there forever. Naturally it will affect the way in which the person views creation, life, others, and indeed, everything.¹⁴

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

COUNSELLING IN REGARD TO PARENTHOOD,

GOD, AND AUTHORITY

If it is axiomatic for good moral, mental and spiritual health that a man should love, honour, and obey God, then the task of the counsellor is to seek to aid him to arrive at that state. He must recognise then the problems, partly outlined above, which militate against such a change in life and attitude.

What we must first recognise is that God is Father. To understand the Sonship of the second member of the Trinity and the 'go-between' activity of the third member of the Godhead we must come to understand the Fatherhood of God.¹⁵ Whilst we cannot here enter into a theology of the Father (Pateriology), yet we may recognise the following from Scripture :-

- (a) There is a sense in which all men have been originated by the Creator-Father (Acts 17:28, cf. Luke 3:38, etc.).
- (b) Israel understood God as covenant-Father.
- (c) All who come to God by Christ are children (or, sons) of God, and have access to the Father. They find their fulness in His Fatherhood.

The Sonship of Christ pertains (1) To his eternal being as Son and Word, and (2) To his humanity, since God is 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Secondly, we must recognise that all fatherhood and familyhood stems from God as Father. This is the thrust of Ephesians 3:14-15¹⁶. At the same time this

earthly fatherhood and familyhood has been greatly marred by the Fall, as is seen in the story of the first family. The NT epistles aver that true familyhood is known in practice by relationship with the Father.

Thirdly, we must see that human fatherhood and familyhood relate to the authority of God. The command to honour parents in the Decalogue stemmed from Israel's relationship with God. Honouring parents was linked with the unique promise of longevity. The rejection of the parents is really rejection of God. The rejection of human fatherhood, and so, of family, is also rejection of God as Father, and the true meaning of family.¹⁷ It is probably more true to say that rejection of God is rejection of the Father in that the human father is representative of the heavenly Father. From this we must not except the mother who together with the father represents the image of God. Hence the balance between father and mother as they exercise their functional roles together will represent the image of God to the children. Thus rejection of one or both parents reflects the child's attitude to God, and so to authority.

Fourthly, we must see that all relationships within the family are conditioned by the relationship to the parents. We mean that as the child sees the father-mother image of God so he will relate to his own (nuclear) family, and others in the wider family of mankind. It may mean that in under-relating to one parent he may over-relate to another parent, brother or sister. Since love knows no partiality this over-relating cannot be true love. It will be unhelpful.

With these facts in mind the counsellor should seek to bring the counsellee to relate to God as Father, and the Son as Lord (cf. I Cor. 8:6, John 17:3, I John 1:3, etc.). True revelation of God as Father is given by Christ the Son through his life, death and resurrection. However, this revelation is experienced in the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31-34, I John 4: 10, etc.). It must be seen that God as Father is the one who forgives, and so can be known as the Father who

loves. Many Christians do not know God as Father. Knowing Him as Father is the fulness of the Gospel (Gal. 4:4-6)¹⁸ The way in which the Son knew the Father reveals that true sonship is full obedience to the Father, and full participation in His will and work (cf. John 5:17ff). The effect of receiving forgiveness from the Father will be to love Him, and to be freed from guilt, and so to forgive others. Any lack of fatherhood will now be more than compensated by this divine Fatherhood. Since all familyhood comes from Him (Ephes. 3:14-15, cf. Isa. 54:5ff) previous deficiencies in relationships will now be solved, so that full relationships may flow. This is the true core to all counselling. Acceptance of God's Fatherhood will be acceptance of earthly fatherhood, and so, of earthly familyhood.

A number of things must be kept in mind in this form of counselling. They are:-

(i) *All men, created in the image of God, although fallen in and through Adam, are nevertheless expected to do the will of God.* Being created in love they are expected to love, and with the love that 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things', and which 'never fails'. Hence they cannot excuse themselves for not loving. This means that all negative attitudes and reactions are wrong, and should be seen as sinful. The acts which result from these negative attitudes are sins needing forgiveness.

(ii) *The proverb 'The fathers have eaten grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge' is a false proverb* (Ezek. 18:1ff, and Jer. 31:29-30). An examination of Exodus 20:4-6 shows that 'visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children' relates primarily to idolatry and the subsequent generations who persist in it. It cannot be made the basis for psychological determinism. Heredity, environment and circumstances do not determine the future and personhood of a child. Such things are 'not his fate but his trial'.

Certainly he cannot blame his present state on these, but rather should recognise it was his reaction to these or his responses which determined his course of life and his character.

(iii) *God is good.* That is, He orders all things for good. Only men and evil powers try perversely to use them for evil. For those who love God that same God is working all things for their (ultimate) good. Hence every circumstance and happening-- even though many be evil or wrong in themselves—is ultimately for the good of the accepting person.

If these things are kept in mind and shared then the counsellee may face up to the true nature of God, especially as the creative, loving and providing Father who is positively directing, correcting and protecting His children. He can no longer object to the authority of God, seeing that this authority is not dominating but is a *servant authority* in that God creates, sustains, redeems and glorifies His creation, always working for it to that end. At the same time He demands submission to His being for what He is doing. He also requires subjection to all authorities deriving from Him and authorised by Him.

When through forgiveness a person relates to God as Father, then he should naturally and reflexively forgive all men (Matt. 18:21ff) and so relate to them all in love. This is true healing, and especially so when he not only forgives those who have trespassed against him, but he has recognised his need for forgiveness for wrong attitudes, and for negative reactions to the hurts he has received. To go on being hurt is sinful. To accept all things without negative reactions is love, since love endures all things, and does this positively.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

AUTHORITY—PROBLEMS AND BLESSINGS

(i) Problems in Regard to

Bad or Deficient Authority

There is no doubt that most reaction to authority seems to stem from *the deficiency of the authority*. We mean that the person who exercises authority does not carry out well or properly that ministry entrusted to him. A father offends his child because of harshness, neglect, undue domination, and so on. Some persons demand moral conformity when they themselves are immoral, and so on. We have seen that creation's laws are primarily functional, and that authorities relate to the exercise of these functional operations. If a father is deficient, and the child is offended, is it then required to carry out true sonship? The answer is, 'Yes.' If this is truly so then does this obedience demand a conformity in some cases to authority which will clash with conformity to the will of God? The answer is, 'No. Where conformity to authority means non-conformity with the will of Him who authorised the authority for His purposes, then one must reject *that aspect of the demanding authority*. ' This does not mean the *position or office* of that authority is to be challenged, but only its *wrong directives* .

Other considerations must be understood. All persons are defective or deficient. Hence they will make, from time to time, faulty directives. Likewise those under them will give faulty obedience. The principle of authority is not thereby lessened. All fathers and mothers are imperfect. Yet the command to honour and obey them is not thereby invalidated.

True honour springs from the love of God, i.e. love to God because He loves (I John 4:19ff). The imperfection of a person should not mar the love of another for him. We must love all men, and love them totally, and without partiality. We should hate none, and react to none. Creationally we are in the image of God—i.e. love. Redemptionally that image is being renewed and enhances the understanding that we should love, and provides the motivation to do so.

As for deficient authorities, they must face judgement for wrong or evil uses of the authority given them. That is not our business.

Finally, in relation to the subject of authority, we should constantly remind ourselves that the old Adam is incorrigible. He, Adam, is that flesh which cannot be subject to the law of God or any authority (Rom. 8:7). Hence by association the terms ‘authority’, ‘law’, ‘obedience’, ‘submission’, ‘subjection’ are abhorrent to fallen man, and even redeemed man may react unless his heart is fully won by love. We have said that ‘authority’ and ‘love’ are really the same. The love that creates, redeems and glorifies man is the authority that likewise does the same. God is the servant of all; hence He is the Lord of all. It is unfortunate that something within us persists in equating subordination with inferiority. It cannot be denied that the Son was subordinate to the Father. He was not, however, inferior. In the ultimate he gives the Kingdom to the Father, and is content to be seated at His right hand.

The counsellor had better know that the whole of man’s problems lie in his refusal to accept the hierarchy of the creation, for this is equivalent to refusing the Creator Himself. It is only when man himself begins to serve in love that he discovers, a world of incredible delight and meaning.¹⁹

(ii) Authority, Relationships and Love

The current egalitarian climate is difficult for any

discussion on authority, since the mention of hierarchy seems to imply inequality when the Scriptures do not use the terms equality or inequality as such, but rather speak in terms of functionality. As we have said, subordination does not imply an inferior order. The greatest is the one who serves.

When, then, we come to functionality it will be seen that the Son does not suggest he is inferior to the Father (nor superior since neither question arises) but is being a Son by obedience. So then, to be a daughter or a wife or younger son does not imply inferiority. Rather it is emphasising functionality within the created orders.

We will see then that the primary problem in disobedience is not in fact disobedience itself but a refusal to love the authority, and so to obey. This may sound to be a radical thought yet it fits, for example, with the story of the prodigal son. Repentance brought a true view of the father and a desire not only for reconciliation but for the opportunity to be a servant—if not a son! The older brother saw himself only as a servant (in the harsh sense of that word) because he did not truly love his father. Jesus said (John 14:15), ‘If you love me you will keep my commandments.’

The counsellor out of this Biblical wisdom will seek to lead the counsellee to receive the love of God and so love his own father, and consequently his family, and all others. This is the true healing of the mind. Those who have been “damaged emotionally”²⁰ are those who have felt unloved. The healing of being unloved is to love, and not to wait to be loved, since true love takes the initiative. Only where forgiveness is received from the Father is love truly known, and then, reflexively, truly given! Following this an acceptance of functional roles should ease the attitude towards the hierarchy and take the unhappy associations from such words as authority, law, and obedience. Being forgiven, and forgiving others now places us in our true roles, giving us purpose and a

goal, with the rich expectation of hope.

It also aids us in taking up responsibility within the authority given to us, so that the exercise of authority to which we too are called will prove easier.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE FULL CONTEXT OF COUNSELLING

(i) The Household, or Family of God

It is true that a man can be more joyful and serene within the total harmony of God's created world as it fulfils its functions. Yet it is also true that the creation is currently under certain limitations (cf. Rom. 8: 19-22). Hence there is suffering and sorrow in the world and will be until the end-time when all things will be harmonised and unified in Christ. Part of man's destiny must be worked out in the context and experience of suffering (Rom. 8: 17f).

The subject of 'the people of God' is one little known in many of our churches, let alone our whole society. Western atomistic ways of living have reduced our context of living—at the most—to the nuclear family. These tiny fortress-kingdoms constitute, in the aggregate, our society. We therefore concentrate, each of us, on his or her own family, if indeed we do even that! It is needful to discover the fact of the people of God in the OT and the new people of God in the N.T. (the latter being the church). We also need to understand the fact of the *eschatological people of God* who will constitute the total elect of God. It is in the context of the people of God that true human health is found.

If we could fully understand the archetypes of Father (God), of Son (Jesus), of elder Brother (Jesus), of Bridegroom (Jesus), of Bride (the church), of Mother (Jerusalem above), and so on, then we could *particularly* understand the healthful way of living. Yet all of this has to be in the context of the true family (the people of God) for it is there,

in love, that the community of God grows (Ephes. 4: 7-16), Each member of that community, i.e. each person, also grows in his true context. Each derives his personal relational powers from the Father of the family (Ephes. 3:14-15, 4:6), but always within the context of the family, and always for the family.

If we study the early church very carefully we find *there were no specialist counsellors*. There was an hierarchy of gifts, and an hierarchy of ministries. This is seen from various passages such as I Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12:3ff, Ephesians 4:7ff, and I Peter 4:10-11. It is to be noted that the use of gifts and ministries was a service, and a service of love. Obedience to leaders is often enjoined, but then leaders are to serve. The pastoral epistles enlarge on the nature of the church and in particular on the functions and operations of deacons and elders²¹. A most revealing passage is I Timothy 5:1-4. 'Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity. Honour widows who are true widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren let them first learn their religious duty. to their own family and make some return to their parents '.. This passage shows that *the family principle obtained across the whole of the community of God*.

The elders were those who were 'apt to teach'. Yes, yet not merely theology, but the way of the Lord, the true ways of life. They were to give wise counsel in all the matters of life, especially in the midst of the families of the Family. In other words, within the community of love relational and personal problems had that context in which-persons could be greatly aided, supported and encouraged as well as rebuked and disciplined.

What cannot be stressed enough is that each member of the church knew himself to be part of the entire supportive community. There could be no thought of attending a professional counsellor, and

then being, as it were, abandoned to one's own devices, or left to shift for oneself with occasional visits to the professional helper.

(ii) The Community of the Redeemed

(a) The Community of the Cross.

'This community, whilst being supportive was a community which was deeply aware of the theology of the Cross. In other words, it understood redemption in depth. Not only its symbols and terms were understood, but the living facts of total forgiveness, reconciliation with God and man, and the outworking of this harmony' in daily life. The current miserable tangle of guilt, and the many therapies to release a man from guilt were foreign to that community. The dynamic of grace and love, as also the ever-present reality of the Holy Spirit keeping his people free *are* dimensions we have yet to rediscover. It is only in them that guilty men and women can become buoyant in faith and life. In fact we may yet have to discover the important and significant 'therapy' of the Cross. To be healed by his wounds is the most depthful of all ministries. This is the true 'cure of souls'.

The continuing dynamic of the Cross alluded to in I Corinthians 1:18 (cf. Gal. 6:14) is what constitutes true Biblical wisdom. Yet again, this can only be effective for persons within the warm, understanding and supportive life of the community. Practical love, of which we have spoken, is the true and continuing therapy.

(b) The Community of Worship.

Worship is the way of true health and wholeness. It is that for which man was created. Personal worship grows within the context of corporate worship, and corporate worship is also the expression of the personal. When man worships God because he knows Him as the God of grace and love, then he not only heals, but finds himself without self-consciousness.

Worship and service are in fact the one thing. To worship God is to serve both Him and others. Hence when worship is not stilted, formalistic and stifling it can become the source of daily enrichment and the deepest expression, as well as satisfaction, of the heart.

(c) The Community of Purpose.

To see the community as composed in part of strong and wise people who act as counsellors to the weak is an unfortunate misunderstanding. Basically all Christians are innately weak, as Romans 7:13-25, and II Corinthians 12 make apparent. Each needs the other in supportive, encouraging, as well as admonishing and rebuking roles. The current view of the church as being a clinic for 'birds-with-broken-wings' is a parody of the true community. It was a *community-under-command*. It was a people on the move. It was a family with a future, but in its present it was strongly proclaiming the Lordship of Christ, the redemption of the Cross, and the liberation of sinners from the bondage of guilt and evil. Its health and its strength lay in its constant proclamation. Whilst undoubtedly it was persecuted for such fearless proclamation it nevertheless saw the fruits and power of the Gospel.

It is 'healthful' to be on the move, and to believe that God is calling His people out of darkness and into His marvellous light. The community of God is the community of hope because it is the community of the prophets. It sees and knows the goal of God. In this sense it is the eschatological community, tasting the first fruits of what is to come. In this context gathered and redeemed sinners know a strength and virility which is unknown where there is so much hand-wringing and heart-failing at the mysterious workings of psychology-so-called. We mean that current humanism, various world-views, and the dark shadows of scientism have cowed too many of us who are Christians. We have been bluffed out of our Gospel. Hence

the pathetic application to ‘lesser therapies.

(d) Conclusion on the Community.

We have to *recognise*, in practice, that whilst the community of the people of God has its many current weaknesses, that it is *nevertheless* the people of God. Whilst we need to work towards a renewal of the community we will have to have ministries of counselling which will even be viewed as professional. Doubtless *the early church* was abysmally weak in many situations, and not always as we have *here* pictured it. Hence we will have to be adaptive, and even concessive. However, *the dynamic* of the Gospel has not waned—only our understanding and use of it.

There needs, then, to be renewal on every side. This is what we will have to be about to enrich the context for *true* counselling.

SECTION TWO

THE PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL COUNSELLING

Introduction

We have sought to cover, even if only sketchily, the truth of God, man, and creation, in the light of creation, redemption, and glorification. We have seen that this enables us to understand man and his world principally, even if not always in detail.

That knowledge or wisdom is valuable in assisting us to help needy persons. We must learn by practice to apply the principles we have learned. We need wisdom to do this, but then such wisdom is not withheld from those who would seek to use it. Knowledge without application is a waste of knowledge, and application without knowledge can scarcely be successful.

There is no dearth of books or materials on the matter of practical counselling. Each counsellor, however, carves out his own way and manner of helping those who come to him in need, so that the elements of application discussed in this section of the book are merely in the way of suggestions. It is trusted that they may be helpful. They are of course based on the writer's theology and experience, and as such are primarily valuable to him. It is hoped, however, that some elements of help may be gleaned from what is written.

CHAPTER ONE

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

We now come to the application of the principles we have adduced from Scripture. To know principles is one thing, but then their application is another. In fact it is only by constant application of principles that we really learn their essential nature. Also this enables us to gain fresh and helpful insights, especially practical insights, all of which increase our skill. Our skill is the wise application of what we know to be the case in question.

What is it then we have to apply? For our convenience we set out a brief summary of the material already covered in the former section so that we may have a bird's eye view of it.

The Bases of Counselling

1. Introduction. Counselling; what is it? What is Christian as against secular counselling? Can there be an admixture?
2. Biblical counselling: the need for revelation. The matters that are not revealed by human reasoning, eg. God, sin, nature of the universe, etc., especially nature of man.
3. The question of wisdom. Its definition. What wisdom man has lost and how he has lost it. Its indispensability. Biblical wisdom supplies what man has lost. Varieties of wisdom: a charisma, a gift, a skill, achieved by patient learning and experience. The true wisdom of God, i.e. Christ, and the plan. Wisdom is knowing things as they really are, and being equipped to use that understanding.

- 4 *The structure of Biblical knowledge*: knowing God, knowing man, knowing creation. Knowing man as created, as fallen, as redeemed, as maturing, as glorified. The need to see all of this *holistically*. Knowing man (and God) in relation to purposeful, moving creation with its *telos*.
- 5 *Biblical wisdom and the counselling of man*. Seeing man as bound. Counselling man *the sinner* with the liberating elements of the Gospel: total forgiveness, cleansing, reconciliation, new relationship with God, gift of the Spirit and love. Man must see that he is wholly restored to God, others, and creation.
- 6 *Counselling redeemed man*. His three dynamics of faith, hope and love. Love's elements of context, counselling, modes, and background of new life and obedience.
- 7 *The whole question of authority and relationships*: the authority structure of creation: authority and power. Function, purpose and authority. Authority and relationships. Authority, love, and counselling. Creation and orders, redemption and orders, glorification and orders.
- 8 *Authority and the counselling of man*. Deficient and false views of authority and why. The principle of parenthood, authority, God and man. The *image* we have of God. Problems in regard to *deficient* authority. Falsity of the problem of Ezekiel 18. The falsity also of egalitarianism.
- 9 *The context of counselling*, desirable context: the Family of God = the Community of the Redeemed, so Cross, worship, service, action, purpose.

The Counsellor is Personally Relationalised

The story is told of the wealthy man, Howard Hughes, who died, literally from malnutrition, unable to trust anyone, even with his food. He died in the midst of personal and fabulous wealth. In one sense his actions were predictable, but he always sought to conceal his self from others. He lived as a mystery man. In his day all who sought employment as actors had to be psycho-analysed. This was because of the stress and strain of acting, and the financial loss to a firm when an actor or actress would break down, or become hopelessly temperamental. When Howard Hughes wished to become an actor he evaded psychoanalysis by the simple device of buying a film company and giving himself the parts he wished to act in. For this reason no one knew who or how he really was. He would not submit himself to this analysis and so, to a revelation of himself.

Whatever the merits or demerits of such analysis may be, it is essential for the Christian counsellor to have something happen to him which will set him up for counselling others. We have chosen to call this process *relationalising*. We mean that the counsellor ought to come to those full relationships we have indicated in our chapters on authority and relationships.

To reiterate, the position is this:-

(i) *Life is a matter of relationships with God.* we mean that eternal life is to know God, that is the Father and the Son. This is made clear in such passages as John 17: 3, I John 5: 20, I John 1: 3. Here it is stated, 'This is life eternal *to know You*, the only true God (the Father), and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.' Eternal life is not so much that which is received by coming to know God as it is the *very knowing of God Himself, the very relationship as it is lived out in this world.*

(ii) Life is a matter of relationships with others. I John 3:14 says, 'We know we have passed from death

unto life because we love the brethren.' Life, then, is relationships with others. Commonsense tells us simply that when we relate well life is enjoyable. Bad relationships lessen the joy and freedom of life.

Our counselling grid by which we assess where people are, and seek to help them is basically a relational one. How does the person relate to his/her parents? What level of relationships obtains within his family. How does the counsellee relate to the wife/ husband, to the children, to those outside the family? Not to relate properly is reprehensible in Christian truth. I John 4:20 says, 'If any man say, "I love God," and hates his brother, then *he is a liar*. If he cannot love his brother whom he has seen then how can he love God whom he has not seen?' The primary problems of human living are not primarily heredity, environment and circumstances. These are quite important, but the primary problem lies in the relational area, which, as we have observed is itself related to the matter and principle of authority.

If we ask the question, 'How does one become relationalised?' then the answer must lie in the whole text of this section of our book. We must learn it personally from the way we go about helping the needy person. Yet at the same time we inhibit that help when our relationships are not complete. We mean that we must first relate to God wholly, knowing the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and being dependent upon them. As a result we ought to relate outwardly to all other human beings. This we commence by establishing relationships of love with our parents, with our own families, i.e. the ones in which we were born, and by relating to our children if we are parents. This should extend to relatives, to those not of our family, and in fact to all others, including our enemies.

Difficult as this may be it is indispensable to true counselling. The stakes are high. Any inner angers, resentments, hatred, hurts and wounds which are retained will inhibit the practice of wisdom. Too much

will be involved subjectively. Any sense of inferiority (as opposed to humility) will set the counsellor in competition with others and even, perhaps, with his counsellee.

The Biblical principle of relating truly is:-

- (i) God loves us: this is shown by the Gospel, and then seen in the magnificent work of creation, and providence. It is also known in the relationship a person has with God through the Gospel.
- (ii) Because God loves us, the very relationship motivates us to love others. 'We love because He first loved us.' In fact we go on loving because of this.
- (iii) Because God has forgiven us we forgive others. Because He has loved me, I then love others. Not to do so is to inhibit full experience of God's love to me.

Relational depth with God is dependent then, and dependent continually, upon my apprehension of God's love to me. This means

- (a) Continually seeing the action, effects and value of the redemptive events of God in Christ,
- (b) Constantly being filled with the love and Person of the Spirit (Rom. 5: 5, Ephes. 5:18),
- (c) Constantly relating to God as Father and to Christ as Lord and Elder Brother, and
- (d) Constantly forgiving and loving others. All of this involves loving obedience to God, to the authorities He has placed in the world, and knowing one's dependence upon God and man. Communally it is being 'subject one to another.'

All of this may appear to be a tall order, but the counsellor must come to terms with it. Relationalised, and living in healthy relationships he will be both fortified and enabled to share a living wisdom with those who need it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COUNSELLOR SEES AND IS SEEN

(i) The Counsellor Sees the Counsellee

We mean by this that the helper has a good objective sight of the one he hopes to help. This he cannot do without complete acceptance of the person. Jesus certainly accepted those whom he helped. Their sinfulness did not shock him for he knew what was in man (John 2:23-25, cf. Mark 7:20-23). Because he accepted them did not mean he condoned what was in them. He did not relate to them simply for the sake of relationships themselves, but in order to help them. When he heals or forgives he warns against a repetition of sin. In no sense, either, was he maudlin about man. He was realistic, and if a direct word was needed he gave it. On the other hand he would be very gentle where a person had been wounded by life. If he had objectivity then it was tempered with genuine compassion.

How then should the helper see the person in need. He should see him objectively, realistically, and compassionately. He should also see him, as far as possible, according to the grid we have nominated of fallen man, redeemed man, and man in hope of glory. Most of all he should see him as created man, intended to be the son, creature and servant of the Father-Creator-King.

Primarily he will see him as a person in need. In need of what? That answer can only be found in a basic understanding of man's needs. These needs are often spelled out by secular psychology, and in various ways, giving varied lists. When we look at man's needs from a Biblical point of view they can be seen

to be material and spiritual, temporal and eternal.

Our understanding of man's needs is based upon our view of God, of creation, and of man. Hence the scope is wide. Let us, however, examine something of these needs.

(ii) Seeing the Needs of the Person

We have seen that the *basic need* for man is to be *his created self*, i.e. to correlate with God as Father, Creator and King. This implies that contingency is man's primary need, and that presumably his sense of fulfilment and well-being would bring the deep emotional satisfaction in the terms we use of peace and joy. This means that man would relate wholly to God and his fellow creatures and creation. It would also mean that he would relate to himself. That would be his true identity, and probably be almost wholly unconscious as against the current yearning for discovering one's identity.

If we remember that the creation is a harmony, then man's need would be to know that harmony. Since creation is essentially functional man would need to operate in true functional ways. His functioning would bring him the deepest satisfaction were it a *true* operation in the realms of his nature which we call physical (bodily), intellectual and spiritual. In fact it is best not to designate them in these special categories, but see them all as a whole, i.e. the bodily, intellectual and spiritual factors are all of the one piece. As it is said, 'The Lord your God is one Lord,' so it can be said of His image (man), 'Man, true man is one (man).' A deep disservice has been done by seeking to adduce a Biblical psychology. An inductive study of man in Scripture fails to grasp his real being, because it seeks to analyse rather than feel what a man is. We shall later enlarge on this statement.

In practice man pursues that which gives him *emotional fulfilment*. His creaturely being is fulfilled by

dependence upon God and others to whom he must relate. True creational functioning brings functional-fulfilment, and so emotional fulfilment. Since he functions in a bodily-intellectual-spiritual way he achieves high emotional fulfilment when he succeeds. At the same time as a son (of God) he knows both dependence and functional fulfilment, again bringing himself to emotional fulfilment. This would be the same for his functional being as a subject of God the King.

His being as a son-creature-subject is tied in with his vocational being. He is a purposeful being, moving towards the goal God has set for him. Thus in being purposeful and reaching towards that goal he is emotionally fulfilled. This is saying at the same time that he is a relational creature so that relations fulfilled bring emotional fulfilment, also.

If the counsellor has this grid then he can listen to the person in need and quietly discover this *general need* and hopefully pin-point its specific elements, i.e. where the person is not experiencing the dependency he ought to know, the functioning he ought to have, the vocational thrust he requires, the relational life he needs to know. Without these he will only find emotional frustration. This, after all, comes from not finding that deepest need fulfilled, i.e. the emotional. Some would prefer to call it an affectional need.

(iii) Seeing the Idols

Man, sadly enough, is beset with idols. When we carefully trace the thought in Romans 1:18-32 we see that man, on rejecting God, immediately seeks out idols. Idols are a projection of his needs, for he makes an idol which will (he hopes) fulfil such needs. He has only been promised the deepest emotional fulfilment of peace and joy in God Himself. Since he has rejected that Source as being unsatisfying he must create his own Source. Humanism sees man himself as his own basic source. Nevertheless man has two deep drives, as Scripture reveals them. The first is love,

and the second is worship. In fact both are the one.

Man has been created to be under leadership, to seek his security in the One Who has created him. He is truly secure when directed, protected, corrected, and put in the way of wholesome maturity. His love for his Creator must find an object when he has rejected that Creator, so he creates one. This he worships, i.e. gives high worth to it. The Psalms are rich in their expression of worship, and their yearning for the true Object of their worship.

Man then worships his idols. The Scriptures say they who make idols become like them. Perhaps it is because they make them like themselves. The prophet says the idolater feeds on ashes and is deluded. Whatever the case, no man is found without his idol if he does not truly worship God. It does not much matter that the counsellor come to know the idol itself, but at least he must see the idolatry that is common to man, and no less the one needing help. Idolatry is not something in itself, for idolatry is wholly empty, but *it is a symptom of a causal problem.*

Idolatry is a basic form of rebellion, if not *the* basic form of rebellion. It is a refusal to give God His worth, His place, and His authority. It is a refusal to relate to Him, and give Him the love which is rightfully His. In worshipping idols man debases himself, for he can rise no higher than that which he worships. He also denies himself his own true worth for he becomes in the likeness of his idol. He cannot be his true self. He cannot obtain true personal fulfilment, so personal peace and joy.

It may be helpful to point to the principle of idolatry, but the counsellee will not easily recognise this system of thinking, or the effects it has had upon him. It is certain that dependencies such as drugs, sexual exercises both natural and unnatural, gambling, alcohol, excessive eating, excessive working, talking, sporting, hobbifying, etc. prove to be man's idols, for from them he seeks both the peace and joy common to true man.

In any case the helper can see these elements, and know that the *obedience* of a man is to the authority *he* has constituted, for at the same time it is defiance of God and His true, natural and functional order.

(iv) Seeing the Counsellor

Can the one needing help really see the counsellor? What do we mean by see? We mean what does the counsellee expect of the one helping him? Why has he come to him (or, her)? What concerns us is the *state* of the person needing help. Is there trust Or antagonism? Is there preparedness to be helped? If true counselling is the giving of helpful advice which stems from wisdom, then is the needy person ready to receive the same?

This brings us to the fact that there are many levels at which counsellor and counsellee may meet each other. A person may wish to help another person who is not ready to such help. Repentance is a powerful element in man's experience but it may require many things and many years to bring a person to that point. Repentance (Gk. *metanoia*) means 'a change of mind, a change of attitude'. A counsellee may be moving towards repentance and counselling may accelerate that. Hence this point of helping may be an interim one, prior to the time when something conclusive can be effected. A counsellor may meet the other person at the very point of *crisis*. Hence the counsellor will have to be wise and humble enough to recognise the point at which they both meet.

Since no man sees God clearly the counsellee will have difficulty in seeing his helper clearly. In fact it may well be said that no human person ever *fully* sees and knows another human being. Certainly there is enough knowledge for a working situation, but that may not be enough for full healing. So often a counsellee is suspicious, untrustful, and even aggressive. The Biblical helper will understand this in the light of

his doctrine of man. As we have said, he will not react, be angry, and reject or fight the needy person.

The Spirit of God works in man to bring him to the place of hearing the word which will liberate him. At that point the helper will be accepted, and can proceed with helping.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WAY OF COUNSELLING—I

Approaching the Matter

We now have to draw together our theology of God, man, and the universe. We have to seek to see where the person needing help is at in the context of all this, i.e. whether he is simply fallen man without redemption, or fallen man having received redemption, and if the former where he is at in his experience of life, and what are his general and special needs. If he is a fallen person having received redemption then the degree, intensity and reality of his experience of regeneration, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, and expectation of glorification, insofar as we can judge or discern.

All of this is a very tall order, and as we have observed, such counselling needs the wisdom of God, and the present discernment of the Holy Spirit who indwells the counsellor. This is what the Scripture means when it says, 'You are complete in him (.Christ)', because '...in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. Thus to have 'the mind of Christ', is also to have the mind of the Spirit (Col. 2:10, 3:3, Phil. 2:5, I Cor. 2:16). The Spirit, as we have seen, is 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord.' (Isa. 11:2)

The Pattern We May Use

Put at its simplest the mode of counselling is as follows:

1. Seek to understand the image the person has of God. Accept the fact that no counsellor will ever discover it fully.

2. See that this image comes from the parents, however much objectively it may not have been communicated in that way. We mean the child has received this image according to its own subjectivity, and its subjectivity does not necessarily parallel the objective facts.

3. See that the image has also been received through the multifarious relationships, experiences, and impressions the child has received.

4. Recognise that in all this the child receives its impressions according to its own mind-set, eg. optimistic or pessimistic or realistic attitudes, or again negative or positive attitudes, or rebellious or obedient attitudes.

5. Seek to bring the counsellee to a revelation of the true nature and person of God, i.e. showing Him in His being as holiness, goodness, righteousness, truth and love. The aim is to counteract or overcome the firm image the child has already formed of God. Seek to know the devious ways in which the counsellee may himself try to avoid such a revelation. Perhaps he is ambivalent in this regard.

6. Seek to counsel the person in regard to (a) Acceptance of forgiveness, (b) Faith-knowledge of justification, (c) Acceptance of sanctification by faith (i.e. not sanctification by works), (d) The reception of all of these elements through repentance and faith, and so the dynamic knowledge and experience of God's love.

7. On the heels of such love to lead the person into forgiveness of all others, especially the parents and members of the family, and if married of the spouse (whether divorced or otherwise, first

spouse or second or whatever!)

8. Seek to show the person that most hurts and wounds, especially those who have produced anger, resentment, hate and unforgiveness are mainly of the person's making rather than those who have sinned against the person. Whilst acknowledging the wrongs of others seek to show the wrongs of the recipients through negative actions, reaction in hatred, and so on. Then lead the counsellee to see that these, too, are forgiven through the Cross.

9. Seek to lead the counsellee to love all, starting with the parents (whether currently alive or dead) and including the family, friends, and enemies.

10. Make arrangements where possible for further teaching of the counsellee, and seek to have that person enveloped in a warm Christian fellowship church, assembly, community, care group or nurture group, etc.), where that one can be loved, nurtured, encouraged, admonished, helped and directed.

Working Out the Pattern in Detail

Seeking to Understand the Image the Person Has of God.

We have said that theologically speaking, man and woman constitute the full image of God. They are of course not God. What God has joined must not be put asunder, either by internal strife in the mutual relationship or by interference and decision outside the relationship.

Since the father-mother (husband-wife) relationship is the primary one the child meets, and probably before birth, then its impressions will be most vivid and dynamic. It is true that other man-woman relationships will add (or detract) from its image of God.

We have seen that it is the relationships of the parents (mutually) and then the relationships of the parents with the child that helps to determine the image the child receives, given in of course the nature and bias of fallen humanity.

The counsellor will know generally that man does not easily receive the image of God, and has much invested in detracting from that image. This is to protect the recipient from direct confrontation, and high demands for performance. For this reason the helper must hang loose to the person and not show indignation or any kind of emotion concerning the nature of the image formed.

In fact should the counsellee have a high image of God this must be taken for either deceit or a true mark of regeneration, or simply compliant acceptance of theological conditioning. Direct love of God is the only element which can give a good image of God.

Given all this in, the counsellor could not possibly know all the ramifications of the image-pattern the person has, nor all its implications for the business of living life. The simpler his apprehension of that image, i.e. the less specific, the better. Every counsellor has to distinguish the *symptoms* from the *causes* and recognise that counsellees are always gripped by their symptoms without having much understanding of their causes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WAY OF COUNSELLING—II

Seek to Trace the Causes and Origins of the Image.

Again, the simpler the investigation the better. A good counsellor, having some grid in his mind, will be happy to let the person chat on, and form his own understanding of the case by what is said. A question here and there, and a gentle cutting off of pointless description of symptoms will enable him to gain the confidence of the person, and the image he is seeking to see.

What then are the elements the counsellor will seek to see? Basically they will be the disposition, nature, characteristics, actions and attitudes of the parents and other members of the family. Members of the family (parents or children, aunts and uncles, grandparents, etc.) cannot be seen atomistically, but must be viewed in the context of the whole family.

Some of the following elements may be detected by listening and questioning, but even so allowance must be made for the bias of the narrator, i.e. whether the person for certain reasons is overly negative, or overly positive. The elements we suggest will be amongst others not nominated, so vast is the scope.

Whether the mutual relationships of the parents are/were good or bad, firm or fractured (e. g. divorce, separation, armed truce, etc.). Whether the father fulfilled the role *generally* understood of a father, eg. exercise of authority, care for the other parent, the children; whether he exercised discipline or not, and if so, in what manner? Whether the father was amiable, kind, but then weak, indecisive, etc. Whether the father was authoritarian, legalistic, dominant,

demanding of high performances, yet not close and helpful in the execution of the tasks. Whether the father was religious, and if so whether he was warm and loving, or distant and remote, and had a view of God as judgemental, and punishing. Whether the father was often absent on business, sport, hobbies, and thus opting out of father-responsibility.

Whether the mother was warm, gentle and strong, or dominant, hard, angry with the father, critical, demanding, directive. Whether she was weak, compliant to the father, afraid of the children, indecisive. Whether she was seeking to fulfil herself, requiring self-expression in work or a profession, busy on committees, active in the community in leadership roles, socially active and busy, and in some ways neglectful of family relationships, seeking fulfilment in roles other than wife-mother relationships, and whether her views seemed reasonable or ultra-feminist. Whether she seemed bitter about failures of her husband, and even of the family. Whether she was religious in a grim and legalistic way or whether a person of quiet, joyful and firm faith. Whether she spent time to teach the children, especially the daughters in matters of cooking, sewing, art, etc.

Whether the parents were together as a unit, or constituted two separate units. Whether they were occupied with material things or not. Whether they had goals of some value or pursued the matters of modern materialism. Whether if parents of faith they lived in the light of that faith, with grace and consistency. Whether together they were legalistic, critical, judgemental, or sympathetic, warm, understanding. Whether their interests were confined to the family, house and work or profession or extended across the community. Whether there was an extended emphasis on vocation, so that family life was limited, and the parents were often absent. Whether parents were obsessive with dependencies such as sex, drugs, hobbies, sports, pleasure, arts, music, social ambition, and the like. Whether parents could express affection,

and were emotionally bound or free.

Whether there was favouritism in the family, whether one or other or both parents gave higher regard to one child than another. Whether there was dislike of a child. Whether a brother or a sister related more to another member of the family other than the parents. Whether there was rivalry, jealousy, striving for attention, gifts, love and the like. Whether there was an acceptance of authority, or rebellion, and whether rebellion was of the overt expressed kind or was static, passive and beneath seeming compliance. Whether there was trouble in the family, especially during teenage years, and of what kind. Whether grandparents were possessive, i.e. the parents (one or other or both) were possessed by their parents. Whether there was dislike by the grandparents for one or other of the parents or the grandchildren, and whether favouritism was shown. Whether the home was under a single parent, and if so what of the relationship of the person counselled to the absent parent? Whether the person was under no parents, foster parents, stepfather or mother, and similar matters.

Whether the child felt encouraged, loved, accepted, trained, taught, directed, protected, provided for, or felt rejected, discouraged, alienated, subject to anger, harsh commands and directions, and exposed to perverse elements in the realm of sexuality.

These details and many more help the counsellor to see something of the image the child has formed. The counsellor will remember that two children in a family may react or respond differently to much the same set of circumstances. It is the general thrust of the accounts given and the questions answered which will provide something of the image the child has received or formed.

Drawing Some Conclusions

The person as a growing child will have received

those impressions (rightly or wrongly) which tell it about the father-mother entity, i.e. about God in whose image the two are made. According to the impressions received we can tell whether the child really sees God as He is, humanity as it essentially is (or ought to be), and the world about it. Causes for withdrawal, inferiority, rebellion and the like will be understood, and on the other hand causes for contentedness, a sense of security, a purposive drive in life, good relationships, and the like. We need to repeat that a child may react to the very best conditions set before it, or respond positively to the very worst it encounters. It is wise then for the counsellor not to make decisions for or against the parent, but hang loose in regard to this matter. The counsellor must be interested in helping the child.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WAY OF COUNSELLING—III

DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE IMAGE

We have seen that Judaism had a high view of God, Whilst it is true that law was very much a part of the Mosaic Covenant we should not think that those of Israel groaned under law. The law of itself was unique in the world. It was of great delight to men and women of faith. A study of Psalms 1, 19, and 119 (amongst many others) shows us the fact that it was a delight to the obedient of heart (Deut. 30:6, Jer. 31: 31- 34, Rom. 7: 22).

All this given in, the natural impression men often get is of God who judges and whose laws must be obeyed under pain of death. Hence God's holiness makes Him seem remote, His righteousness to be a God of high demands, and His truth to be beyond the reach of practical human beings who seek to live out their lives in the midst of imperfection.

As we have said, little or nothing can be done by the counsellor about the image of God the person has formed. It would be hopeless to seek to correct it, especially by trying to change the attitude of the person to his/her parents. *The change has to come through revelation.* For this reason the counsellor must be couched well in the truth of the Scripture so that he can distill that material which will form a revelation for the person needing help. How, then, is this done? The writer suggests a method but knows that each Christian teacher .will develop an approach of his own, and approaches will vary from helper to helper. What has to be clearly understood is this :-

(a) No matter how well the counsellor is versed

in psychological and psychiatric knowledge and techniques, both clinical and personal, he *cannot* thereby change *the image the person has formed*.

(b) If the helper does not have a warm, true, and dynamic image he cannot bring such an image as a revelation to the person. It is fundamental that one can only bring another to the point one has arrived at, not beyond it.

This means then that the Christian counsellor needs to be one who has experienced a revelation of God and knows that within him dwell the Members of the Godhead, i.e. that he is Father-filled, Christ-filled, and Spirit-filled. He knows the rich truth of the Gospel, and through the grace of the Gospel can unlock the prisoner, thus setting him free.

The Revelation of the Image

We have said that the person as a child may have seen God in one or more of various ways, i.e. as weak, vacillating, undependable, or as hard, grim, judgemental, remote and uninvolved in persons, and even in His creation. Many a person with Christian background will talk of 'the God of the Old Testament' as though He were one in the OT and another in the N. T. It is scarcely likely that God would have changed between Malachi and Matthew!

Such a person may orient himself to Jesus, seeing Jesus as the tender, more intimate, more human, personal, and loving one. He may view the Cross as the Son's work of satisfying the Father, and even pacifying Him! He will think then that forgiveness comes from the Son, and not from the Father. Hence there may be a variety of ideas and concepts. He may have made an idol of Jesus which is not the essential Jesus. He may fear God as many a pagan fears his idols and

seeks to propitiate them by offerings and sacrifices. Such a person may work hard at what he calls 'church work' or 'good deeds'. He may just be the victim of a tyrannous conscience. He has detached the law of God from God, and it is a hard grind. He has been turned into a legalist, never at peace.

The other problem will be the substitute idols he has, i.e. his dependencies. We have seen that a man in rejecting the image of God in his parents (or opposing it) turns to other sources for satisfaction, and sources which (he supposes) provide joy and peace. His life thus becomes a conflict. He will have guilt for rejecting the God-image, and guilt for choosing the substitute /s . Hence his anger, frustration and despair grows. The counsellor therefore has to wean him from his idols as well as change his image of God. In fact it is only by changing his inadequate image of God that he can wean the person from his idols. We have seen in the statement, 'Ephraim! Let him alone for he is joined to the idols,' that man fixes himself irretrievably to his idols. He *must* have his substitute for God. Functionally he *must* express love and *worship* even if it is of the most perverted and debased kind.

The revelation of the image, in one way, is simple. True as it is that the creation speaks of God, and true as it is that prophets and the angels have brought such messages, it is powerfully true that no reliable image of God can be found in the quests of men outside the Scriptures. They are revelation. They show what man would never think up out of his own resources. By nature of the case they cannot be proven to be true and reliable by the same means that other things are said to be proven, but when man has faith in them, then he can truly see God. Of course these Scriptures have to be opened by their Author, the Holy Spirit, and God generally chooses to do this through men and women who themselves have been given revelation. We have already treated some of the material in our first section of this book, yet the God

who is revealed is not, so to speak, locked into this Book. The Book reveals the God Who reveals by the Book and His Spirit.

The Son the Revelation of the Father

In the OT God was known as Father, but not in the full sense that He is known in the NT. In the OT the Son had not walked openly before man. In the NT he is shown as the Word become flesh, dwelling amongst us, full of grace and truth, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Hebrews 1:3 says, 'He reflects the glory of God, and bears the very stamp of His nature,' whilst other translations say, 'He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person', 'the effulgence of God's splendour, and the stamp of God's very being', 'he is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of His nature...'. (*RSV, KJV, NEB, Jerusalem Bible.*)

John 1:14-18 has it:- (a) The word becoming flesh shows the Father to be full of truth and grace. (b) The law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ, and (c) No man has seen God at any time but the Son has revealed Him. John 5:19ff shows that the Son utterly depends upon the Father, and does only what he is shown to do, and the Father loves the Son and shows him all things. John 14:1-10 shows that (a) God is Father and has His home to which He welcomes His children. (b) The Son goes to Him to make preparations for those coming. (c) The Son is the (only) Way to the Father. Also he is the very life and very truth of the Father. (d) The Son does nothing of himself; the Father dwelling in him does the works. This means that were we to cross out every mention of Jesus and replace it with 'the Father' then we would see who the Father truly is.

The helper needs to communicate this. He will have the barrier of the person not fully accepting authority, and even fatherhood, but then it must be pointed out that God is not *like* a father, but is *the*

Father. He is not one father amongst many, but is Father. He is uniquely Father. His Fatherhood is heavenly, in another dimension but displayed in this dimension by the Son.

Supremely the Father shows His Fatherhood in the Cross. He is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. In Hebrews 2:9-10 he brings many sons into glory by seeing that Jesus bears the entirety of suffering. It is the Father Who is the Initiator of the Cross, not the Son. *He* lays on the Son the iniquity of us all, *He* sets him forth to be a propitiation for sins. *He* makes him to be sin for us all. *He* so loves the world that He sends His Son. It is the will of *the Father* to bruise him. *The Father* loves him because he lays down his life for the sheep (Isa. 53:6, Rom. 3:25, I John 4:10, Isa. 53:10).

All of this the counsellor must know intimately. He must have experienced its truth. He can then show that it is not a theory of the Cross which saves a man, but the Cross! No person can be healed of his problems until he has come to full forgiveness, total cleansing, unchanging justification, sanctification (by faith), and sonship of the Father. First he must see the Cross-and-Resurrection and see what they accomplished (Rom. 4:25), and then receive the fruits of that event. Receiving the gifts of forgiveness, cleansing, love (etc.), a man is dynamically changed. He sees the true God-Father, Son and Spirit and their intrinsic unity, their Being as Love, and he is released.

The key to all this is Galatians 4:4-6 in which we see (a) The Son is sent, becoming human, and being under the law. (b) By becoming the curse (Gal. 3:13) he redeems man from law. (c) This is the bridge to sonship: redemption is prior to sonship but issues in sonship. (d) Because man has become a son God has sent *the Spirit of His Son* into the believer's heart. The Spirit cries, 'Abba!' that is, 'Father!', and so the son (cf. Rom. 8: 15-17) naturally and spontaneously also cries, 'Abba!'

All of this means that the person has now seen a totally new image of God, and is gripped by it, and sees the Father as love. This whole truth is rich. It is stunning. It is totally liberating. The counsellor had better understand all its implications. The counsellee, rightly speaking, should now be free.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WAY OF COUNSELLING—IV

OLD AND NEW IMAGES

Some problems arise in the matter of images. Many Christians have not yet come to see the warm image of God we describe above. They are, so to speak, weakly born. We find such persons who do not understand the totality of forgiveness. They do not believe that forgiveness is a once-for-all gift, never to be recalled. There can be no essential tension between Romans 11:29 and Matthew 18:21-35. He who is forgiven, forgives. That is the lesson of the passage in Matthew.

Such persons often do not believe in total cleansing as outlined in I Corinthians 6:9-11, Titus 3:3-5, Hebrews 1:3, and Hebrews 9:14 (cf. Acts 3:19, 22:16). Hence they feel bound in some measure by their past, and cannot exercise faith that the past has been dealt with. Some are puzzled as to how there can be no condemnation (Rom. 8: 1), and are always looking to judgement. They confuse the judgement of II Corinthians 5:10 with the judgement for eternal life (cf. John 5:24). They do not know that it is having one's name in the Book of life which matters, not the works one has done, whether good or bad (Rev. 20:15). Hence poor teaching, poor theology, and poor grasp causes more problems amongst *Christians* than we could compute.

The trouble here is that there is *a conflict of images*. The old image formed in childhood and confirmed by later life is still strong. The new image is weak. The idols have not been wholly vanquished (cf. Acts 14:15, 17:28-30, I Thess. 1:9), and so there is a battle in which the person is confused. He may still

seek peace and joy from his idols (dependencies) and be wrought upon to give them up. He may still interpret much of the Scripture in the light of his old image, and be puzzled because of the partial illumination given by the new, yet weak, image which has come to him in conversion.

The writer has seen this happen so many times, and various cases could be given. The following is a distinct possibility. A person grows up with a bad image of God which he received (rightly or wrongly) from his parents. He conceives of God as a fierce One who dominates, judges, punishes, and does not encourage or love warmly. A miracle happens and he is converted. He believes God is still the same, but he relates to the Son, because the Son seems gentle, warm, loving, tender, intimate, and human. Moreover, the Son has gone to the Cross *to pacify the Father.* Now he has God on his side, and uses him in threatening ways to others. He does not see God as he Forgiver, but the Son to be the forgiver. So he does not relate to the Father. In fact he has two images, and these conflict with one another, and cause great confusion and tension. Inevitably he will make Jesus into the idol which gives him his peace and joy. However, this cannot be since Jesus did not come primarily to show himself, but to show the Father.

Such a person needs a whole new counselling.

He needs to have a total revelation of the Father, and his set of problems would disappear.

Getting Free of the Past and the Image

What must be accepted categorically is that, 'If any man is in Christ he is a new creation: *old things* have passed away, behold, they have become *new!*' 'hat is the old things have become new. We must explore the whole truth of new birth, i.e. regeneration, and know it to be 'washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit,' so that there is no doubt bout the definitive nature of forgiveness, cleansing

and the new person. It must be agreed that in some wonderful way the work of the Spirit in applying the Cross has purified the person who has exercised the gifts of repentance and faith.

The point is that if the person does not see the total work of the Cross, and receive its totality, then the question of grace is in doubt. The fact of grace is obscured. One works more by works than grace. He is often striving to achieve what God has already done! That is he is working *towards* forgiveness, justification and sonship, instead of working *from*, and so, by these. Hence he is open for all the analysis any counsellor may give him.

He has the pernicious illusion that every time he feels depressed, or emotionally disturbed or flat, that *it must be a consequence of the past*. Why should it be? Has deterministic psychology so ground us down that we are victims of our past? Have not the old things passed away? Indeed have *they* not become *new*? Has not the Spirit gone down (so to speak) into the memory data bank (with all its evil programming, cf. Ephes. 2:2, I John 5:19), and thoroughly (a) Cleansed the evil from it, and (b) Reprogrammed the material that is there? To put it another way: Has not the sin, the stain, the guilt and the pollution been erased, and the erstwhile sinner *freed* entirely from it (John 8:31-36), Or does it require a therapy which is *beyond that of the Holy Spirit's work*?

Some Christian therapies which are current do not believe in the total work of the Cross. It may be because they are based on the 'decision' kind of evangel that is often preached. It may be because converts (so-called) have been conditioned into making decisions, rather than seeing the vital truth of saving grace. Hence there is a dismal recycling of the former sins, a recharging persons with guilt, and then using certain therapies to free them of the guilt. Since, however, these therapies do not correlate with the objective facts Of the Cross and the objective work of the Spirit, they further confuse the counsellee, and

dim his view of the God of grace. He becomes the God of the installment plan, of the dribs-and-drabs handing out of forgiveness. He is an eye-dropper God, giving healing in a sparing way. He is a sparse God, and does not inspire the response of love, and the dynamic obedience which results from powerful love.

The Way of Freedom

The counsellor must convince his client that forgiveness and cleansing are total. Because of this the person helped must now forgive everyone, commencing with his parents. This forgiveness must be as thorough as is that of God. He must consciously forgive, and having done so proceed to others in the family, then outside the family, and so on to his enemies. When all are forgiven he must then be sure that *he is not forgiving others what in fact he needs, himself to be forgiven*. We mean *the matter* of hurts, wounds, and the like. We mean bitter, resentful and angry memories. We mean the elements of self-pitying contemplation the person has indulged in over the years. The counsellee must be taught that being *hurt, and going on hurting is sin*. We mean that whilst the initial hurt or wound afflicted is the responsibility (and sin) of the doer, the person who does not immediately forgive is in danger. Since love 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things', and 'never fails' (I Cor. 13: 7-8), then a human being should forgive for his own sake as well as for the sake of the other.

To foster, cultivate and compound a hurt is most dangerous. Negative reactions to others, wrong thoughts, and the accumulation of guilt builds up a whole complex state of hurt. It breeds the acids of self-pity, and the demand for healing from others. In some cases sheer *rage* and anger develop, and the desire for vengeance. Whilst it is true that the one who has wounded the person is wrong, that one is surely not to blame for the compounding of it.

This brings up the whole matter of (seemingly) adverse heredity, environment, and circumstance. James Denney once said, 'Heredity fixes not our fate, but our trial.' He means that any human being born into this world has at core a will which wills either to battle against the adverse elements and win, or to receive the hurts which come and then blame those adverse elements for the damage done, always demanding at the same time compensation for the hurt received.

Some counsellors think that sympathy will help the person concerned. This is doubtful. Sympathy inflames the object of sympathy, confirming his conclusion that he has been badly done by. The counsellee should see the harm such an attitude does. Some helpers feel that since some of these matters happened in childhood that the person deserves sympathy. The clear fact is that *the person is no longer a child but an adult!* It should develop adult (mature) views of its early hurts, and put them away cheerfully and sensibly.

When then the helper has helped the counsellee to receive forgiveness and to forgive, he should urge that person to accept his own sinfulness in the matter of reaction to being hurt, wounded, and so on. Further to this he should point to the Cross where, it is said, 'He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows'. If he has done that why do we insist on carrying them? They may even have been—so to speak—illicit griefs and sorrows, but Christ has nevertheless borne them. Also it is said definitively, 'By his wounds our wounds are healed.' That fixes that!

The acceptance of responsibility for one's own negative reactions and the enlargements of one's own hurts will free the person from them. He will see them borne in the Cross and destroyed. Also, when he remembers that in all things God is working for the good of those who love Him, it will be clear that every event—no matter how evil or horrible it may be—is in the ultimate worked by God for the person's good. The answer then to the prophet's question, 'Is there

no balm in Gilead for the healing of the hurt of the daughter of my people?’ must have the answer, ‘Yes, there is!’

The way of freedom then is to be forgiven, and to forgive. It is to see one’s own sins taken away in which are included the sins of rebellion, non-acceptance, prolonged hurt and the angers that attended self-pity. One is free now to forgive on every occasion, even to ‘seventy times seven’.

Freedom and Love

We know God to be love through forgiveness (I John 4: 10, Jer. 31: 31- 34, cf. Luke 7: 47). Hence our knowledge of that love depends upon the degree of forgiveness we realise. In the same way others come to know us through forgiveness. They know our love. The person needs then to forgive and so, love. It is not true forgiveness where it is not followed by love. Whilst it may be difficult to forget what another has done, we do not have to remember. God says, ‘I will forgive their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.’ He says, ‘As a thick cloud will I blot out your transgressions’. Likewise we must not remember. We must blot out. (See Jer. 31:34, Isa. ‘43:25.)

Forgiveness is what releases us in love, to love. We love because He first loved us. We not only love Him, but all, even our enemies (Matt. 5:43-48, I John 4:19). Because His love never fails our love too, need never fail. We do, however, need to exercise a certain carefulness in forgiving and loving. Whilst in general humanity understands forgiveness, yet true forgiveness is a revelation. Man, of himself, cannot forgive and love. Hence when the person counselled is told to forgive it must be something he has in his heart rather than something he does outwardly, for such forgiveness may become a form of bondage, even tyranny. Likewise asking others to forgive who do not understand forgiveness is a burden which ought not to be placed upon them. The person can forgive

and love without announcing it. Likewise he can accept God's forgiveness for what he has done against another.

One final word. It is for those who say, 'I know God has forgiven me, but I can't forgive myself.' The statement is utterly foolish. No one has been asked to forgive himself. It is neither his right, nor is it in his power. Only God can forgive and he must accept that forgiveness. The excuse is a ploy to escape the humiliation (imagined) of being forgiven. Likewise the person who says, after being taught, 'Ah, I have that in my head, but somehow it is not in my heart!' The answer is, 'You are responsible for getting it to the heart. Head-hearing is no hearing. Heart-hearing is heart-receiving.' The person will know what is meant. In the Scriptures to truly hear means to obey what one has heard, for it is the Word of God.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COUNSELLING THE CHRISTIAN PERSON—I

Introduction

To this point we have been concerned with the person who needs to be relationalised. We mean that whether he is a Christian or non-Christian, each counsellee must be brought to the point where relationships are established with God, especially as a child to the Father, a person subject to Christ as Lord. If then we have worked, roughly speaking, according to the grid set out in Chapter 3 (of Section 2), then some time must elapse before further help is given. In that period the one helped can sort out the elements in which he has shared. In other words, all the implications of changed relationships will have become clear, and the change in the counsellee would have been stabilised.

The basic need of such a person will be, as we pointed out in Chapter 18 (Section 1, p. 68ff), to be integrated into the community of the redeemed, and receive love, care, attention, encouragement, teaching, and an opportunity to share in the ongoing work of the Church. The after-care is a vital matter. Even if an ideal church or fellowship cannot be found the person concerned must be encouraged to persist under less than ideal conditions.

This being said, the helper will be confronted by many Christians who have needs which have not been met. We mean not the needs met by a relationalising ministry, but needs which persist even when this counselling has been, so to speak, successful. It is to these we now apply ourselves.

The Continuing Christian and His Needs

We realise that a Christian who is integrated into a loving and caring church is well-placed. If the church is one which goes out to the world with the Gospel of redemption then his position will be strengthened. If the church operates as a sharing family then it seems that his emotional needs will also be met. If the church is a church which teaches, then its members have the opportunity to grow and mature. 'In such a church there should be no need for person-to-person counselling. The healthy life of this community should be enough.

The practical facts are that such churches are not plentiful in number. Ideal conditions are rarely met, and whilst no counsellor can substitute for the life of a healthy church, he must teach truths which will be helpful to the needy person. If he is not in a position to do this himself, then he must direct the person to where such teaching is available. Some of the elements we outline below should prove helpful.

(i) Knowing What Has Happened in Conversion.

Let us repeat here what we have said before, that the believer must understand what God has done in the *repentance-conversion-regeneration* process. He must understand the totality of forgiveness, the completeness of cleansing, and the absolute nature of sanctification. That is he must know that nothing from the past need again tie him to that past. His guilt has been dealt with, his pollution has been cleansed, and he is now made part of the continuing community of Christ and the Father.

If he has any doubts about the absolute nature of the work done for him and in him by God, then he will have a hesitant approach to life. At the same time he must be shown that this *work*, whilst intrinsically absolute, is only known *by faith to faith*, and that never for a moment will it be by sight, but always known and understood *by faith*. Faith is not only

believing what God has said, but it is walking in the knowledge that it is true. That is faith is obedience.

We will now examine the elements which motivate the believer in true holiness of life. However, before we do that we should understand that all motivation commences with, and is bound into, love. If then love is absent, or love has waned, great problems will arise. Our point here is that a person who has gone through counselling in regard to relationships should be amply motivated. However, this even being so, problems will arise if there is any doubt on the part of the person in regard to the absolute nature of forgiveness, cleansing, and sanctification.

(ii) The Motivation of Love.

I John 4:19 says that we love because He first loved us. This is the basic principle of the believer. The N .T . places love in the highest priority. We love God because He loved us. We love others because He loved (and loves) us. Jesus said that if we loved him we would keep his commandments (John 14:15). This makes obedience a simple matter, and a loving matter. We love the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and we love others, and in fact all men (Ephes. 1:15, I John 4:11-12, I Pet.. 1:8, II Cor. 5:14).

Love then is the motivation for living a rich and obedient life. The failure to love is deeply reprehensible in the NT (I Cor. 16:22, Rev. 2:4-6). The counsellor will want to discover the reasons for lack of love in the person requiring help. Causes for loss of love are as follows :-

(a) **Recurring idolatry**, i.e. love of things or the world (I John 2:15-16, II Tim. 4:10). This means the person has turned back to things or persons for fulfilment of emotional needs, and not trusted the Father for these. The reasons must be sought out and dealt with.

(b) **Increase of lawlessness**. Matthew 24:12 points to this cause. That is, increasing pressures, permissive social-pressures, and the loss of moral

absolutes will draw man's thinking to relative values, as against actual values. Thus love grows cold. Counselling must recall to total values, and the true nature of the law/s of God as love.

(c) *Refusal to remember forgiveness.* Forgiveness graciously obligates 'to love (Luke 7: 47). Forgiveness issues in responsive love. In order to escape such obligation a person must deliberately refuse to remember. II Peter 1:9 shows that a person will deliberately forget he was purged from his old sins. He must be counselled to pure remembrance and renewal in love.

(d) *Refusal to forgive.* Matthew 18:21ff shows the plight of one who has refused to forgive a *trifle* although he has been forgiven a vast debt. Non-forgiving dams up the flow of felt-love. This person needs to see afresh God's love in forgiveness, and so forgive another.

(e) *Refusal to act in love.* Such refusal brings a dislocation in the unloving person. I John 4:11 shows that we must love one another when loved by God. I John 3:16ff shows how reprehensible is the failure to share one's goods where another has need.

The positive counselling in this situation where love has been abandoned is the promise of Zephaniah 3:17 by God, 'I will renew you in My love.' Revelation 2:4-6 calls for repentance and turning back to do the works of love. Jude 20-23 counsels keeping one's self in the love of God by certain means. This is prophylactic. It also urges the going out to others in love. The counsellor would do well to remind the person that waiting to be loved is fatal, but going out to love is positive and healthy.

(iii) The Motivation of Obedience.

We generally think that we need to be motivated by love in order to obey. Whilst this is correct, nevertheless obedience executed is its own motivation for further obedience. I John 2:3-6, and 5:2-3 show that obedience is love, and to obey perfects love. The

joy of fellowship with God stimulates to further obedience. A disobedient person may need wide counselling, and renewal in love. 'I delight to do Thy will, O Lord!' suggests that obedience carries its own delight.

(iv) The Motivation of Vocation.

We saw in the first section of this book that man is functionally structured (in and by creation) to fulfil the purpose for which God sent him into the world. The generic purpose of creation is shown in Genesis 1:28ff. The *redemptional* purpose is shown in what we often call 'the Great Commission', i.e. Christ's directions to preach the Gospel. The specific purpose of God is shown in the vocation He has for each person. This relates to the gifts and graces He has allotted to each one, as also the particular situation in which He has placed or will place the person.

Life without purpose is futile. Some Christians have been shown the purpose God has for them but they may rebel against that. Hence the counsellor must renew them in the richness of vocation, and the joy of having purpose. Often a Christian person is angry at the specific purpose God has for him. He has envisaged other and more attractive purposes. Passages such as Colossians 1: 9f, Romans 12: 1-2 and Ephesians 5:17 should be used to show that the will of God is good, and must be sought and obeyed.

(v) The Motivation of Hope or Goal.

Linked with vocation is the end-goal. This is set out plainly in Scripture. Each believer will ultimately become like Christ the Son. The end-time will result in the resurrection body (of glory) for each person who is in Christ. Far from a puerile 'pie in the sky when you die' philosophy, such persons should be counselled with the rightness of hope which relates to glorification, and the brilliant future the people of God have, i.e. they will reign upon the earth; they will reign forever; they will be conquerors, etc. The facts of the new reconciled and harmonised creation of the

heavens and earth should be underlined. Whilst love, so to speak, takes from man the-monkey-on-his-back, which impedes man from going forward, so hope is the great power which tugs man forward, giving him a great incentive such as is seen in I John 3:1-3 (cf. I Cor. 2:6ff, and Rom. 8:28-30).

The counsellor will often be faced with 'hopeless' Christians. He must take time to give them vocational renewal, and set their hearts on the certain hope of the faith (cf. Col. 1:27, Rom. 8:18ff, I Pet. 1:13, Gal. 5:5, Titus 2:13, II Pet. 3:11-13).

(vi) The Motivation of Holiness.

Part of the calling of God is to holiness (Ephes. 1:4, I Thess. 4:7, Matt. 5:8, Heb. 12:14, II Pet. 3: 11-12, I Cor. 6:11, II Cor. 6:14—7:1). The counsellor will do well to remember that the most sensitive area of man is his concern with holiness of life. Created to be pure he feels impurity very deeply, especially as one who is a new creation. We have to understand that shame plays an important part in the life of a person. One may be undone by shame. [22](#)

Counselling for the matter of shame at impurity must be done on the basis of the cleansing work of the Cross. I Corinthians 1: 18 and I John 1: 7 show that the Cross goes on being the power of God for guilt and cleansing, every day, in the life of the believer.

(vii) The Motivation of Grace.

Grace, far from condoning failure in the believer, is the best prophylactic against sin. Romans 6:12-14 and I Corinthians 15:55-56 show us that grace denudes sin of its power by taking away the guilt of (former) sin, and so setting the believer free to obey. The power of sin lies in the guilt of sin, and the Cross has dealt with such guilt (Rom. 5:1, 6:7, 8:1-3). Christians very quickly come under guilt, especially so since their consciences are now sensitised to evil. They can easily be accused (Rev. 12:10-11). They must be taught the true techniques of staying out of guilt, eg.

‘When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see him there,
Who made an end to all my sin.’

One then, has to live in grace. But grace is not a mere theological idea but a great dynamic. In Titus 2:11-14 Paul shows this rich dynamic: ‘For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory. of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.’

Grace, when looked at from one point of view is’ just the sheer love of God in action. From another point of view it is seen to be wholly undeserved. At the same time it can never be purchased. It keeps man from depending upon his own energies and efforts.

The counsellor must be an expert in grace. He, himself, must live in grace, and show that God is always ‘the God of all grace’ (I Pet. 5:10), and that personal rehabilitation is the constant programme of grace. This is good news for persons who habitually fail. We all habitually fail.

It is recorded that a person once said, ‘O Lord! I’ve done it again,’ and he heard a voice saying, ‘Done what?’ This is the grace of the Cross. Yet it is a grace which relieves a person from guilt in order to Free him for obedience.

(viii) Motivation and Power.

Motivation, technically speaking, is the initiating power for action. It is that which gets something moving. So far as the will is concerned this is true of the Christian man. However, the power to execute

what one wishes to do lies within the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. Without motivation a person will be lifeless. However, motivation of itself does not effect the action. This springs from the power of God:

Motivation then must be attended with the invigorating Word, and the energising Spirit. Hence the best counselling that can be given is to urge the person to study (and obey) the Word, and to be continually filled with the Spirit (Ephes. 5:18, Rom. 12: 11, Gal. 3:5, Phil. 1:21).

Motivation as also the operation of God's power work most richly in the context of the Body, the church. There is no such thing as a privatised Christian life. It is part of the whole, the dynamic whole of the corporate Body. Hence the counsellor will stress this fact. As hope draws on, and love urges on, so the truth of the family of God, stretching back from the beginning of time and merging into time's future will be a constant context in which the thinking and action of the believer will best operate. To be a son of God is also to be a child of Abraham (Gal. 3), and better still to be part of the perpetual Family of the Father.

It is here that relationships operate best, and life is lived most healthfully.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COUNSELLING THE CHRISTIAN PERSON—II

Introduction: The Matter of Sexuality

This is a matter we have scarcely touched upon, yet sexuality is, rightly understood, the whole of man.²³ A true but simple understanding of the subject is indispensable for useful counselling. An outline of the subject cannot be reasonably undertaken in this book, but some matters will have to be looked at.

The Christians to whom help may have to be given will be (a) Young Christians, in teen-age and early twenties and even older who are not yet married, but who wish to be married or are afraid of marriage. (b) Married persons who need help in their marriage. (c) Married persons whose marriages are about to break up. (d) Married persons who are separated or divorced. (e) Persons who have been married and divorced more than once. (f) Persons who are troubled with immoral sexual drives, or sexual perversions.

Because these are complex problems, the counsellor ought to know how to help those persons who are Christians, and who have problems or who need guidance in the areas we have indicated.

A Biblical Approach to Sexuality

What is a Biblical approach to sexuality? Many writers differ as to what constitutes a Biblical view of sexuality. The term sexuality as such is not found in the Scriptures, but the fact of sexuality is certainly strongly present.

The term sexuality needs to be defined. Biblically it covers the masculine-feminine matter of the

human race. In Genesis 1:26ff, 2:18ff, and 5:1-2 (cf. Matt. 19:1-6) we find the creation account of man and woman. What can be seen is as follows :- The man is created, and from him, by a special act of God, the woman. *Creation is not finished until woman is created.* God blesses the creation of man and woman. Man and woman together, i.e. male and female are called *Man*. Whilst the male is first created (cf. I Cor. 11:8f) yet the total image is constituted of male and female. If it is true that the man is the image and glory of God it is also true that *he is not this without woman* since she is man's glory. Hence the total image is that of man and woman together.

There is a *generic* use of the term man. In Genesis 5:2 it is stated, 'Male and female He created them, and He blessed them, and called *them* Man.' Man then is man-woman. The *specific* use of the term *man* is found in Genesis 2:16ff. What must be seen—as against certain 'liberation' movements today—is that the human race is male-female, and not male and female. We mean there are not two races (so to speak), one being male and the other female. Neither male nor female should be talked of as separate entities. Sexuality then expresses the entire male-female entity. The word sexuality is often used to distinguish male from female, but the *differences* do not separate male and female, but rather unify them. The term sexuality must not be confined to biological copulation or genital differences, but rather should embrace the entire man—woman entity or unity.

The word sexuality then has a *generic* use. That is it covers the whole male-female relationship, entity, unity, and operation. It also has a *specific* use covering the physical union of two people of male and female being. Thus masculinity and femininity are not limited to the *specific* use of sexuality, but the *specific* use of sexuality is certainly limited to masculinity and femininity, especially .as they come together in biological union. When we say biological union we do not confine this use of sex to the biological but gladly admit that it

entails the whole of the elements of masculinity and femininity, i.e. not only procreative but social elements also.

Biblically then masculinity should not be seen apart from femininity, or femininity apart from masculinity. They must be seen together if we are to understand what is humanity. Humanity is male-female. This does not only, or even primarily, refer to physical sexual play and union, but to all that man is about in fulfilment of the mandate given by God to the human race (Gen. 1:28f), namely to be fruitful, multiply, 'replenish the earth and subdue it, thus coming to have dominion over it. We mean that it requires the *entire male-female entity (unity) to complete the whole task*. This is what humanity is, and this is what humanity is about, and this is how functionally God has both created and ordained it. Thus it can be quoted, 'What God has joined let no man put asunder.' It is not saying, '*Those whom* God has joined,' but What, (i.e. that which) God has joined let no man put asunder.' That is, do not separate masculinity and femininity, for they are joined (and not only by marriage and in marriage) together for the whole operation given to man to accomplish. We certainly do not mean that there should be physical sexual union apart from marriage but that the masculine-feminine operation is not confined to marriage. This is obvious. All the gifts that operate across humanity are necessary to fulfil the mandate God has given to the human race. This would apply equally in the matter of the redemptional mandate given by Christ to his church.

This means then that no male or female needs to be ashamed of his or her sexuality. It means that sexuality is a thing for the entire race, and covers all its operations—properly speaking. It means that in the *generic* sense one is not more or less sexual whether married or unmarried. It also means that the specific use of sexuality does not put one into the upper bracket of being human, nor one without this

practice into a lower bracket since, in humanity, there is neither a higher nor lower bracket.

Counselling Those Preparing for Marriage

This is a whole discipline on its own and we cannot here examine it in detail. What we can say is that the truth of sexuality must be opened to young people. The generic sense of sexuality is the most vital. The *specific* use of sexuality takes genuine honesty and modesty for teaching. However the approach to the whole matter of sex lies in the relational, functional area, and strongly relates to the matter of authority.

All that we have said on creation, authority, function and obedience must be spelled out. The attitude of a child to its parents greatly determines the attitude it will have to its spouse, and, later, to its children. Indeed courtship and marriage will be contingent upon the familial relationships the person has developed. Sexuality is learned within the context of the husband-wife/father-mother situation. That is the school in which the child has been tutored.

For this reason the counsellor needs to know the basic truth of *family*, and to know it from the Scriptures. We have seen this can only come from learning of God's Fatherhood through the Son, the nature of brotherhood from the Elder Brother Christ, bridehood from the Bride, husbandhood from the true Husband, and familyhood from the true Family, the people of God. The fontal sources of these lie within the Godhead (cf. Ephes. 3:14f), which is why all relationships must stem from the Father. Likewise the paradigms for courting (Christ and his Bride), marriage (Christ and his Bride), for family and relationships all come from the archetypal sources made known to us within the Scriptures.

It means that the best preparation for marriage will be what we have loosely called 'relationalising', i.e. ensuring the counselees have received the liberation of the Gospel, and have been united to the Father and the

Son, through the Spirit. We have seen that many problems which face those seeking marriage are but symptoms and not causes. Coming to know God these can be healed.

Counselling Those Who are Called 'Single'

Many (so-called) single persons have few problems. However, they have to be noble souls, for the impression is often given to them that they are less than normal, and certainly unlucky if they are not married. Whilst the enormous failure in marriages today should tell another story, the myth persists that there is something a little (or a lot) curious about a person who is not married. In fact it is inferred that marriage is the normal state, whereas singleness is *subnormal*, or, even, *abnormal!* This is because we confine sexuality to physical sexual union. We have seen that it is ignoring the wider and deeper understanding of the whole male-female entity, the human race fulfilling the mandate from all its given resources.

Christ was 'single' (so-called), but nonetheless a full person for that. Moreover he enlisted masculinity and femininity in his cause. Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany (amongst others) ministered richly to him and others, without the fact of marriage. Only where it pertains to having children does the specific use of sex have functional significance. Of course the marriage union is not confined to this action. It has much more to it, but then the fellowship of man and woman is not confined within the boundaries of marriage.

Persons who are not married have to face the problems of deficient views of sexuality held by many. Hence they need to be reassured as to the true value of personhood. They must understand its nature. Especially must they be helped when they are angry with God for having denied them—so it seems—living what others call a *normal* life. They must be shown that *all* life—apart from sin—is *normal*. No single person should be pitied or patronised, nor should any

kind of consolation be attempted. Also God should not be justified in leaving the person unmarried, for all of this simply underlines the fact that to be single is unfortunate, and a pity. It also infers the lesser status of one who is not married.

Positively the true meaning of personhood should be indicated. The action of a person who is single should not be taught as sublimation. Nor should it be shown as a consolation prize! The dignity and honour of all personhood should be stressed, and especially as that personhood is in Christ. Only the Gospel will heal previous hurts and act prophylactically against the pressures that come dally.

A true, unconscious, and full use of (generic) sexuality should be urged. This will allow a man and/ or woman to live fully without aligning life to a possible marriage, or seeking to cope with (supposed) disappointment. It will allow such to get on with life usefully, and to enjoy it.

Counselling the Marrieds

Problems arise between husband and wife, but then they have always arisen wherever persons relate. There is nothing necessarily sinful about problems. If husband and wife have understood the matter of relationships and come to terms with such, through the Gospel, then for the most part they should be able to live together. True love accepts the other person as he/she is, although there is no necessity to agree with the faults and wrong actions the one sees in the other. Counselling then should be a fairly straight-forward matter, at least in the expression of its principles. Application of these is a matter of human will (or won't!).

Counselling separated persons or divorced persons is not as simple. Yet, here again what we have stated from Chapter 3 to Chapter 6 should be sufficient to help these persons. Separation is a sign of failure, but it can be used usefully. The fact of

divorce need not hinder one or both of the previous partners from being healed of their problems, the very problems which may have caused the divorce. The counsellor needs to be guarded against mere human emotions, especially pity. He must keep the matter in the dimension of 'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake', or human pity will interfere with good objective help.

What matters is that people are healed, not simply that their conditions are improved or their suffering ameliorated. A person who has passed through more than one marriage will need the cleansing, renewing power of the Cross to rehabilitate him to live in life. Legalistic yearnings, remorse at failure, self-pity through disappointment must not be allowed to place a stranglehold on the lives of those who, seemingly, have failed. Only here can grace heal, restore, and rehabilitate, and this is what really matters.

Counselling the Deviates

All human beings, though each one is unique, have the same basic creational elements. Deviates, especially sexual deviates, are often singled out. Because they constitute a threat to normal society (sic:) they are especially denigrated. Romans 1:20-32 shows us that every form of sin is a deviation from the norm, i.e. the creational norm. The same Gospel is needed for all deviations. Deviations are generally a form of rebellion against God's created order. They often constitute the idol, or source of emotional satisfaction required by the deviate or devotee.

Because of these facts all human beings need the same Gospel of liberation and grace. All need to know the love of God. In I Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul first names a number of deviates—idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, alcoholics, thieves and robbers—and implies strongly that although some of his audience were such, yet through the Gospel they have escaped these damaging deviations. They are now washed, sanctified and justified. In other words they have

been delivered, and for ever!

If such statements seem simplistic, then this is how they must appear! If such counselling cannot fully heal—we mean if the Gospel applied cannot fully heal—then we must take recourse to other methods. The Scriptures, nevertheless, make the claim that regeneration can not only heal from deviations but meet the deepest emotional needs of those who trust in Christ and come to the Father and His family.

Applicative Counselling

The sketchy and brief account of human sexuality given above may appear to make the matter of sexual needs and their healing a simple one. The truth is that it is not counselling, nor even the Gospel in its form which heals people, but the God of all peace and grace. We must realise that it is He Who is working through the network of His people, including counsellor, pastor, teacher, and the warm fellowship of those who love men and women. There are no guaranteed modes, patterns or techniques we use which necessarily bring healing. God must be at work. The Gospel must be known and declared. The will of man must come to submission to God. Faith and obedience are necessary for the healing of the Cross to be effective.

It is the task of the caring, loving counsellor to be faithful to the Scriptures and to declare the commands and promises of God. What then is enormously complicated and complex through sin, can be dissolved by the effectual grace of God, and men and women can come to healing, wholeness, and enter into a full life.

APPENDIX ONE

SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

‘Who am I?’ is often the cry of the modern person. The answer is, ‘Does it really matter? Does it matter that you know who you are? Why do you want to know?’

A simple solution to the quest for knowing oneself—if indeed knowing oneself is good and helpful is first to know what (and so who) a man is. This we can find from Scripture. We have already seen who and what is created-man, fallen-man, man-redeemed, and man-glorified. All we need to know is written for our understanding. If one can know generally who and what (a) man is, then one can work from that basis.

We have seen that to know man we first must know Who God is. Man is made in the image of God so to know God is to know man. Man must first know God relationally. That is he must love God. He will not love God until he knows he is loved by God and so responds to God, loving Him (I John 4:19, cf. John 17:3, I John 5:20).

At the same time man cannot know God (and so love Him) without also loving others (I John 3:14, 4: 20). That is to know himself he must know (love) God and others. This experience of love is at its best when it is unconscious. The less introspection, the more simple and real the love. The fact is that when man is occupied loving God and others he is more himself (his true, fulfilled self) than at other times. It is doubtful whether at this point he is caring very much about knowing who, or what he is! We repeat, he is being himself.

Why then does modern man feel so compelled to

know himself? Why is he forever trying to discover who he is? Is it because he does not know what a human being is? Is this because the study of human phenomenology—especially that branch called psychology —has failed to show him what a man is? In turn, has psychology failed to produce the results he needs because it has not counted upon the spiritual nature of man? Many similar questions could be asked.

Basically man must take into account the Biblical revelation of what man is. Then he can understand the nature of man, i.e. as created, fallen, redeemed, and glorified. This of course will be helpful.

There is even more to be said. Firstly Psalm 139 tells us ‘that God has formed man in the womb and knows who he is, particularly. It has been observed that every person is unique, a special creation. God loves the entire race of human beings (Ephes. 2:4-5, Gal. 2:20). The Scriptures are filled with His dealings with nations, but then no less with His dealings with persons. He recognises the characteristics of persons and deals accordingly.

In John 14:1-6 Jesus speaks of going to the Father, i.e. home. He says that in his Father’s house there are- many rooms, or places to live. He in fact is going to prepare places for each: that is the inference. Surely this is personal preparation for persons.

In the Book of the Revelation Jesus promises those who overcome each a white stone with a new name written on it which no one knows except him who receives. Since in the Bible the name is the identity of the person, i.e. his character, disposition, vocation, personal authority and all that constitutes him, then the name will be a revelation of who he is. Only then, at the end, will he fully know, as he has been known by God (I Cor. 13:12). It may well be that it is not for the best that the person, now, should fully know himself (cf. Phil. 3:10-15).

Why, then, does a person wish to know himself now? It may be because he feels lost, without a sense of identity. He may thus feel a failure, inferior.

Hence he may embark upon becoming *someone* or *something*. This will not get him an identity. It may even create or increase a *false* identity. Man is a true identity when related to, and dependent upon, God. This will simultaneously make him related to, and dependent upon, others. Man is more himself (i.e. more truly man) in the context of other persons. That is at once his real habitat and milieu for living.

The Bible speaks of man (i.e. the prodigal son) as being ‘dead’, and ‘lost’ and it is primarily *a relational* matter. When man relates to God and (so) others, he finds himself. His self-consciousness then becomes simple and *unselfconscious*! He delights in living in God and His world, along with and related to, other fellow-creatures, and creatures of the creation.

He has his identity but senses no need to either seek it, or ponder it.

APPENDIX TWO

BIBLICAL PSYCHOLOGY

By this we mean a Biblical psychology of man. There can, in fact, be no such thing. At best we can derive a Biblical anthropology. We can see what the Scripture states man to be. In our previous notes we have attempted something of this. We have spoken of man as created, man as fallen, and man as redeemed. We have seen that man is son, creature and subject correlating with God as Father, Creator and King. We have also examined the nature of fallen man, and man as redeemed, seeing he is developing in holiness and maturity, being a person who is oriented to the final goal of God for history, namely glorification. Hence we have seen he is essentially a creature of hope, purpose and goal.

We have also seen that man is a relational being. He has moral faculties. He is more than the animals although related to them. All of these things we have seen, and were we to examine each fact in more detail we could formulate (as many have) a truly Biblical anthropology. Such of course could not be formulated without a prior theology, a Biblical understanding of the nature of God and His universe. Nevertheless, all of this given in, there is no Biblical psychology as such. We may adduce a Biblical phenomenology of man, i.e. of his actions, and so on. Yet we could not call this a psychology. Psychology is the study of man as psyche, man the person in relation to his mind and his bodily being, and rightly speaking does not have a presupposed philosophy of man.

Some enthusiastic students of Scripture have sought to shape up a Biblical psychology and then to apply it. They think of man as either bipartite (body

and soul, or body and spirit) or tripartite (body, soul, and spirit), and out of this designation of man they purport to know how he operates. For them the body and soul, or body, soul and spirit have certain values, certain predictable and nameable elements. Such may also speak of the spiritual man, or the soulish man, or the fleshly man. They may speak of these three elements composing the one man. In such cases the matter of man becomes quite complex.

It becomes even more complex when persons with such a Biblical psychology set out to counsel persons. This is especially so where the counsellor teaches the counsellee his aetiology or epistemology of human behaviour. Doubtless we will never resolve the matter of whether man is bipartite or tripartite if we insist upon categories. It may even be that he is one (or none) of these, but then where does such a classification get us?

A Problem of Semantics

It is an old, and often unconscious device, to use words in such a way that they fit into our presuppositions. For example we have a tripartite view of man, and when we meet passages such as I Thessalonians 5: 23, and Hebrews 4:12 we assume these prove our classification. However, another person might equally take II Corinthians 7:1 and find that it fits his bipartite category. The fact is that such passages are not undertaking an analysis of man, either bipartite or tripartite. In order to understand what they are saying we need to acquaint ourselves with Hebraic categories of thinking, as also certain Greek categories of thinking.

In the OT there is no explicit mention of conscience, although certain references to the heart may imply conscience. In the NT the word conscience is used. It certainly was a current Greek concept. In the OT Israel was commanded to love the Lord with all its heart, soul, and might. In Matthew 22:37 Israel is

to love with all its heart, soul, and mind. In Mark **12: 30** it is heart, soul, mind and strength, and in Luke 10:27 it is the same. How then are we to understand man from this? The answer is here as in I Thessalonians 5: 23, Hebrews 4: 12, and II Corinthians 7:1, that the Scriptures simply mean 'the whole of man' without any vivisection: In other words these are literary, rather than scientific categories.

In the N.T. we have a number of terms which are used, such as 'self', 'soul', 'spirit', 'heart', 'inner man', 'mind', 'spirit of the mind', and the like. The term 'body' is also used, but then so is the word 'flesh' meaning in some cases carnality, and in others simply the body. Thus we see that when the above terms are particularised great misunderstanding can arise. The claim that spirit is the seat of God-consciousness, *soul* of self-consciousness, and body of world-consciousness is an interesting view but finds no substantiation in Scripture.

The facts are that when the terms body, soul and spirit are seen in the entire Scriptures they are often used synonymously. In the OT *soul* and *spirit* are sometimes used interchangeably. Sometimes the *soul* means the whole person (Gen. 2:7). In the Psalms the terms soul and spirit are often interchangeable. The psalmist can speak of his soul (*nephesh*) and his spirit (*ruach*) in the same way. Again we hear of eight souls being saved from the Ark. Doubtless this also means *bodies* or persons. Soul then can stand for the whole person, and likewise *spirit* can stand for the whole person. In Leviticus (17:12, 22:6) no *soul* is to eat blood or touch anything unclean. Doubtless it means the person is not to do these things, things which are bodily actions.

The idea is much the same in the New Testament where there thinking is still for the most Hebraic. The word *soul* has high value, sometimes referring to the *self* of a person, and sometimes simply to a person. Mary says, 'My soul does magnify the Lord,' meaning 'I magnify Him.' We have seen that the soul loves

God. Passions war against the soul (I Peter 2:11); the soul hopes (Heb. 6:19). One does the will of God from the soul (Ephes. 6:6) and serves Him from the soul (Col. 3:23). It is not Christian thought then which speaks of the soul in derogatory terms. It is Eastern mysticism and philosophy which would put the soul in opposition to the spirit. The soul may be troubled, but then so may the spirit (John 12:27, 13: 21). Jesus gives up his life (soul), but also gives up his spirit (Matt. 20:28, 27:50). One loves God with his soul, and so on. Does he love with his spirit? The answer must be that soul and spirit are one.

Only three times in the NT is the adjective 'soulish' used, i.e. James 3:15, Jude 19 and I Corinthians 2:14. It does not mean this man is soulish as against spiritual, but rather he is the natural man, not wanting the things of the Spirit of God. If the members of the church are of 'one heart and one soul', then the soul must relate to such spirituality. In I Timothy 1:5 we read of a pure heart, and in I Peter 1: 22 of a pure soul. If we examine such passages as Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 10:21, John 11:33, 13:21, Acts 17:16 and 19:21 we see that soul and spirit are really the one. They are used for much the same thing. If we worship God in the soul (Col. 3:23) then we also worship Him in the spirit (Phil. 3: 3). The parallelism of II Corinthians 7:1 shows that *soul* and spirit (probably used synonymously) have both to be cleansed. It was the Greek dualist, or the gnostic who saw the body as evil, but the spirit as pure, of itself.

We could examine many other aspects of this vast subject. What lies at the depth of our problem is that man wishes to analyse man, even Biblically, obtain news of his categories, and then try to handle the matter of body, soul, and spirit. However, man is a single entity, a person in himself. It is best to see him as a whole person, and Hebraic terms as 'body, soul and spirit' as simply meaning 'the whole person'. At one time soul may mean man, and at another time *spirit* may mean *man*. The term *flesh* may likewise

stand for humanity. And so on.

What we must be careful to do is to preserve the true doctrine of creation. God created man as a whole person, and there is no part of him that is higher or lower than another. In Romans 12:1-2 redeemed man gives up his body and this is accounted as ‘a pure sacrifice’. We must not think of the soul as better than the spirit. Indeed they are the one, and then one with the body, and so you have a true human person. If we teach men that their bodies are evil, or that their soul is of a lesser quality than their spirit, then we attack God’s creation. A man in all his being may be evil, or in all his being may be good. He is a total person, either for good or evil. When Genesis 2: 7 speaks of man becoming a ‘living soul’, it must mean a ‘living being’.

When, then, it comes to counselling a person we must not seek to dissect him in our thought, or teach him that one part of his being is opposed to or is in conflict with the other. He is either opposed to God (with his whole being) or loves Him (with his whole being). It is best then to leave man be, and not psychologise him. The Scripture tells us enough about him so that we may help him. For the rest let us leave (so-called) Biblical psychological analysis alone.

Other Terms

If we will let man be an entity and refuse to abstract from the Scriptures that which we call a Biblical psychology, so also we ought to be careful of terms we use theologically. Some translators sincerely translate the term ‘flesh’ as man’s ‘lower nature’, inferring that man has a higher nature and a lower nature. In fact, from a creational point of view man does not have a lower nature any more than he has a higher nature. The word *flesh* is used variously. In I Peter 1:24 it is stated, ‘All flesh is as grass...’, meaning ‘all humanity is frail’. In John 3:6 it is said, ‘That which is

born of the flesh is flesh'. This has the idea of ordinary natural birth which lacks spiritual connotation. In Galatians 4:23 the birth of Ishmael is by natural means, i.e. through Abraham and the young Hagar, but Isaac's birth is by a miracle, and is said to be of the Spirit. The term flesh becomes very strong, denoting evil opposition to God, and especially to the Spirit in such chapters as Romans 8 and Galatians 5. The flesh, then can mean humanity, man born in his natural, though sinful, state, or it can mean that man is basically weak of himself. It can mean that evil principle of opposition to God which influences man to do evil. It must not, however, be thought of as a lower nature, which exists in contradistinction to some 'higher nature' which man possesses. Man is an entity, and whilst it may well be true that various forces are contending for him (i.e. *flesh* and the Spirit), yet he himself is a person, and regeneration aids him to be this true entity, even though he may have to contend with sin dwelling in him (Rom. 7: 13-25). Paul denies that *indwelling sin is part of himself*. Verses 16-20 should be closely examined to verify this statement.

Again there has been some confusion of the terms 'outward man' and 'inward man' (see II Cor. 4:16). The outward man is simply man's physical being, or the physical elements of man's being, i.e. his body. The inward man corresponds to the heart, soul, spirit, and other similar terms intended to depict man in his true personality. Man is not a dualistic being. Body and spirit, or body and heart are all of the one piece. Whilst it is true that the flesh, i.e. the body, is doomed to death because of man's sin (Rom. 8:10, I Cor. 15:42-56), yet it is also true that man is not intended to be disembodied. The body is just as significant in ultimate man as it is in man on the earth. On death man goes to be with Christ, and at the point of resurrection in time he will be clothed upon with a body of glory, i.e. a glorious body, so that body is an essential part of him (cf. Phil. 3:21, I Cor. 15:51ff).

Some see *outward man* as being in opposition to *inward man*, i.e. as though the latter were spiritual and the former merely material, and therefore inferior.

What we have to realise is that the redeemed person is a new creation, and his body, because created by God is not at all evil. However, the body can become, and in fact does become the testing point which evil seeks to use, for the body eats, drinks, feels, sees, and so on. Yet having said this, it is the heart or mind of man which is attacked by evil, for the body of itself is not an entity set over and against the heart of man, betraying his so-called 'higher nature', Man is beset by the whole complex of evil such as sin, the flesh-principle, Satan, principalities and powers, and the God-opposed world-system. Nevertheless the man who stands and walks in the Spirit, using the armour and weapons which are called 'spiritual', can not only hold the enemy at bay, but even pull down strongholds of evil (cf. II Cor. 10:3, Ephes. 6:10f, I John 2:13, James 4:7).

This being so we ought to be slow to categorise and classify the parts of which the entity of man is said to be composed. We ought to understand the Biblical model of man as it is found within the Scriptures and not attempt to syncretise those elements with extra-Biblical elements We have conjured up, and which we use as our accepted presuppositions.

Notes

¹ Epistemology: theory of the method or grounds of knowledge.

² It must be noted that a school of anti-psychiatry has been in existence for many years. Christian counsellors such as Jay Adam have little time for formal psychology or psychiatry. M. & D. Bogban's book, *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way* (Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis 1979) analyses the weaknesses of certain schools of psycho-therapy.

³ By theology we do not necessarily mean theology in the formal systematical sense. We mean Christian doctrine. as a whole and not only one school of theology. Nevertheless, systematic theology as such will prove most beneficial to those prepared to study and acquire it.

⁴ This treatment of Biblical knowledge by nature of the case is extremely limited. Readers should have recourse to books which enlarge the themes we examine. The study of God, man, and creation will well repay the time and energy given in research.

⁵ Man is son. This is not accepted by all theologians. Luke 3:38, Acts 17:28f, and Genesis 1:26ff imply God originating man as His offspring. Full sonship is planned 'through Christ Jesus' (Ephes. 1:5), that is redemptional sonship. Nevertheless many theologians believe man is, in creation, not merely potentially a son, but was created as a son (see Luke 3:38, Acts 17:28, etc. Note the statement, God is Father of all men, but not all men are the children of God. '), which sonship he has abdicated, hence his is not truly and functionally a son until he is redeemed and comes to the Father by the Son (John 1:11-13, 14:6, Gal. 4:4-6). If he is not a son by creational origination then redemptional sonship will have to add something to his functional (creational) structure, i.e. in order to accommodate that which is not inherently functional. Thus Ephesians 1:5 would be seen to posit only a *potential* in created man and not an *actual*. The *actual* would have to await redemption.

⁶ Note that God's Fatherhood, although referred to in the O .T. rather sparsely, is fully revealed in the NT by the coming and ministry of the Son. It is difficult to know how else it could have been revealed. The lateness (in time) of this full revelation, does not mean God became Father in the N .T. period (sic!). He must have created as Father. That He created by a Son (Heb. 1:1-3) means the creation has Fatherly and Filial elements conditioning it. The Spirit of Life (the

Holy Spirit) as the creative Spirit is also the Spirit of the Father and the Son, i.e. he is 'the Go-Between God' (John Taylor, SCM, 1972).

7 The question of basic creational authority and the rebellion of man is a complicated one. For its treatment see LFS. 5 (NCPI, 1976) entitled *The Nature of Authority and Obedience*.

8 Sadly enough the little word *also* (Gk. *kai*) is missing from some modern translations. It is, however, in the text. It is also present in Matthew 8: 9.

9 We speak of the order within the family of father, mother, elder brother (etc.), the elders within the community, the ruling authorities such as kings, governors, legislators, magistrates, and so on.

10 See Chapter 17 (i) 'Problems in Regard to Bad or Deficient Authority'.

11 By 'dependencies' we mean those forms of idolatry and attachment which are substitutes for God. These give them pleasure of a sort, being a means of temporary relief from the constant guilt and anguish man knows.

12 Without doubt the elements of masculinity and femininity derive from God. God is Creator and thus creative. At his highest man is *procreative*. If then we ascribe masculinity and femininity to God this must be without sexual connotation as such. When God is called 'He' there is no sexual inference. Sexuality is a temporary gift and exercise given to man.

13 In seeking to understand elements which are affective and effective upon the child in pre-natal, and post-natal states, one needs to research the whole idea of covenant, and of the concept of community. Psalm 58:3 (cf. Psa. 51:5, Isa. 48:8) says, 'The wicked go astray from the womb'. Genesis 25:19-26 speaks of conflict, *within the womb*, of Jacob and Esau. Galatians 4:21-31 speaks of Isaac being born of the Spirit and Esau being born of the flesh. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb, and indeed leapt within the womb when his mother, Elizabeth, met Mary in whose womb was Jesus. How can all this be? What causes attitudes which develop, it would seem, *from conception*?

14 Reflect, for example, on the principle of dualism where some things are good and some not. See how fatalism reflects a depressed view of God and the universe. Esoteric religious rationalisations are man's attempts to explain the universe to himself along certain lines other than those which are Biblical revelations. These rationalisations arising from man in his dilemma then add to his problems, for they influence the way in which he proceeds, further, to live.

15 This subject is vast in its dimensions, and is demanding considerable research from many modern theologians. The counsellor would do well to study the theme in depth. See the writer's books, *Father.' My Father.'*; *True God or New Guru?*; and *Where I Love I Live*, amongst many works available.

16 An exposition of this is given in detail in the *Anchor Bible*, ad.loc. (Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, Doubleday & Co. Inc., N.Y. 1974).

17 This does not at first seem apparent. A thorough study of John's first epistle reveals (i) Redeemed man's fellowship is with the Father and the Son. (ii) The children of God love as brothers. (iii) He who does not love the brother does not love the Father. Not to love the Father's son is not to love the Father. (iv) True love of the Father is in doing His will and commands. In John 15:18-25 Jesus points out that to love the Son is to love the Father. To hate the Son is to hate the Father. Throughout John's Gospel Jesus is saying that rejection of God is rejection of true authority. He demonstrates that true subjection to the Father is subjection to *the* true authority.

18 See *Knowing God* (J.I. Packer, Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), pp.181-208

19 It has been pointed out by many that an alcoholic (for example) is one who has not submitted to authority. He almost always had problems in parental relationships, i.e. with his parents and his children. He desires to exercise authority but cannot sustain such. When he submits for treatment his very submission is in fact a large part of his treatment or healing itself. He can then attain to the exercise of authority.

20 The term 'damaged emotionally' may fit certain cases, no doubt. However, those who 'hug their hurts' may even be said to have self-inflicted wounds since 'love endures all things'.

21 For the whole matter of eldership see LFS. No. 22 *Eldership in the Scriptures* (G. Bingham, New Creation Publications, 1978).

22 See, for example, Deane Meatheringham's book, *Naked, Yes, But Not Ashamed* (NCPI, Blackwood, S.A. 1978). Here it is shown that shame is mentioned in Scripture even more than is guilt.

23 For a wider treatment of this subject see the writer's book, *Man, Woman, and Sexuality* (NCPI, Blackwood, SA 1980).