

An Introduction to an Unusual Book

- **Could a system of counselling—a new system—be devised purely from the Bible?**
- **Would such a method be wholly practical?**
- **Could it take into account modern scientific disciplines contained within present anthropology?**

The author of this book believes so. He began a counselling career in a Japanese prison camp where he observed his fellow-men under unusual conditions. Having recourse both to the Bible and non-biblical counselling literature, a scheme of counselling had its origin, and its foundations well laid.

This was later implemented by theological training, parish pastoral ministry, and vast opportunities for counselling in a ten-year missionary period, in decades of being a Principal in Bible Colleges, visiting missionary campuses, and in constant personal pastoral ministry in teaching work.

It is true that nothing quite like the materials contained in this book have been included in other biblical counselling systems, but Geoffrey Bingham himself has gained much from many others of his own ilk.

The structure of the book makes it easy to absorb the principles he enunciates, and a reading of the whole material should be of great value to all who read it. Professionals will gain new and valuable insights, and all will be encouraged to read the Scriptures with a new and deeper understanding. It will also be most helpful to those who find they have personal relational problems.

New Creation Publications Inc.

The WISDOM of GOD

and the

HEALING of MAN

by Geoffrey C. Bingham

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?

Beyond the Cross

Christ's Cross Over Man's Abyss

Christ's People in Today's World

Cleansing of the Memories

*The Conscience—Conquering or **Conquered?***

Discovering Your Identity

The Everlasting Presence

For Pastors and the People

God's Glory, Man's Sexuality

Great and Glorious Grace

I, the Man!

Man, Woman, and Sexuality

Oh, Father! Our Father!

Practical Christian Counselling

Shepherds of the Flock

The Splendour of Holiness

*The Things We Firmly **Believe***

Truth—the Golden Girdle

Where I Love I Live

The
WISDOM
of **GOD**
and the
HEALING
of **MAN**

© by Geoffrey C. Bingham

Published by

NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC.
P.O. Box 403, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051
1990

First published 1990 by
NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC., AUSTRALIA

Reprinted, 1998

© Geoffrey Bingham, 1990

National Library of Australia cataloguing-in-publication data

Bingham, Geoffrey C.
The wisdom of God and the healing of man.

ISBN 0 86408 135 9

1. Christianity—Psychology. 2. Spiritual direction—Psychological aspects. 3. Counseling—Religious aspects. I. Title.
253.53

This book is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by *any* process without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

Cover design by Glenys Murdoch

Wholly set and printed at
NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC.
Coromandel East, South Australia

Summary of Contents

FOREWORD: THE LEGITIMACY OF BIBLICAL COUNSELLING	xv
The Compilation of This Book	xv
The Important Matter of Counselling	xvi
The Use of This Book by Counsellors and Other Readers	xxiv
Conclusion: The Gospel and the 'Wonderful Counsellor'	xxv

PART ONE:

A Biblical Way of Counselling

AN INTRODUCTION TO 'A BIBLICAL WAY OF COUNSELLING': A THEOLOGY OF COUNSELLING	5
Our Counselling Must Be Biblical	5
Anti-Statements Regarding Non-Biblical Counselling	7
A Theology of Counselling	7
1: WHAT, THEN, IS BIBLICAL COUNSELLING?	10
Introduction: The Meaning of Counselling	10
Counselling in the New Testament	12
The Matter of Wisdom in the Practice of Counselling	15
2: COMING TO KNOW MAN, THROUGH GOD	20
Needing to Know the Nature of Man	20
The Doctrine of Man as Found in the Scriptures	21
Conclusion to 'Coming to Know Man, through God'	26
3: HOW, THEN, SHALL WE RELATE?	28
The Matter of Human Relationships	28

VIII	CONTENTS	
	The Fall of Man and the Loss of True Relationships	28
	Man's Fear of God and Fear of Man	30
	How, Then, Shall We Relate?	32
4:	AUTHORITY, AND THE LIFE OF LOVE	34
	The Principle of Authority in Scripture	34
	Man's Loss of Obedience to True Authority	36
	Authority and Human Relationships	38
	The Nature and Dynamic of Love to Destroy Rebellion	39
	Authority and the Life of Love	39
5:	RELEASE AND FULFILMENT IN HIS FATHERHOOD	42
	Man and the Fatherhood of God	42
	The Revelation to Mankind of God as Father	43
	Coming to the Father through the Son	45
	The Impact of Becoming Sons of the Father	45
6:	LOSING ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY—I: THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF ANGER	48
	The Fact of Human Anger	48
	The Danger and Evil of Anger	49
	Ridding Ourselves of Anger	52
7:	LOSING ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY—II: THE WAY OF TRANQUILLITY	55
	Liberated from Anger	55
	God's People the Unangry Ones	57
	Tranquillity: The New Life of Peace	58
8:	HOW, THEN, SHALL WE HEAL?	60
	Human Sickness Needs Healing	60
	God Is the One Who Wounds and Who Heals	62
	How, Then, Shall We Heal?	64

PART TWO

Counselling For Our Comfort

	INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAYS ON 'COUNSELLING FOR OUR COMFORT'	77
	A General Reminder Regarding Counselling	77
	The Matter of Comfort	78

	CONTENTS	IX
	There Has Always Been Counselling	79
	The Heart of Counselling Is Christ	81
1:	THE SOURCE AND SENSE OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS	84
	All Life Is Relational	84
	The Source and Basis of Human Relationships	85
	All Relationships Must Be Other-Person Centred	85
	All Relationships Must Be Other-Person Concentred	86
	All Human Relationships Derive from God	87
	True Family Derives from God	88
	The Present Problem Facing the Entire Human Race	89
	Conclusion: The Solution to the Problem Dividing the Human Race	90
2:	THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN BIRTH	92
	The Matter of Human Birth	92
	The Implications of Being Born in Sin	93
	Human Rationalizations Concerning the Entail of Sin	94
	The Principle of Accountability: No One Is Wholly Victimized	95
	The Biblical Portrayal of the Prenatal State of Humanity	96
	The Practical Dynamics of Human Birth	103
3:	CONSCIENCE IN CRISIS AND COMFORT	104
	A Man of Conscience	104
	The Matter of Conscience	104
	The Power of the Conscience	105
	Different Forms or States of Conscience	107
	The Value of Knowing States of Conscience	110
	How to Deal With Conscience	110
	A Summary of Conscience	112
4:	GOODBYE TO ANGER!	116
	The Fact of Anger	116
	Causes of Anger	116
	A Warning Against Anger	117
	The Way in which Anger Works	118
	Dealing With Anger	119
5:	WISDOM FOR LIFE	123
	What Is Wisdom?	123
	Wisdom Originates With God	123
	The Lack of Wisdom in the Fallen Human Race	124

The Counsellor's Need for Wisdom	125
The Counsellor and the Wisdom of God	126
Return to God's Wisdom	127
Two World Views and Two Wisdoms and Their Tension	128
The Getting of True Wisdom	129
The Matter of Mysteries	129
The Use of Truth in the Getting of Wisdom	130
The Application of Biblical Wisdom in Counselling	131
6: THE CLEANSING OF THE MEMORIES	132
Trapped Within Our Memories	132
The Value of Memory—Good or Bad	133
The Past, the Present and the Future	134
The Memories to be Cleansed	134
The Cleansing of the Memories	136
The Way of the Cleansing of Sins	137
Living With Cleansed Memories	138
Demands Relating to the Cleansing of the Memories	141
7: THE COMFORT OF CONTINUING COVENANT	143
The Comforting Principle of Covenant	143
Living in the Comfort of the New Covenant	145
Family in Covenant	146
Continuing Covenant and the Future	150
Conclusion to 'The Comfort of Continuing Covenant'	151
8: THE DYNAMICS OF SEXUALITY—FOR SINNERS ONLY	153
Introduction: A Title in Humour	153
The Dynamics of Sinful Sexuality	153
What We Mean by Sexuality	155
Man as a Male-Female Entity Reflects the Unity of God	157
The Biblical View of Man and Woman	159
All Family Relationships Derive from God the Father	161
The Misery of Asymmetric Sexuality	161
The Shortest Path to True Sexuality	163
9: THE DYNAMICS OF SEXUALITY—FOR SAINTS ONLY	164
Sexuality for Saints	164
Learning Relationality	164
The True Union of Man and Woman as Bridegroom and Bride	165
The Problems Confronting the Counsellor	167

The Principle and Practice of True Sexuality	168
10: HELPING THE TROUBLED AND DISCOMFORTED	172
Who Are the Troubled and Discomforted?	172
Troubled Man—in Nature and Grace	173
Man in Nature—Troubled and Discomforted	174
Comfort, Deliverance and Healing for Man 'In Nature'	176
The True Benefits of God's Reconciling Work in Christ, through the Spirit	178
Troubled Man in Grace	179
The Crowd of Troubles	181
Helping the Troubled and Discomforted	183
11: THE DYNAMICS OF DELIVERANCE	184
The Meaning of Deliverance	184
Man Who Needs to be Delivered	185
Man in Bondage	186
The Cruel Lords and the Deliverer	188
The Application of Liberation	190
What Happens in Liberation	190
Deliverance from Demonic Powers	191
12: THE LIBERATION OF GRACE	195
Grace Is for All Things	195
Liberation of the Person With or Without Grace	196
The Application of Liberating Grace	199
13: LIVING HOPE—LIFE FOR THE LISTLESS	201
The Nature of 'Living Hope'	201
Without Hope We Are Hopeless	202
The Time Factor and Hope	203
Vocation and Hope	203
Being Heavenly Minded and Earthly Minded	204
Counselling the Troubled Person in Regard to Vocation and Calling	207
14: THE SONS OF GOD ARE SERVANTS OF ALL	208
Full Vocation Is Total Serving: Total Serving Is Full Vocation	208
God's Glory Lies in His Serving of the Creation	209
The Son the Example and Paradigm of True Serving	210
All Authority Is for Love and for Serving	210

Loss of Listlessness: Gain of Dynamic Living	211
15: RICHNESS OF RELATIONSHIPS	213
The God Who Is One in All	213
Man Who Is One in All His Being	214
The Loss of Humanhood	214
God in Revelation: The Grace and Love of Covenant	215
Finding God as Father: God as Father Finding His Children	215
The Value of Coming Into the Family Under the Father	216
The Value of Counselling in Regard to God's Fatherhood	217
16: THE PROFITABLE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE	218
The God and the 'god' of Pleasure	218
The God of Joy: Man's Original Pleasure	218
The Loss of Pleasure	219
The Human Drive for Pleasure	220
The Attainment of True Pleasure	221
Biblical Statements on the Pleasures God Gives to Man	222
Counselling the Pleasureless for True Delight	223
The Therapy of the Joyous Community	224
17: SAINTS AND SINNERS IN STRESS AND SEVERITY	225
Something About Stress and Severity	225
The Stress We Feel from the Experiences We Have	226
Knowing and Facing Stress	228
The Matter of God's Severity	230
Conclusion to Our Study	230
18: WORSHIP, AND THE RECOVERY OF WHOLENESS	232
Man the Worshipping Creature	232
Man the Self-Worshipper	233
The Counsellor and Worship	234
The Matter of Rationalization	235
The New Views and the New Creation	236
Faith and the Newness and Wholeness	237

THE KINDNESS OF COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION TO ESSAYS ON THE 'KINDNESS OF COUNSELLING'	241
True Counselling Is Always a Matter of Love, and Love Only	241

The Matter of Kindness in a World Which Is Broken and Confused	242
Conclusion	245
1: KINDNESS FOR BIRDS WITH BROKEN WINGS	246
Birds With Broken Wings	246
Getting to the Causes of Such Maimed States of Being	247
Some Elements to Take into Consideration When Using Kindness Towards 'Birds With Broken Wings'	252
2: THE KINDNESS THAT HEALS US ALL—ALL-IN-ALL	255
Human States of Illness	255
Some Causes of Sickness	256
What and How Christ Healed	260
The Kindness of Healing	260
The Ultimate Wholeness	263

The Wonderful Counsellor and His Under-Shepherds

THE WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR AND HIS UNDER-SHEPHERDS	267
'Wonderful Counsellor'	267
The Wonderful Counsellor and His Under-Shepherds	271
Christian Counsellors for Today	272

Appendixes

APPENDIX ONE: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONVERSION	277
Introduction to the Essay	277
Notes on the Theology of Conversion	277
Notes on the Psycho-Theology of Conversion	278
Some Resource Materials for the Theology of Conversion	283
APPENDIX TWO: THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY	285
Human Responsibility in General	285
Who Are Accountable?	286
The Doctrine of Victimization	287
The Practice of Accountability in Human Living	289
The Principle of Pastoral Responsibility	290
APPENDIX THREE: THE LOSS AND RECOVERY OF TRUTH	293
The Nature of the Truth	293

The Recovery of Truth	294
Man Is a Relational Creature and Person, Seeking Perfection	295
The Truth Dynamically Liberates and Renews	297
APPENDIX FOUR: THE PERSON AND PURPOSELESSNESS	298
The God of Purpose	298
‘Everything for Its Own Purpose’	299
Man Must Have Purpose	300
Man Without Purpose	301
The Giving of Purpose and Hope	301
APPENDIX FIVE: THE DYNAMICS OF JUSTIFICATION FOR TRUE COUNSELLING	303
The Place of Justification in Scripture	303
The Theological Meaning of Justification	304
The Practical Implications and Outworkings of Justification	305
Living Freely in and by Justification	307
POSTSCRIPT: THE HEALING OF INDWELLING	308
A Matter of Divine and Human Relationships	309
Elements of Application in the Ministry of Indwelling of God and Man	314
BIBLIOGRAPHY	316

Foreword

The Legitimacy of Biblical Counselling

THE COMPILATION OF THIS BOOK To date I have written a number of books on biblical counselling, as distinct from what might be called ‘secular counselling’, although that is not a good term. Some of the books were written to cover counselling courses which were given at the New Creation Teaching Centre. In this present volume we are trying to put together what we consider to be the most useful material from all the books. That really makes for a composite volume, and therefore there must be a certain weakness in such a compilation. We had to opt for a particular format—the one set out in the index—that is, Part One of the book is composed of what was *A Biblical Way of Counselling*, and Part Two is essays. The first sets out to give something of a structure to counselling—firstly the theology of Christian counselling, and secondly the way of applying it. The second is a series of essays, some of them amplifying the materials dealt with in Part One, but easier to read because they are not fortified with numerous biblical references. Because some of the essays repeat material from Part One, and even some of the subject matter of other essays, it might seem to some to be

excessively repetitive. I plead your tolerance, but point out that since ‘repetition is the soul of teaching’, what has happened fortuitously might, in fact, turn out to be a blessing.

**THE IMPORTANT
MATTER OF
COUNSELLING**

This book seeks to set out the matter of ‘biblical counselling’. The term ‘Christian counselling’ is also in vogue, but there can be a difference between the two. ‘Biblical counselling’ calls for a demonstration that the principles adduced and set forth can be substantiated by the Scriptures, and that they are indeed the very essence of them. ‘Christian counselling’ is a cover title for a vast variety of counselling methodologies, many of them varying radically in their theology and practice. Our first chapter takes up this matter, so I will not discuss it here.

What I would like to raise here are the terms ‘biblical’ and ‘secular’ which I have already used. Both terms can be misleading. The word ‘biblical’ might seem to infer that all that is not biblical is inferior to it, whilst ‘secular’ may seem to infer that extra-biblical counselling is ‘unspiritual’ and even less effectual. Both terms tend to be sectarian. Certainly they ought not to be opposed one to the other.

* * *

So much of Christianity has been ‘religionized’—to coin a word. The normal term used is ‘sacralized’. Whilst, roughly speaking, Christianity can be regarded as a religion—such as are Judaism, Islam and Hinduism—Christianity is really a way of life, the way of faith in God as He has been revealed by Jesus Christ. Religious elements are accretions which come to any faith. For example, Buddhism is essentially atheistic, yet its followers have devised gods and idols from Buddha. Likewise the Christian faith has been so sacralized that it has been taken into the category of religion. The

Scriptures insist the whole world belongs to God, that human beings are commissioned to live in it, use it, look after it, and that all forms of knowledge—insofar as they are authentic—are part and parcel of equipment for all humans. On this basis science—i.e. the substance of what it deals with—cannot be said to be exclusively for the scientifically minded ones. A Christian ought to be as scientifically minded as any non-Christian person. Present forms of Christianity ought to be de-sacralized, i.e. secularized, so that the religious accretions which have been added over the years are removed, and the original faith is again clear, devoid of the trappings which put it into the religious category.

This is not to say it should be in the category of secularism. That is another category altogether. In secularism God does not exist. Nothing that is supernatural is given credence or place. By de-sacralizing Christianity we do not mean bringing it to a secularistic and rationalistic basis. Christianity itself speaks of ‘mysteries’, i.e. ‘the mystery of his will’, ‘the mystery of Christ’, ‘the mystery of the gospel’, ‘the mystery of lawlessness’, ‘the mystery of godliness’ and ‘the mystery of the faith’, so that by ‘de-sacralizing’ we mean ridding the Gospel of unrealistic religious trappings, and allowing it to be that movement of God which relates fully to this world, as also fully to existence which lies beyond death, and which in this world relates to the unseen celestial world. Thus all scientific research and discovery is grist to the Christian mill. It is finding out what this world is, what its flora and fauna mean, and what man is as the highest creature within it.

We are then led to this important conclusion: *no Christian can afford to decry or belittle the research and discoveries of science, and practical outworkings of such discoveries as they are related to formulated disciplines and methodologies.* At the same time, Christians are required to test out all areas of knowledge. For example, if man is examined scientifically without taking into account his being as a spirit, then that

kind of research will always be deficient, and its conclusions will be lacking full reality. Since the Bible is not a scientific textbook, a Christian who ignores the fruits of scientific research will be denying himself material which is useful and necessary for his understanding and work. At all times Christians must apply their biblical criteria when using the findings which are called 'scientific'. They must take into account rationalistic, secularistic, agnostic and atheistic views of investigating scientists, and study the interpretations they consequently place upon their findings. Whilst scientists do not have to be Christians in order to be scientists, Christians need to take account of the secularist view of some research and its interpretation, especially where the matter of human personality is concerned. Keeping in mind that Christianity is primarily revelatory, and so receives knowledge and insight from God which could not ordinarily be arrived at by reasoning investigation, it is clear that there will sometimes be differences of a kind that will puzzle secular minds.

In addition—especially in regard to the ministry of counselling—there is the added complication of various schools of thinking in regard to psychology. What do we do about such diversity? How do we evaluate such schools, and how do we utilize their fruits of research? The subject widens considerably at this point. Christians who are given tertiary training will themselves differ according to the particular school of counselling in which they are trained. When we add to this the fact that most training today is basically humanistic, then we see that it is going to be difficult for Christians to separate their professional training from their theological understanding. It is also going to be difficult to integrate institutionally learned psychology with theological understanding. Some attempts have been made to do this. Books such as Gary Collins's *The Rebuilding of Psychology*, J. D. Carter & Bruce Narramore's *The Integration of Psychology and Theology*, Lawrence Crabb's *Effective Biblical Counselling*, R. L. Koeteskey's *Psychology from a Christian Perspective*

are—amongst others—commendable endeavours to bring about the integration of psychology and theology. In the realm of psychiatry, there is the monumental work of Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, which seeks to understand and treat people in abnormal mental states by the principles of Christian theology linked with clinical psychiatric treatments. Well known are Jay Adams's series of books on Christian Counselling. Adams has little time for formal psychology and psychotherapy, deriving his system almost entirely from the Scriptures. Martin and Deidre Bobgan (both psychologists) set out to destroy many of the myths concerning psychotherapy in their writings (cf. *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*), and receive commendation from Thomas Szasz, whose book—*The Myth of Psychotherapy*—has become a classic. Paul Vitz also tackles the validity of psychology (cf. his *The Cult of Self-worship*), as does the psychiatrist William Kirk Kilpatrick in his *Psychological Seduction*. Reading these several works cautions us against an unthinking acceptance of formal psychology.

When it comes to what we might call 'Christian counselling', there is, again, a large variety of therapies which present themselves. Counsellors have developed their own styles of therapy based on their understanding of Scripture, some of these being 'love', 'forgiveness', and 'truth' therapeutic systems. In fact not all are verifiable by Scripture, and are usually fairly pragmatic, so that whilst some counsellors seem to get immediate results, the question of the permanency of those results is to be asked.

What the counsellor has to keep in mind is that this world belongs to God. Those who are sons of God are expected to be conquerors. That is, they are expected to encompass the scientific findings and insights, and to utilize them where they are valid and valuable, and not to be too timid to take hold of them. At the same time they must subject those findings to the truth of Scripture. In addition, each person must face the fact that when dealing in men's

hearts and emotions, there is the great temptation to power, to imagine oneself as God, and then seek to fasten on patients and use them emotionally. The counsellor must be well above this kind of thing.

It is difficult to find the idea of counselling in the Bible as we understand it today. Whilst our first chapter does discuss some elements of counselling in the Bible—especially that of wisdom—on the whole a *practice* of counselling, as we know counselling, is virtually absent. Of course people have always counselled one another, i.e. given helpful advice and comfort out of their wisdom to those who are needy. Counselling is not quite the same today. It is an important profession, and indeed a large one. It is taken for granted that people facing crises in modern living need to have access to professional counsellors. With sudden accidents, bushfires, earthquakes, floods and other physical catastrophes, it is assumed counselling will be needed. Divorce, too, requires helpful advice and comfort, as do bereavements and the more traumatic events of rape and crime. Counselling has come to stay, and governments make provisions for it in their societies. We know that in past eras members of society faced similar devastating experiences without professional counselling aid, but that is not thought to be a sufficient reason for abandoning professional counselling.

In addition to counselling there are the areas where practising psychologists, psychotherapists and psychiatrists seek to bring healing to disturbed people—especially the mentally disturbed. Many of these therapists believe that conditions such as neuroses and psychoses are definable human sicknesses, as real and as important as organic illnesses. Most of them are aware of the psychosomatic nature of much illness, and are not at all simplistic in their approach to mental and physical illnesses. They diagnose and prescribe for mental illnesses in the way a doctor would prescribe for bodily sicknesses. There are therapists and psychiatrists, of

course, who do not agree that there are mental illnesses which can be defined as such, prescribed for, and treated as disease. They even posit an anti-psychiatric approach to mental disturbances. They see the troubled mind as arising from certain causes, and believe that special counselling will help the troubled person, liberating him from the condition under which he labours. They would define mental stress, not so much as sickness or disease which comes upon a person, as a state of mind and attitude which can be treated helpfully—given the willingness of the patient.

**The Matter of Aetiology
and the Constituent
Nature of Man**

It seems to me that the key to the problem is the *aetiology* (the science of causation) of any state of being in which a person is found. All sicknesses are understood by their aetiology where this can be known. It should be the same for mentally disturbed persons, whether their condition should be described as an illness or not. This brings us into the wider area of the nature of man. If we all agree to see man as a person, as a creature, and describe him as being at a stage higher than the animals because he has reasoning ability, then our enquiries will start at that level. If, however, we describe him as a psychological creature, i.e. having or being a psyche, and if we describe his psyche as mind rather than him having a mind and a soul, then that will be the basis on which we investigate man—as we say, scientifically. If we think of him having a mind—reasoning ability—*and* a soul—that faculty which senses beyond oneself and which may have connotation beyond this world of three dimensions and the five senses—then we will have to investigate man on this plane of ‘body-mind-soul’. If, further, we think of man being a spirit, or having a spirit, so that he is a body-mind-soul-spirit complex—and at the same time an integrated unity—then our enquiries will have to be further extended, and we will have to take man into account as a self-conscious, others-conscious being, and even one who

is conscious of what transcends him, i.e. he has a supra-consciousness, being conscious, perhaps, of God and of supra-human creatures and dimensions. What I am trying to say is that man may be more than he appears to be, and if he is a spiritual creature then all scientific investigation of him will have to take this into account, otherwise it will fall short of seeing what man is, and in fact its investigations will prove misleading. All investigation into the nature, functions, and operations of humanity are valuable, even if truncated in these senses that I suggest they are—yet those investigations will not prove valuable enough.

**Man a Moral Creature and Conscience
a Moral Faculty** The drives which impel a human being into certain actions and which bring him into certain states of mind have long intrigued those who research the nature and behaviour of man. It is one thing to develop a phenomenology of human behaviour, but it is another thing to get to the causes of such behaviour. If man is only psychical, and does not have deep moral being and spiritual drives, then man can be tabulated reasonably on that psychical level. If, however, he is a spirit and has deep moral sensitivity and drives, then we must understand those elements in order to comprehend his behaviour. For example, it has long been thought that certain patterns of wrong behaviour do not essentially arise from man. It has been thought that other forces come to inhabit certain human beings, these forces being called ‘demons’ or ‘spirits’. The idea here is that persons who exhibit abnormal behaviour are not being ‘human’ at this point, and must be infested with non-human spirits. The Christian Scriptures certainly subscribe to this idea, but with strong limitations. They attribute all immoral behaviour to the human being himself, and not to demons. Man must take responsibility for all the evil he commits. Demons or evil spirits are shown as non-human spirits which seek to inhabit human bodies and which bring torment and suffering to

their host-beings. Under that oppression and persecution human beings will manifest terrible symptoms, being driven by the parasite spirit.

In the moral realm, however, human beings suffer deeply without necessarily having any direct contact with demons. In fact some of the moral and mental seizures which grip man are even more terrible than demonic seizures. Many professional counsellors are almost completely ignorant of the suffering, dislocation of the mind, and disturbance of the human psyche which come from the moral conflicts which result from the interaction of the conscience, mind and will, especially in regard to the law which we call ‘moral’. Many who seek to research man shrug off these elements as being ‘religious’ or outside the realm of what they see to be scientific enquiry. In this, I believe, they are being most unscientific. That is why in this book I recommend an intensive study of theology. Only when we discover the complex nature of man trying to live apart from God—his natural, creational Source and Habitat—will we understand the healing that man requires, and which he cannot find apart from God.

Anyone would be a fool who did not acknowledge the immense healing that the vast medical industry—which has almost central place in our present society—accomplishes. Even so, no one should imagine that physical healing is all that human beings require. Both doctor and patient have some knowledge of the complexity of human living and human dying. To be healed physically is a good thing. To be made whole as a person may be another thing altogether. Doctors’ consulting rooms are generally counselling places. Today some patients have faith that doctors have an understanding of their problems. Even more so, they seek help from counsellors on the level of psychological and psychiatric competency. Psychiatrists—and other doctors—effect healing of mental illnesses, yet they too know that so often the patient is not healed of his deeper problems.

All of us, then, have to have humility in regard to our knowledge, gifts and abilities. To deal in the precious stuff of

humanity is a high calling and a responsible one. In times past, parishioners looked to their priest or parson ('the person') to help them to wholeness of being and living. Today help is sought outside the study of the clergyman. Clergy and other Christian workers should be those who draw from the source of true knowledge—the Scriptures, God's own uttered word—so that they can obtain wisdom for counselling. There should be no more conflict between Christian counsellors and professional counsellors than there is between clergy and doctors, for each is doing his own task. Even so, both need to learn from one another. We cannot afford that incompetency which springs from a deficiency in knowledge and wisdom. Altogether too much is at stake.

**THE USE OF THIS BOOK
BY COUNSELLORS AND
OTHER READERS**

What hope do I have for a book like this, which from one point of view is a bit of a hotch-potch seeing it is a composite volume put together from a number of small volumes? My hope is that by reading through its various sections something will emerge which is useful. Because the Scriptures have their own internal unity and integrity, and since they are about God, man and creation, we will expect to draw great truth from them—the sort of thing that we cannot draw from what is human thinking itself. This nature of the Scriptures to be an entity in themselves, to have a unity and to be the truth, is a kind of miracle, and one rarely understood by critical man. It is not, even, that the Scriptures are a coded system—'find the code and you will break open the mystery'—no: the Scriptures are plain for every human to read, and the 'mystery' they present is not one that is inscrutable. It is known simply by the will. He who has an ear (i.e. is willing to hear) will hear what God is saying.

For the second time then, I beg the patience of the reader.

I believe that he—or she—will find himself on the perimeter of a veritable gold-mine of truth, of revelation of God, man, and creation, and will be able to utilize the insights according to the gifts and abilities that he has.

**CONCLUSION:
THE GOSPEL AND
THE 'WONDERFUL
COUNSELLOR'**

The thing which is distinctive about biblical counselling is that Christ, who is Lord of the Christian, is called in Isaiah 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father'. Christian counsellors know—or should know—their limitations in the realm of counselling, but since they are 'in Christ' and since Christ works through them, they have the wisdom and direction of this Wonderful Counsellor. Whatever that term meant in its day, it is certainly applicable to today. As we have said, the matter of man is a complex one, and seeing we are all fellow human beings, and have no mortgage on wisdom, it is necessary that we apply to Christ. We are not 'fix-it' persons. We can only meet people where they are, but then we have the resources which are not only Christ's, but Christ himself. As Christ indwells us by his Holy Spirit, so we apply to him to give us the wisdom and power to act in the ministry of mercy—where that is.

Of course, all of this cannot be resolved into a methodology, or a distinctive therapy. The counsellor lives with the Wonderful Counsellor. In this he has advantage over all others. He also has a great responsibility to live in this union with Christ. This union is what makes the difference in the ministry of counselling.

PART ONE

A Biblical Way of Counselling

=

=

A BIBLICAL WAY OF COUNSELLING

An Introduction to 'A Biblical Way of Counselling'

A Theology of Counselling

OUR COUNSELLING MUST BE BIBLICAL Throughout this book it is said that counselling as we understand it in our society was not an activity of the early church. That is not to say there was no counselling. The ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher made their impacts upon people, and members of the community must have looked to such ministries to help them cope with life, and be 'more than conquerors'. Since counselling has to do with imparting wisdom, and training others in wisdom, then counselling did exist. Israel had known such—hence its considerable body of 'wisdom literature'. Since all of this existed within the covenant life of the community, it would have been theologically based. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are two excellent 'wisdom' books. They portray a wide knowledge of man, of his ills and spills, and they have good prescriptions for human problems and difficulties. In the New Testament there are many injunctions, exhortations and encouragements given. In particular, the pastors and elders were men

of wisdom, 'apt to teach' and so knowledgeable in matters of the truth. Of course, they did not expound creeds and formal beliefs as such, for their teaching was primarily oriented towards the practice of life.

As life in the West has become increasingly detached from the churches and their doctrines, and as science has delved into the nature of man and the universe, so the idea of having a counselling practice based upon doctrines of the Bible has waned. We are pragmatic and impatient enough to want to gather up scientific data and principles as found in present schools of psychology, sociology, psychotherapy and psychiatry. The pastor in his study has been greatly influenced by seminary training in the areas we have just mentioned. He feels such disciplines have gone far beyond the old views and ways of 'the cure of souls', and believes his ministry will be inferior unless he is coached up on the latest ideas. As a result of this kind of thinking many pastors do not see the Bible and Social Science as necessarily being at loggerheads, but they tend to see them as separate and dissociated entities. Hence—as mentioned in the Foreword—the attempts of some to integrate psychology and its concomitants with theology, in a bid to have 'Christian' counselling. Other pastors just think the systems are different, and tend to believe pragmatically that the new and scientific approach is more practical. In our Foreword we have mentioned some writers and their attempts to rebuild a psychology which can be called 'Christian'. It may be that even those writers could differ amongst themselves as to what would be 'Christian' or 'biblical'.

The materials set out in Part One, 'A Biblical Way of Counselling', can scarcely be called theology—as such. Even so, they are drawn from the Bible. They discuss biblical wisdom, the nature of man, of human relationships, the authority of God and delegated authorities within the creation, the release God's Fatherhood brings to man when he sees Him through the atoning Cross, and the consequent change in human beings. Coupled with this is the important matter of

human anger and violence, the way out of such anger, and the coming of peace to the heart. Finally it expounds some kind of a 'theology of healing'. These seem to me to be vital areas when it comes to the troubled heart and mind. I have written more widely regarding them in other books.

ANTI-STATEMENTS REGARDING NON-BIBLICAL COUNSELLING

The Foreword briefly touches on the fact that from within the sociological professions there are complaints about their disciplines of psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry. We do not need to go into this sort of thing here. To prove that one therapy or another is not biblical and ontological so that it is thus doomed to failure is not the sort of debate we need to be in. Jay Adams, in his book *Competent to Counsel*, delivers some hard body-blows to those who have been trained to practise in the various areas of the social professions and who are exponents of different systems. It is enough for us to recognize that such an internal warring exists. If anything, this encourages us to see whether theology has any value for our counselling which we would call 'Christian'.

A THEOLOGY OF COUNSELLING

A helpful place to start this enquiry is the Book of Ecclesiastes. The writer—whose name is *Koheleth* in Hebrew—tells us we can have two lines or modes of enquiry, the first being that of 'under the sun', a phrase which he uses time and again. The second is that of 'vertical thinking'. By 'under the sun' he means 'horizontal thinking'. He is saying that if creation does not have a transcendent as well as an earthly dimension—i.e. a vertical as well as a horizontal dimension—then life will always be empty, thinking will be devoid of what is called 'the supernatural'. He is saying—in effect—that for the most part they think only on a horizontal

level, hence their lives are moulded by this sort of thinking. If they believe in God, fear Him, try to obey His laws and help others to come into the dynamic experience of new birth, then they will be persons of more than the horizontal approach to creation. They will agree with Koheleth, that 'God has put eternity into man's heart, so that by searching he cannot find the end from the beginning'. Man is a questful creature, as indeed he is a purposive one. Koheleth would claim to have found true wisdom because he did not stay in the horizontal mode, but shared in the vertical–horizontal results. Being theological is to fear God, to obtain wisdom, to live without vapidness, to honour God, to keep His commandments.

The Theology of History To understand the theology of history is not necessarily to understand theology. Little harm can be done if the counsellor becomes familiar with his Scriptures. If he does, then one thing should strike him, namely that the Bible does not structure a theology, although theology will certainly form itself in thinking minds. What we see primarily is that the Bible is interested in God, creation, men, events of history, salvation, sanctification and (ultimate) glorification of the whole person. It is all about actions. This being the case, a theology of counselling will have to be linked with what we call 'Salvation History'. This is the saga of mankind, and of the covenant-people in particular. To counsel truly we need to have narrative minds, to understand actions, and to see that God is leading humanity on an adventure, drawing him into participation in His plan for humanity. Jonathan Edwards once wrote *The History of Redemption**, the sort of thing that is known today as 'Salvation History'. This is the kind of theology which is the true substance of thoughtful counselling. Man must be counselled as a participant in and contributor to the action and development of history. This is

what gives him his sense of true being, or identity, and of vocation. Without this the counsellor himself is deficient in a proper life-view, to say nothing of a God-view, man-view, time-view, world-view and eternity-view.

Substantial Theology Even a salvation history view of theology—essential as it is—needs the support of biblical and dogmatic theology, since through them we come to know God, man and creation, and knowing all these three together makes for a full-bodied understanding of the universe in which we live. It is probably best not to be confined to one system of theology, and as many theological and biblical dictionaries are available, the counsellor needs to utilize them. A full theology is only built up over many years. The minimal theology in Part One of this book needs to be supplemented. For a working theology I would recommend my own book *The Things We Firmly Believe*, as it is easy to read, but there are many more, and these are mentioned in the Bibliography. The fact of theology brings us back to what we said in the Foreword, namely that we find out much concerning man from the Scriptures which we cannot discover apart from the biblical revelation. This is not to denigrate what human research has discovered but to say that it is not enough.

* Associated Publishers, n.d.

1

What, Then, Is Biblical Counselling?

INTRODUCTION: THE MEANING OF COUNSELLING

Most people have a reasonable idea of what the word 'counselling' means. Generally speaking, it means to so assist a person who has problems or

who is in need, that the person is better able to cope with the difficulty, and even able to find a solution to it. *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* has a number of definitions of 'counsel', two of which relate to our subject: 'Advice, direction, as the result of deliberation. The faculty of counselling; judgement; prudence; sagacity.'

The word 'counsel' is used a lot in the Scriptures. The word used quite prolifically in the Old Testament is *etsah*, i.e. counsel or advice. A study of this word in a concordance will repay the time spent. There are other words also, but they appear to carry the same meaning. There is the counsel of the godly and the wise, sometimes by one person, sometimes by a group or council.

Counsel can be good, or wicked and wrong. II Samuel chapters 16 and 17 give a picture of two counsellors, Ahithophel and Hushai. Sometimes counsel is planning together, either well or evilly. Generally counsel is given by God, in which case the word can be a synonym for 'will', i.e. God's will. Wicked counsel is planning or advice which is against God's will.

Job, Psalms, and Proverbs highlight the theme of coun

selling. Proverbs gives great emphasis to wisdom, and links this with the giving of useful advice. The prophet is one who gives counsel, but this by means of the word of God and not his own intrinsic wisdom. Isaiah and Jeremiah speak against human counselling, and exalt God's will and advice. Generally speaking, counselling in the Old Testament can be described as 'that giving of advice and direction out of genuine wisdom which comports with the will of God, and which is for the good of man'.

In the New Testament much the same idea obtains. The main word for its English equivalent (i.e. 'counsel') is *boule*, carrying the ideas of 'counsel', 'will' and 'purpose'. With it is often the thought of 'recommending' (i.e. 'giving advice and direction'), in which case the stronger word (verb) *symbouleuo* is used. There are two words for 'counsellor', namely *symboulos*, as in Romans 11:34 ('who has been his counsellor?'), and *parakletos*, which does not directly have the idea of 'giving advice out of wisdom', although we cannot say that this thought is absent. In John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 *parakletos* is referred to the Holy Spirit, and also to Christ in John 14:16 and I John 2:1. *Parakletos* is an advocate or intercessor.

When we come to the verb *parakaleo*, the ideas of 'asking', 'requesting', 'beseeching', 'exhorting', and 'comforting' are present. The asking and entreating springs from wisdom (real or imagined), and the effects of exhortation are strengthening, edifying and comforting. Sometimes the thought of 'warning' is present (cf. Heb. 3:13).

Linked with *parakaleo* is the verb 'to admonish', *noutheteo* (see Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; I Thess. 5:12; II Thess. 3:15), which means literally 'to put in mind', and the noun 'admonition', *nouthesia* (see I Cor. 10:11; Eph. 6:4; Titus 3:10). The verb and noun carry some sense of 'rebuke' and 'confront', this action being operative out of wisdom (real or imagined), that is, out of the possession of useful knowledge. Sometimes the words 'exhort' and 'admonish' are used together, and in some cases other words such as 'instruct',

'train' and 'teach' are linked with them. We can draw the simple conclusion that out of teaching, instructing, admonishing and exhorting comes that wisdom which can act as an aid to us where needed.

We may seek to find exact equivalents in the Scriptures for our modern words 'counsel', 'counselling' and 'counsellor', but the model or image we have in our minds must not be read back into those words where found in the Scriptures. It is useful to seek to understand them, and to bring those insights to the use of the words in our day.

We can say that practical biblical counselling is 'that helpful advice and direction given to a person at a certain point of need, which comports with, and issues from, the wisdom of God'. How this wisdom is acquired, and the modes of using it, will occupy us in this series of studies.

COUNSELLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

If our description of counselling stands, then (i) what was the nature of counselling as given in the early church?, and (ii) who were the counsellors? Whilst our actions today are not rigidly restricted to what happened in the early church, yet the example and pattern of that church is extremely helpful for us to follow.

The Nature of Counselling in the Early Church

We need to be honest and say that counselling as we know it was not extant in the early church.

In some sense it could not have been, i.e. a professional group of people using scientific disciplines to assist people in their mental illnesses and aberrations, seeking to bring them to human wholeness.

Counselling—the giving of advice, direction and prescriptive living—came through generally in the life of the church, for (i) the fellowship of the Christian community (cf. Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; 8:4–8; 11:19–30) was a warm and healthy one, filled with care and compassion; (ii) the word

of the Gospel not only saved people, but liberated them in a radical way (Acts 13:38–39; I Cor. 6:9–11; Titus 2:11–14; 3:5–7; II Cor. 5:16–17; etc.). This state of the church was aided and enhanced by what are called 'the variety of gifts', 'the varieties of service', 'the variety of workings' (I Cor. 12:4–7). These are called 'the manifestations of the Spirit', and are 'for the common good'.

We need also to see that the Christian community was a proclaiming community. I Thessalonians 1:5–10 exemplifies the pattern and life of an early church which was healthy in every way because it related outwardly to the world whilst inwardly it had a 'work of faith, labour of love, and steadfastness of hope'. The Epistles of the New Testament, along with Revelation chapters 2 and 3, make it clear that the early church had many troubles as time passed, as teaching became confused, and as human egos sought to satisfy their ambitions. The problems we face now, they also faced then. Even so, the nature of the true church has always remained the same, albeit greatly beleaguered and deficient from time to time.

What is often missed by us moderns is the life and place of worship in the New Testament church. Paul's remedial teaching in I Corinthians chapters 10–14 is helpful to study in detail. See also Philippians 3:3; John 4:20–24; Ephesians 2:11–12; 5:18–20; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; I Peter 2:4–10; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15–16; Romans 12:1–2 for positive teaching on the nature of the worshipping community. In the context of worship, communities kept themselves healthy. Note in I Timothy 5:1–16 (cf. Eph. 5:21–6:9) that relationships were maintained on a healthy familial basis, and social concern was evident.

Counsellors in the New Testament Church

If we trace the use of words such as 'counsel', 'exhort', 'comfort', 'beseech', 'admonish', 'rebuke', 'edify'—in both their nounal and verbal forms—then we will see that (i) the congregation was well taught in the

nature of the Gospel and Christian community living (cf. Acts 2:42), so that they understood themselves to live under 'great grace' and 'the word of his grace' and 'the gospel of grace', and to be led personally and corporately by the Holy Spirit in all that they did; and (ii) there was mutuality of teaching, exhortation, encouragement, and the like (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 3:13; 10:24; I Cor. 14:26f.).

The church had an order of ministries, all of which worked to mutuality of help, encouragement, and growth in maturity (cf. Eph. 4:7-16; I Cor. 12:28; cf. I Pet. 4:10-11). It also had structured leadership, i.e. elders who led and directed the congregation. Eldership should be looked at in detail, for if we can speak of 'counselling' in something like our modern order, then such would have come from the elders (see I Tim. 3:1-6; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-5; I Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17). Elders had the ministry of teaching, and may well be the pastor-teachers of Ephesians 4:11.

The ministry of deacons is an *aid* to the elders, and support to the needy (see I Tim. 3:8-13). Greatly helpful to women were older women who taught and helped younger women (Titus 2:3-5).

The great emphasis given to teaching, especially in the Pastoral Letters, tells us that the church was well taught. Where well taught, there seemed to be little need for counselling as we know it today. The congregation saw that 'the word of his grace' was able to 'build them up'. It is to this Word that we need to have more recourse. Passages such as I Timothy 4:11-15, II Timothy 4:1-5 and Titus 2:11-14 underline the need for correct teaching.

We need also to see that there were many false teachers in and around the early churches. Letters such as Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Letters show us that Paul's teaching had to be remedial against Judaizing, gnosticism, docetism, asceticism, and occultism. John's Letter warns against gnosticism and false spirits who teach as antichrists. II Peter and Jude and Titus show how antinomianism has gripped some churches, and false pneumatic

phenomena threatened to undermine basic ethical life. Thus negatively we see the need of teaching. If we were to probe the proneness of some Christians to doctrinal deviations and practice, we might find a basic misunderstanding of the Gospel with deliberate elements in it.

Summing up on pastoral counselling in the early church, we may arrive at the conclusion that healthy Christian living was connected with strong teaching and a living, caring community. True personal health derives from these two elements.

THE MATTER OF WISDOM IN THE PRACTICE OF COUNSELLING

If my description of Christian counselling is correct, then wisdom is essential to its practice. I have said that counselling is that helpful advice and direction given to a person, at a certain point of need, which comports with, and issues from, the wisdom of God. For this reason we need to look at the nature of wisdom in the Scriptures.*

The Nature of Wisdom in the Scriptures

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines wisdom as 'Being wise; (possession of) experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically; sagacity, prudence, common sense'. In biblical counselling, biblical wisdom is required.

We must first recognize that knowledge *per se* is not necessarily wisdom, although knowledge is always essential to true wisdom. Romans 1:18-32 (cf. Gen. 3:1-6) shows that man in rejecting God rejected what wisdom he (man) already had, and closed the door to true wisdom. Paul says:

for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and thei

* For further reading, see my *Practical Christian Counselling*, 2nd edn, NCPI, 1984, pp. 8-16, and *The Wisdom of God and Man* (Living Faith Studies, vol. 4), NCPI, 1981, pp. 109-123.

senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

He is saying not only that true wisdom departed, but that the bias of the mind prevented the acquiring of true wisdom.

Linked with this is the temptation to 'be as God, knowing good and evil'. Man now assumes that he can know what is right and what is wrong. He does this as an autonomous being (so-called), when to be truly human he must be dependent upon God, i.e. be a creature dependent upon the Creator, a servant of the King, and a son of the Father. Only in these relationships can he discover true wisdom. Man's rebellion has placed him in opposition to God's wisdom. This so-called wisdom Paul names as 'the wisdom of this world' (cf. I Cor. chs 1 and 2).

The Wisdom of God In many places true wisdom is alone attributed to 'the only wise God' (Jude 25, *AV*). Paul says, 'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!' and asks, 'Who has been his counsellor?' Daniel says of God, 'To whom belongs wisdom and might' (Dan. 2:20–23; cf. II Sam. 14:20; Prov. 21:30). So we might multiply these affirmations of Scripture, but we do not need to do so. We speak of God as 'all-knowing', i.e. omniscient, but in one sense God does not *know* anything or everything. It is simply within His knowledge, for what He knows is, and is so by reason of His knowing it. In no sense does God acquire wisdom or knowledge, nor does He cogitate in order to arrive at conclusions.

God is known as wise because He is Creator In Psalm 104:24 the psalmist cries, 'O Lord, how manifest are thy works! In wisdom thou hast made them all.' This wisdom is independent of others:

Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice,

and taught him knowledge
and showed him the way of understanding? (Isa. 40:14).

The whole of creation is based on the wisdom of God The prophet Jeremiah says, 'It is he who made the earth by his power, *who established the earth by his wisdom*, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens' (10:12; cf. 51:15). Included in this is God's counsel, i.e. His wise will, destined to be fulfilled; so Proverbs 16:4, 'The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of judgement'.

God's wisdom is moral and is Christ In Ephesians 1:3–14 (cf. 3:1–11) Paul shows the plan of God was purposed before time, and God 'accomplishes all things after [according to] the purpose of his own will'. In I Corinthians 1:30 Paul says that God 'is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God has made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.' Some translators have, 'Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom—in righteousness, sanctification and redemption'. Christ is God's wisdom.

Colossians 1:19 says that in Christ the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and in 2:3 that in Christ 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. In essence Paul is not only saying that all God's wisdom is *in* Christ, but that Christ *is* that wisdom of God, i.e. that God has planned salvation through Christ, and Christ is the outworking of that salvation. That is why he says Christ is 'your wisdom', meaning that who and what Christ is and does is God's wisdom. In I Corinthians 1:17–31 he places this 'foolishness of God' over and against 'the wisdom of this world'. In fact, man is wholly foolish and God wholly wise.

This brings us to the practical fact that all our wisdom lies in Christ and the Spirit. In Isaiah 9:5 Messiah is called 'Wonderful Counsellor', and in 11:2 it is said of him:

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

As we come to examine how we can obtain wisdom, it is evident that such can only come from the true Teacher and Master, Christ himself, and this must be obtained through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Obtaining the Wisdom of God Proverbs chapters 8 and 9 virtually make a hypostasis of Wisdom, i.e. personify it, so that it comes close to being God Himself, or 'the Logos', i.e. the true Word of Wisdom (cf. 8:22–31). Through the Logos all things were created (John 1:1–13), and have their life (cf. Col. 1:15–16; Heb. 1:2–3; I Cor. 8:6).

What we need is to obtain wisdom. We need wisdom in order to understand the human situation, and to be able to give advice and direction where it is called for. The following helps us to understand how wisdom is obtained:

Wisdom is a gift, charisma Often Jesus exercised wisdom and a knowledge which seemed supernatural. He knew the woman at the well (in John 4) had had five husbands and was now living outside marriage with another man. Paul refers to 'the utterance of wisdom' and 'the utterance of knowledge'. These would be spontaneous understandings received at a particular point when needed. They were, so to speak, 'ad hoc wisdom'.

Wisdom is a gift which can be acquired by asking In James 3:13–18 the writer describes the lofty nature of God's 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.' Whilst such wisdom may be given at a point of urgent need, the emphasis seems to be that God's wisdom will be

given generally to the one who seeks it. The classic example of this is Solomon's request to God for wisdom, which is granted to him (see I Kings ch. 3). He asks, 'That I may discern between good and evil,' to which God replies, 'I will give you a wise and discerning mind.'

In Exodus 28:3 and 31:1–11 we see wisdom as skill. This is given by God, without request, to Bezaleel and his fellow workers. Such given wisdom requires the recipient to exercise, and even habituate it.

Wisdom is gained by learning and application The writer of Ecclesiastes says, a number of times, 'I applied my heart to know wisdom.' The writer of Proverbs urges his listeners to 'hear wisdom'. It is a self-evident fact that some have ears to hear the wisdom of God and so profit by years of learning, acquiring knowledge and thus the gaining of wisdom. Wisdom has been said to be, 'The way you use the knowledge you have'. As we have said, knowledge *per se* is not wisdom, since 'Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up' (I Cor. 8:1). True wisdom comes from the personal (i.e. relational) knowing of God. It grows through love, i.e. the use of it for others, as we do the will of God. Paul said, 'Be wise, knowing the will of the Lord.'

In the ultimate, wisdom is not acquired brilliance, but simply obedience, the doing of the will of God, which is, after all, God's *counsel*. Paul once said,

Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:15–17).

We obtain wisdom in the midst of doing the will of God.

2

Coming to Know Man, Through God

NEEDING TO KNOW

THE NATURE OF MAN

It is obvious that we need to know man if we are going to be able to help him. Whatever

insights we may have from scientific disciplines which do research into what man is, we need, for our purposes, to understand what the Scriptures reveal to us concerning man. We require God's wisdom and God's understanding of man to help him in his complex situations and direct him for his good.

This immediately brings us to our first problem. Why do we think in terms of helping man? Is it because we wish to have control of man, to exercise some kind of power over others, and even to act 'God' to him or her? Quite possibly. There can be many wrong motives in seeking to counsel man. Much of our life is used in trying to justify ourselves, and what quicker way than to gain some kind of control over our fellow creatures. Great dangers lie in any kind of leadership, and any form of sacerdotal or priestly authority is fraught with great danger. Humility is utterly indispensable in taking on the ministry of counselling.

The second problem is linked with the first: how can fallen humanity help fallen humanity? At first sight this may seem the best thing, the fallen helping the fallen, but it was the unfallen Christ alone who could truly help man. Only he could be God's wisdom, and bring about

our righteousness (justification), sanctification, and redemption. Fallen man is a complicated creature. Indeed, his problems are so complex that it may be said of him that he is a 'blind leader of the blind'.

How, then, can we know man? The answer must be, 'Through God alone.' Romans 1:15 tells us that man exchanged the truth of God for a lie. We must take that as man's defined position. He rationalizes the lie as the truth, the truth as the lie. Where he is not in union with God he does this compulsively. We cannot therefore rely on man to understand truth and espouse it. Paul said, 'Let God be true and every man a liar' (Rom. 3:4, AV). In Psalm 31:5 He is called 'the God of truth', or 'the faithful God'.

That the truth alone comes from God is the emphasis of Scripture. Man is too deceitful even to know the truth. 'The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt' (Jer. 17:9). On the other hand, 'God is not a man that he should lie' (Num. 23:19). Jesus said he heard the truth from God (John 8:40), and that he came to bear witness to it (John 18:37). He—like his Father—was 'full of grace and truth' (John 1:14), and was actually the truth of the Father (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit is called 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). In I John 5:7 it is said definitively, 'The Spirit is the truth'.

On these grounds, then, we can only evade man's estimate of himself by going directly to the truth, the Scriptures which give us insights we would never arrive at unaided. We truly need the revelation of the Bible.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN AS FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES

There are three inseparable doctrines in Scripture, namely (i) the doctrine of God, (ii) the doctrine of man, and (iii) the doctrine of creation. In fact they are the one, for creation is man's context of living and he also is part of it, but creation cannot be understood apart from the Creator, and man being (in) the image of God.

At the end of our first study we saw that whilst knowledge is not itself wisdom, yet wisdom and knowledge are closely linked. The more knowledge, the more the possibility of increased wisdom. We will need to know man in his various states, i.e. as created, as fallen, as redeemed, as pursuing holiness of life, and as living in hope for eternity. The final understanding of man must come in respect to his glorification. Failure to understand any one of these categories of man will mean failure to understand man, and certainly hinder giving him true counsel. We shall seek to see man in these categories.

The Doctrine of Created Man We have two sources for understanding man as created: (i) from the biblical description of man's creation, and (ii) from observing Jesus the true man. Whilst we cannot enter into a full biblical anthropology, we must at least sketch man as created.*

What we know is: (i) man was created in the image of God, i.e. everything that God is, man is like that, but anything that God is, man is none of that. Thus man reflects God; (ii) man was created to be useful and purposeful, hence the mandate of Genesis 1:28 (cf. Gen. 9:1–7; Ps. 8:3–8; I Cor. 11:7), linked with Genesis 2:15, 'The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden to till it and to keep it'.

Man has his identity (we will call it here 'creational identity'). He is a son (child) of the Father (Luke 3:38; Acts 17:28; cf. Jer. 2:26–27), a creature of the Creator, and a servant of the King of the universe. These three things are 'dependence' categories, i.e. man cannot live in them apart from God. When he lives in them fully he finds emotional and relational fullness and satisfaction, i.e. he is fulfilled in his affinity with God, as 'deep calls unto deep'.

Man not only had (has) vertical relationship with God but

horizontal relationship with his fellow humanity. The male and female constitute one humanity, i.e. human unity. There are not two races—one male, one female. The two constitute 'one flesh', i.e. 'one humanity'. Humanity is this: a male–female entity, and not a male-and-female thing. Man as created must be understood in the husband–wife, father–mother, parents–children, brother–sister complex. Any break in any of this will constitute a fractured situation. Man is a moral-spiritual social creature, finding his fullness in family.

Man is always moving towards God's given goal. Man is not fully man until he is glorified. Thus he lives in genuine hope. The future is one of promise, whatever the present may be.

The Doctrine of Fallen Man and Creation The temptation set before the woman was, 'You shall be as God, knowing good and evil'.

This meant (i) that man would (could) become autonomous, having high authority, and (ii) that he would know—of himself—the difference between good and evil, i.e. his evaluations would be authentic. Fallen humanity is sure it is able to discern good and evil correctly. This is the source of much strife. Genesis 3:1–6 and Romans 1:18–32 show the results of man's bid for independence. Man lost his integrity and has attacked God's. His chief evil lies in his idolatry.

Since everything is created, sustained and maintained in Him, it holds that to alienate oneself from God brings tragic consequences. We cannot realize what these are until we see that creation is functional. When God made all things, He saw they were 'very good', i.e. functionally good and harmonious, each having its own purpose (Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 3:11; Prov. 16:4).

By the Fall man became awry, disoriented, dislocated, dysfunctional—at odds with God, creation, and himself. He suffered not only depravity but 'deprivity', i.e. he has deprived himself of joy and peace, because he, via his will, is at

* For further reading, see my *Man is—What?*, NCPI, 1982, and *I, the Man!*, NCPI, 1983.

variance with the true order of things. He is thus the victim of his own conscience. Hence his emotional starvation, his vocational awryness, and his inability to enjoy sonship, creaturehood and servanthood in relation to God the Father, Creator and King.

In understanding fallen man we must also see him in thrall to Satan and evil powers. The 'whole world lies in the evil one' (I John 5:19), and is under his bondage (Eph. 2:1–3; Heb. 2:14–15). Man, by reason of his guilt, is never free. His imagined autonomy is a delusive lie. Man cannot be free-standing, but he seeks to be so.

All of this tells us the state of man, his anguish and his suffering. Lest we pity him, we must realize that he hates God, and is hostile towards Him (see Rom. 1:30; 5:10; Col. 1:21). He also hates his fellow man (Titus 3:3). If we do not see man's depravity, and at the same time the fact that he was made in the image of God, we cannot help him or ourselves.

The Doctrine of Redeemed Man Fallen man is saved and justified by grace, and not, primarily, by faith (Rom. 3:24; 5:17; Eph. 2:8–10). He is given the gifts of: repentance (Acts 5:32; 11:18), faith (Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29), forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 13:38–39), justification (Rom. 3:24; 5:17), cleansing (Heb. 9:14), sonship (Gal. 4:4–6; Rom. 8:15), love (Rom. 5:5), eternal life (John 3:14, 16, 36; II Tim. 1:10), holiness (I Cor. 6:11) and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; Acts 2:38).

This redemption is based on the complete work of Christ in his earthly obedience, death, resurrection and ascension. It is communicated and applied by the Holy Spirit (John 16:7–15; Rom. 8:2; II Cor. 3:17) in what is called 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:5). This makes fallen man a 'new creation', so that 'old things have passed away, behold, they have become new' (II Cor. 5:17). Man is 'washed, sanctified and justified' and this 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit

of our God' (I Cor. 6:11).

All man's sins are forgiven; he is wholly justified: he is placed amongst God's true people (sanctified); his sins or 'dead works' are completely cleansed (Heb. 9:14; cf. 1:3; 10:22). God, in forgiving him, remembers his sins no more (Jer. 31:31–34; cf. Heb. 10:11–22; esp. vv. 17–18).

This person has become a son of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; John 1:12–13), a member of the family of God, a member of Christ's Body, i.e. the church. He has been born anew by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, walks and lives in the Spirit, knowing true prayer, worship, fellowship, service, and the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel. He thus has true identity. His social being is fulfilled in the context of the true family, body and Christian community. Ideally speaking, he is now without personal inner problems and the sicknesses and disturbances which once derived from guilt and an accusing conscience.

The Doctrine of Sanctified Man The redeemed man lives in sanctification (I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 6:15–23; Eph. 5:1–14; Gal. 5:16–18, 22–26; I Pet. 1:14ff.). He is not—of himself—perfect (see Rom. 7:13–25). He is in a spiritual battle (Eph. 6:10–18) He faces the powers of darkness. Hence the Christian life is one of persecution and suffering (see II Cor. 10:3; 4:7–15; II Thess. 1:5; etc.).

The redeemed man has a tender and sensitive conscience and is open to accusation (Rev. 12:10f.). He 'feels' things, and can come under heaviness of spirit. His failure may depress him. And so on. We need to understand his holiness conflicts, especially where grace is not fully understood and the new man seeks to accomplish things in his own power (cf. I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 12:1–10).

The Doctrine of Glorified Man I Corinthians 2:6–10 tells of God's wisdom, which was ordained for our glorification. Man is a creature destined by God to reach full sonship and that glorification of his being

which he does not have in this world and creation. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' must mean that this physical being must be transformed. In Philippians 3:21 Paul tells us that 'he shall change this body of our humiliation that it may be made like his body of glory'.

This means that man moves towards his ultimate fullness of being. In this sense he is always 'becoming'. This fact is of great importance and affects him deeply. Fallen and unredeemed man is in misery because he cannot sense vocational fullness. Man redeemed and in holiness is enriched by his progress towards final maturity, but can be troubled when he seems not to achieve fullness in his vocation.

If the counsellor does not understand man-in-becoming, he may make many errors in judgement, advice and direction.

CONCLUSION TO 'COMING TO KNOW MAN, THROUGH GOD'

Why do we say, 'coming to know man, through God'? It is because we could not see man apart from God revealing him. Man cannot understand the truth apart from revelation, and he cannot even understand sin, let alone his own complex sinful self, apart from God revealing this to him.

What we have not seen, and what we must see, is that, with all the indications from Scripture regarding the creation of man, nothing gives us the full picture until the man Jesus is born, grows, lives, dies and rises, and is glorified. It is then only that we see true manhood. He is the true shape of man: he is the authentic paradigm.

Often in Christian history we have failed to see this, for we have made his humanity a super-humanity. We have tacked his deity (which certainly co-existed and co-exists with his humanity) on to his humanity, and have called him a 'God-man' when, in fact, being truly God and truly man, his deity is itself and his humanity itself, and the two

never merge. His humanity was true humanity, and we only view it as beyond ours because ours is a fallen humanity. Even when redeemed, we are still in the process of becoming, and we struggle with flesh to the end of our days—a fact which ought to be noted by teachers and counsellors.

We have, then, true humanity to examine and ponder. We have the further valuable fact that the Christian is a new man by virtue of being in the New Man—Christ. All the true resources for rich manhood lie within him. Yes, God has brought us to know and understand what man is. With this authentic biblical anthropology, theology of God, and biblical cosmology (true world view), we are richly equipped for the ministry of teaching–counselling.

3

How, Then, Shall We Relate?

THE MATTER OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Life is a matter of relationships. This may sound like a cliché, but it is not. Man-in-creation had a total relationship with God. The male and the female related in perfect union. In marriage they were 'one flesh'. This would be the true setting for the rearing of children, and for ideal parent-children relationships. Whilst things were this way there was no question of disturbance or turmoil, and none of guilt. Guilt arises from wrong relationships with God and others. Few, if any of us, have had continuing total relationships with God and others.

THE FALL OF MAN AND THE LOSS OF TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

The serpent's temptation was designed to lure man away from total trust in God. His question, 'Has God said . . .?', implied doubt.

The idea of being a person apart from God fascinated man. In breaking away from God he broke away from his true self. He became a creature of pride, but a creature alienated from the true source of his relational and emotional life, so that his pride had no real basis for stability.

Jesus made it clear that knowing God was in itself eternal life: 'This is life eternal, that they know thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). To know God is not merely *to know about Him* but *to know Him* directly, by interrelationship. True knowledge of God or persons is relational. To interrelate fully with another is to come to know them. To refuse to relate is to refuse to know. John supports this by saying, 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' We conclude, then, that in this sense eternal life is knowing the Father and the Son.

When man broke with God he broke with his fellow humans. Man's relationship with God is vertical, in which God takes the initiative and man receives, only to relate back. At the same time that his relationship is vertical with God it is simultaneously horizontal, i.e. with others. One cannot possibly exist without the other. Hence John's saying, 'If any man says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for if he cannot love his brother whom he can see, how can he love God whom he cannot see?' (I John 4:20).

Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob

In each of these cases the older brother hated the younger. In our study on God's Fatherhood we will further examine the matter, but we conclude that to hate your brother is to hate your father, and mother. 'By this it may be seen who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil; whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother' (I John 3:10). The child of the devil hates his brother. This is not life eternal, and so must be 'death eternal'.

The key to this disaffection lies in Genesis 3:1-24 and Romans 1:18-32. When the woman placed her trust in the word of the serpent rather than the word of God, her relationship with God was broken. Likewise, when the man 'listened to the voice of his wife' rather than the voice of God, true relationship with God was dissolved. When division came

between man and woman, it also came between parents and children. The older brother killed the younger.

Romans 1:21–32 shows the breakup of all relationships, for the rejection of God by man led to his involvement in idolatry. John speaks in I John 5:20 of eternal life being in the knowing of God, and adds immediately, ‘Little children, keep yourselves from idols,’ meaning that if one has relationships with idols one does not have a true relationship with God. It would follow, then, that one would not have true relationships with others.

We can sum up this section by concluding that man’s primary misery and trouble arises out of his break of true relationship with God and man, and is worsened by man’s idolatry. His capacity to love is absorbed by his idols. He has to love and worship something. He has an emotional need to be fulfilled, and is unhappy and even dangerous when he cannot effect its fulfilment. His deepest problems lie in this area.

MAN’S FEAR OF GOD AND FEAR OF MAN Basically, because of the break in relationships, man is afraid of God, and afraid of his fellow human beings. In the case of God, ‘conscience doth make cowards of us all’. Man is afraid to die. All his lifetime he is in bondage through fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15). He fears God’s judgement. Because of guilt he cannot trust God or man.

The division in human relationships begins with the division of the sexes. There has always been a battle here for advantage. ‘Sexism’ is no new thing in the history of the human race, but it has little to do with gender as such. Gender is the occasion rather than the cause. Men can be as divided from men, and women from women, as men from women, and women from men. The human race can be divided through tribe, clan, and race, as through culture, and religion. It can be as strongly divided within tribes, clans and races, as between such. We might parody a famous

saying by stating, ‘Perfect fear casts out love’.

Human beings are in competition with one another because of the fear of death. They desire to secure themselves against an untimely end. Cain was angry with Abel because the latter seemed to have an advantage over him in his relationship with God. Ishmael persecuted Isaac for a similar reason, and Esau Jacob. Joseph’s brothers were moved evilly by the same principle.

In counselling we always come to the deepest problem of persons not relating to God and to one another. Human beings ‘love the praises of men more than the praises of God’, but they wish for both. Where they are not accepted, and in fact are rejected, there is anger. We will enlarge on this in our study, ‘Losing Anger and Finding Tranquillity’, but the anger of Cain, Ishmael, and Esau are proverbial. So, also, the anger of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son.

Elitism is a deep problem of the human race. When some seem to claim superiority because of birth, attainment, clan or ‘club’, then hatred grows in those not elite. Israel was regarded as elitist by the Gentiles. Israel may not have regarded itself this way, but it appeared to be God’s ‘favourite people’ when in fact it was God’s ‘chosen people’—a vast difference to be sure! Man cannot tolerate any form of superiority. It causes insecurity, anger and resentment, and may issue in murder. Likewise, where a person is cut off from what he considers a ‘rightful relationship’ by the disaffection of another, anger can get out of control. This, then, is the state of the human race, so well set out in Romans 1:26–32 and 3:11–18. Realistic Christians will accept that this is the true state of human relationships.

We have to be realistic and see that man hates God, and is his deadly enemy, even though his religious expressions *seem* to say he is seeking God. He is not. None seeks after God (Rom. 3:11; Ps. 14:1–2). Instead, man is God’s implacable enemy (Rom. 1:30; 5:10; Col. 1:21). He violates God’s holiness and knows as he does it ‘that those who do such things deserve to die’ (Rom. 1:32). How then could he ever come to

God, and be reconciled? However could he—let alone would he—reconcile God to himself?

HOW, THEN, SHALL WE RELATE?

Love (see our next study, 'Authority, and the Life of Love') is a deep passion of human beings, fixing itself on something which is worthy or unworthy. We must love and we must be loved, but *what* we love and *who* loves us is what determines much of our lives. Loving God and man determines it one way, and loving idols and ourselves determines it in another way. But love we will, even if hurt and jealous love is often the cause of deep hatred.

We cannot relate to man unless we first relate to God. Indeed, we can only truly relate to man *through* God. When we experience God's love coming to us down the vertical, then we love upwards in that vertical relationship, and outwards (horizontally) to others: that is the true order. None of this sort of thing happens apart from grace. Man cannot and will not take any initiative. He is wholly unholy and not disposed towards humility and repentance: hence he is locked into his disaffection and enmity.

We can only relate, then, when God makes His initiative of grace in Christ: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them'; 'All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself'; '... our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation [atonement]'; '... through him [Christ] to reconcile all things to himself'; '... he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death' (see II Cor. 5:18, 19; Rom. 5:11; Col. 1:20, 22).

This amazing act of Atonement has brought reconciliation. Only when and because man sees God's love will he respond in love—the very love God has poured into his heart (I John 4:19; Rom. 5:5). Only then will love be both vertical and horizontal in operation.

If we seek to bring about reconciliation by 'horizontal'

thinking and efforts, we will be unable to do so. If we ignore the fact that *no true relationship takes place apart from the grace of God*—either with God or man, and man to man—then our counselling will be utterly to no effect. If we realize the grace of reconciliation, then we will see the new dimension in which rich relationships are born and obtain.

For such relationships, see events such as Pentecost (Acts 2:42–47), the second infilling of the Spirit (Acts 4), the events at Samaria (Acts 8), Caesarea (Acts 10), and Antioch (Acts 11). In all of these situations there was unprecedented human fellowship, love and unity. See, then, the principle that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, slave nor free person' (Gal. 3:29; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11).

With this knowledge we can counsel (teach) effectively the way of relating. We must, however, be competent under the Spirit of truth to bring that revelation of God's love in Christ which will evoke the response of love to God and man, and effect the dynamics of forgiveness and reconciliation which are impossible outside of the Gospel.

4

Authority, and the Life of Love

THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY IN SCRIPTURE

Before we commence to speak on this principle, we ought to recognize that all human beings have an inbuilt opposition to authority. We cannot be wholly objective, detached and rational about this subject. Fallen human beings are 'flesh' creatures. Paul says, 'The mind of the flesh is hostility to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot' (Rom. 8:7). Doubtless many of us believe we have a good attitude, but beneath our seeming acceptance of authority is rebellion against it. The test of genuine acceptance of authority is that we 'obey from the heart'. If we recognize the human problem with authority we can at least approach the subject with this awareness.

I myself find it distasteful to have to write such words as those above. I feel irritated that I have to include myself and the human race in this opposition to authority, and I suspect the reason little is written on the case *for* authority is that we refuse to believe we are—by fallen nature—inherently rebels. In any subject that we approach we all have a 'hidden agenda', i.e. for reasons not known to us we have prejudice about certain things. Ideally only the person who has been justified is free *not* to have a hidden agenda, although many justified persons retain hidden agendas.

In approaching the matter of authority we need to define our terms. 'Authoritative' is a good term, denoting authentic

commission to an office and proper exercise of authority. 'Authoritarian' indicates the use of authority for one's own purposes, ego, and advantage, and not as service to others. The Scriptures place God as the Authority over all, and in fact the word 'author' (originator) signifies the right or 'copyright' of the author. God has authored the creation and so has natural right over it.

No one has 'natural' right over anything in the creation. Hence all authority exercised is delegated by God. This obtains in the case of parents, elders, governing powers, and the like. Paul says, 'There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.' On the basis of this He demands obedience to such authorities. When Jesus said, 'Render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's,' there would have been the thought that what was Caesar's was God's, anyway!

If we examine the authority of God, we will find that it is consonant with His Being, i.e. His attributes which are holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth and love. In Him is no arrogance, domination, and other things which we often find in authoritarian uses of office. Ephesians 4:6 is a good place to see the nature of authority: 'one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all'. A human father must have a parallel authority. 'Above' means 'over', 'through' means the integrating power, and 'in' means the personal presence to.

If we pursue this we see that true authority is love, but then love which is holy, righteous, true and good. This love serves that over which, and for which, it has authority. Parents have the responsibility to bring children to maturity; teachers have the task to do the same. Authorities are there not to dominate but to serve.

We can say, then, that authority is there to direct, to correct, to protect, and to bring to maturation. Only that authority which serves—and loves—is true authority. If one who has delegated authority misuses and abuses that authority, that does not cancel out the delegated authority.

The one who has been given authority stands or falls to God, not to man. His or her failure calls for judgement, discipline, and correction. Those under any 'office' must respect the office, even if the person filling it is not respect-worthy. The judgement of the offending authority must be left to God, who often uses certain circumstances and situations to effect that judgement.

MAN'S LOSS OF OBEDIENCE TO TRUE AUTHORITY Again we go back to the fall of man. Man had been under the authority of the God who was at once Father, Creator, and King. Man was tempted to be *as* God and not merely *like* God, which indeed he was (Gen. 1:26). To be *as* God meant he was no longer under God. Man thus did despite to himself, by removing his dependent categories such as son, creature and subject. He now had to justify this departure from the creational norm, and since he cannot, he is compulsive in his opposition to authority.

What we need to understand in this regard is that the creation has authorities and is, indeed, hierarchical. We may be wary of using the word 'hierarchical', because it is most emotive to those who believe in egalitarianism or in anarchy. Even so, we must use it, because authority has nothing whatever to do with superiority, and being under authority with inferiority, even if we see authority being abused after this manner.

We have to say that all authority is part of the *functional* nature of creation. Each day, as God created, He saw that it was 'good', i.e. functionally good. When all the creation was completed, God saw it was 'very good', i.e. fully functional. This thought is repeated in Ecclesiastes 3:11: 'You have made everything appropriate in its own time'. Hence in Genesis 1:16–19 we have an example of this principle:

And God made the two great lights, the greater light *to rule* the day, and the lesser light *to rule* the night; he made the stars also. And God

set them in the firmament of the heavens *to give light* upon the earth, *to rule* over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*.

This functional rule, then, was prior to man's fall, and was not something which arose as a result of man's fall. Some contend that the formation of authority (and authorities) was necessitated by the fall of man, and one day will dissolve when the human race turns to obey God. A hidden agenda may well cause us to argue thus. It is reasonable to say, of course, that man's attitude to authority has changed because of the Fall, and that there is much trouble on the earth because of rejection of authority and consequent rebellion to it. Authority must never be looked upon as a regrettable necessity created because of the rebellion of man, and designed to combat it. This is untrue.

Some exegetes argue that the male was not placed hierarchically over the woman. Her role of 'helpmeet' does not make her inferior as to nature, but subordinate as to functional authority. Subordination, we repeat, is not inferiority. The servant of all is greatest of all. God is, in fact, the Servant of all, for He serves the creation by creating it, sustaining it, redeeming it, and repristinating it.

What most—if not all—exegetes have missed is the total union of the man and the woman, as depicted in Genesis 2:21–25. Humanity is not 'male *and* female' but 'male–female', i.e. humanity is only authentic, and functionally complete when the man and woman are in unity, i.e. *all* maleness relates fully to *all* femaleness so that the race is wholly one. The union of the man and his woman in marriage creates a unity which out-countenances the fallen person's arguments against authority. The man and the woman as one together face the mandate of God and fulfil their vocation as stewards of all the creation.

It may well be that no marital union—post-Fall—has ever fully attained this ideal functional state, but that does not destroy the mystery of the love union which obviates arguments regarding superior–inferior statuses and roles.

The two are one in their pursuit of God's will for them and the human race.

A deeper understanding of this functional-relational union of the man and the woman can be discovered by examining the union between Christ and his church. The marriage of the Bride and the Lamb is seen as wholly pure, producing the true union. We must work back from this union to the nature of true human union in marriage. We must look at the eschatological reality in order to know the nature of the human reality. We need to see that this Bride-and-Lamb union is the archetype and paradigm for the human. It also is the true climax to history.

AUTHORITY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS It may appear simplistic to say that all human problems are linked with man's refusal to accept authority. It may also seem an exaggeration to say that most human anger is directed at authorities. None of this will be fully apparent until we view man's rebellion against God. If man rebels against God then he also rebels against His functional authorities.

When it comes to human relationships, we need to read Romans 1:18–32 and 3:9–18. When man rebels against God he creates idols, goes against the true morality, seeks immoral deviations, and destroys all true relationships. Immorality, sexual deviations, and rejection of true human relations are *man's form of rejecting the functional nature of the universe* as created by God. An example of this is in I Corinthians 6:9–10, i.e. 'the immoral, idolaters, adulterers, sexual perverts, thieves, greedy, revilers and robbers'. Reverse this order (as in II Cor. 5:17) and you have 'moral, God-worshippers, maritally faithful, functionally sexual, temperate, those who honour, and those who work faithfully'. These latter represent the true creational (functional) order.

What is often missed is that every infraction of the true order brings its backlash and back-pressure of guilt. Guilt is a most perverse dynamic, and deeply troubles the human spirit. Guilt compounds sin and disobedience, and these in turn compound guilt. Thus man's state is fearful. His

rationalizations of his rebellion have then to be fortified and extended, and these increase insecurity and anxiety. Hence reaction to authority can become obsessive.

THE NATURE AND DYNAMIC OF LOVE TO DESTROY REBELLION

Paul said, 'The love of Christ controls [constrains] me' (II Cor. 5:14). Jesus said, 'If you love me you will keep my commandments' (John 14:15). John added in the same vein, 'And his commandments are not burdensome' (I John 5:3). God said to Israel (Deut. 30:6, 8):

'I will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live . . . And you shall again obey the voice of the Lord, and keep all his commandments which I command you this day' .

When we analyse man's rebellion, we see that it relates to his false view of God. Man sees God through the lens of his own guilt, and finds Him condemnatory, grim-visaged, judgemental and moralistic, all of which is wholly untrue. If only man could (would) see God as love, then he would have no grounds for rebellion. He would then be disarmed. Seeing God's love, he would love Him. Loving Him, he would realize that authority is for the matter of love, and he would accept true authority. Moreover, he would love God and so love others. Thus his relational problems would be healed. This, in fact, is what happens in the radical act of true conversion, in 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:5). 'We love, because he first loved us' (I John 4:19).

AUTHORITY AND THE LIFE OF LOVE

We now move to the matter of living in love. When the slavish fear of God is removed, and fear of judgement is abolished, then 'perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not

perfected in love' (I John 4:18). With this fear goes anger against God and His authorities, and against authority in general. By this we do not mean that we are never tempted to revert to old images of God and authorities, or that we are never tempted to our old 'flesh-rebellion'. This battle goes on continuously. We are never wholly free of 'the flesh' whilst we live, and it is in league with the powers of darkness, seeking to bring us back into enmity and hatred.

The Life of Love We come now to the heart of true biblical counselling. The following things obtain, and should be as the background to our ministry:

- (a) We are saved by God's love, and as a consequence we love Him and others (I John 4:19; I Pet. 1:22; I John 4:7-10; cf. I Pet. 1:8; I Cor. 2:10; Rom. 8:28).
- (b) Because we have been made the children of God we naturally love the brethren (I John 3:10; 2:7ff.; I Thess. 4:9; cf. Rev. 2:4; I John 4:20). God's Fatherhood teaches us brotherly love.
- (c) Love is known and expressed in forgiveness. He who has been forgiven now forgives—no matter what the extent of the sin (Matt. 18:21ff.; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
- (d) The new love—in practice—'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things . . . never fails' (I Cor. 13:7-8). It is all that Paul describes it in I Corinthians 13:4-8, and Peter in I Peter 4:8, and, as John says, it lays down its life for the brethren (I John 3:16; cf. John 15:13).
- (e) The new love inspires obedience in everything (II Cor. 5:14; I John 5:3; cf. I Cor. 16:14).
- (f) The new love has an eye to the needs of others, caring for them, and honouring them (Phil. 2:1-8; Gal. 5:13; Rom. chs 14-15; I Cor. ch. 8; Rom. 12:9-10; 13:8-10).
- (g) Love is maturative (I Cor. 13:9-13), leading to sensitivity for others (Phil. 1:9-11), and love for all men (I Thess. 3:12-13; Gal. 6:10).

The application of this love is worked out in exhortation to forgiveness, acceptance of others, renewal (and healing) of

all relationships, the honouring of all human beings, including the superordination-subordination relationships, the true deference to God's delegated authorities, and the keeping of the law of Christ from the heart.

By the above means, where man relates to God directly and to his fellow creatures in love, true healing follows. Man becomes noble and is enabled to fulfil the requirements of God (Rom. 8:4; 6:12-23; Micah 6:8), thus arriving at true human stature.

In this, as in other cases we have presented, the counsellor must first understand, and live in, the wisdom of God.

5

Release and Fulfilment in His Fatherhood

MAN AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

‘God is Father!’ is certainly the grand teaching of the New Testament. He is first of all ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Eph. 1:3) and also ‘God our Father’ (Eph. 1:2; cf. 4:6). It is clear from the New Testament that man becomes a son (child) of God through redemption (John 1:12–13; Gal. 3:26; 4:4–6). It is also clear that God planned this action ‘before the foundation of the world’, i.e. before creation, so that it is ‘in Christ Jesus’ that we become His children (Eph. 1:5).

The question that is important is, ‘Was man a child of God by creation?’ Some answer ‘No!’, some answer, ‘Yes!’ It seems clear from Luke 3:38 and Acts 17:28 (*passim*) that man was created as a child of God but lost his relationship with God as Father. Some say, ‘God was Father in *originating* man,’ meaning that *origination* does not contain relational sonship. This seems to give *origination* a specialized meaning exclusive of true sonship. God was Father prior to creation, and since man was created in His image it seems logical to say man was a son of the Father, although not in the unique sense of *the* Son of God, the one who later became incarnate.

Someone has said, ‘God is the Father of all men, but not

all men are the children of God,’ meaning that man abdicated and so lost his relationship with God as Father, through his fall. This does not mean that he is not a son *de jure*, but that he is not one *de facto*. The point of this discussion is to show that although man denies sonship of God as Father, the essential functional structure of sonship is there so that when he is redeemed, a new act beyond that of initial creation does not happen for him in order for him to be able to relate to God as Father. He is restored to what he was, and is not created into what he never was essentially.

Some readers will find the paragraph above confusing. No matter: what we do know is that God planned man’s true sonship ‘in Christ Jesus’. Man needs to come to sonship. I would see it that he has always been a prodigal of the Father, and now comes back through Christ and the Cross, and that redemption does not make God ‘Father’, but that His Fatherhood ‘makes’ redemption.

It has been said by some that ‘In every man there is a God-shaped blank, and until that blank is filled with, or by, God Himself, man will never be fulfilled and at peace.’ We mean that man is structured for Fatherhood, and this is what Paul appears to communicate in Acts 17:24–30. He is really saying that you do not form images of God out of plastic materials, for God-as-Father cannot be seen in such idols.

We say, then, that man has a functional need of God as Father, just as, being a creature, he has creaturely need of the Creator. This also needs to be seen in the light of man’s familial being: man needs to see all mankind as the family of God. His relationships depend upon this (ontological) factor.

THE REVELATION TO MANKIND OF GOD AS FATHER

In the Old Testament, God is referred to a number of times as Father, but always directly in connection with Israel: He is Father to Israel. We might say ‘Covenant Father’. Sometimes this is linked with

creation, but it may mean ‘the creation of Israel the nation’, so we do not find His Fatherhood as it is seen in the New Testament.

The simple explanation of the richer revelation of His Fatherhood in the New Testament is that His Son came into view. A father is always known by his children, and so *the* Father by *the* Son. God always had the Son, and the Son the Father. When the Son became visible and in human form, he showed the Father, spelling out his Sonship in *human* ways, the only ways known to humans!

Jesus once said, ‘All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father, except the Son, and any one *to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*’ (Matt. 11:27). No one could reveal the Father except the Son, which is why Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me’ (John 14:6). He meant, ‘I am the way to the Father, the truth of the Father, and the life of the Father. There is no other “way” or “truth” or “life”. That is uniquely mine. No one, unaided, can ever come to God as Father: only I can reveal Him.’ John said elsewhere, ‘No man has ever seen God: the Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known’ (John 1:18).

Jesus showed the Father by a number of means: (i) he walked as the Son of the Father, so that seeing him people saw the Father—‘Like Father, like Son’; (ii) he only ever did what the Father told him (John 5:19f.), hence the Father and Son were one (John 10:30) in all their action (cf. John 5:17); (iii) he taught the nature and actions of the Father, especially in the Sermon on the Mount; (iv) the Father initiated the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, so that by these acts Jesus revealed the heart of the Father, thus showing the Father to mankind; (v) the Son, with the Father, sent the Spirit of truth, who was at once ‘the Spirit of the Son’ (Gal. 4:6) and ‘the Spirit of your Father’ (Matt. 10:20), so that being ‘the Spirit of truth’ he could reveal the Father and the Son to mankind.

COMING TO THE FATHER THROUGH THE SON This is a simple matter: belief in Christ and receiving him for what he is makes men children of God (John 1:12–13). Paul said, ‘You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus’ (Gal. 3:26). The word for ‘sonship’ is often translated ‘adoption’, but is better translated ‘sonship’ since the word ‘son’ is embedded in it.

In Galatians 4:4–7 Paul gives the full range of salvation:

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, he has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

As we said, it is a simple matter to believe on Christ and to receive salvation. Whether we are conscious of it or not, that is the time when we become sons of God. It is a fact that many have never come consciously to the Father—as sons—although they have trusted Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

THE IMPACT OF BECOMING SONS OF THE FATHER

The highest cry we will ever cry will be ‘Abba!’, that is, ‘Father!’ It is much the same as saying ‘Jesus is Lord!’ When we address God as Father, something has truly happened to us. We are now consciously children of God. See Romans 8:14–17. Sonship relates both to regeneration (being born of the Spirit: John 3:3–5; 1:12–13) and adoption (Rom. 8:15).

The impact of being His sons and children is incalculable. God is now our Father. We saw the dynamic of the ‘reconciliation’. We are now reconciled as ‘prodigals’ to the Father. He has brought ‘many sons into glory’ (Heb. 2:10), and we have, in His Fatherhood, all that Jesus promised in the Sermon on the Mount—quite considerable promises!

Yet the greatest impact is that of us being ‘family’, His

family. In Ephesians 3:14 Paul speaks of 'the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.' This can be translated, 'from whom all fatherhood is derived', or 'all familyhood proceeds'. The family exists because He is Father. It has to do with His creatorial, as also His paternal, being.

This has great implications. It means that when we cry 'Abba!' we simultaneously cry 'Brother!' and 'Sister!' That is, we are all brethren. When this is wed to the New Testament teaching about brotherly love, the story is complete. The church is the true family of God (cf. Eph. 2:18-22; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:1-6; I John 3:10f.). All our relationships, therefore, are familial, orchestrated (so to speak) by the Father, and the Elder Brother (Heb. 2:11f.; John 20:17; Matt. 28:10; cf. Rom. 8:29).

It means that the 'God-shaped blank', which is really the 'Father-shaped blank', is now filled with God, but God-as-Father. This means that all 'irreconciliation' (to coin a word), all unfamiliar relations, and all bitterness, alienation, anger and resentment are swallowed up in the new Father-child relationship. What we think we have been deprived of, i.e. full paternal-maternal love and security, is more than supplied by this new Father-child relationship. Thus the whole pattern of relationships changes. See especially John 4:19-5:3.

It is undoubted that children get views of God from their parents, and mainly along the 'man-woman = the image of God' presentation. Children never get a true view of their parents because of their own innate fallen attitude to authority. However, in coming to see God as the loving Father and as 'above all, through all, and in all', the disgruntled person is delivered from false and inadequate images of God.

The counsellor has immensely valuable materials on hand to counsel into true security, and the fullness of filial and familial relationships which are with both God and man. This material can at once be remedial, prophylactic

and transforming. It goes without saying that the counsellor must first have penetrated the mystery of adoption.

6

Losing Anger and Finding Tranquillity—I

The Nature and Causes of Anger

THE FACT OF HUMAN ANGER

We should be prepared to find anger in human experience, for man is made in God's image, and many times in Scripture God is said to be angry or wrathful. The Bible speaks of God as love, and of God as light (holiness)—and these are two profound statements—but it never speaks of God being wrath.

Wrath is never defined as one of God's attributes, but rather an attitude and expression which is provoked within him with that which is evil. Were there no evil we would know only His love, goodness, righteousness, holiness and truth, and not wrath. Even so, His attributes are involved in the wrath that comes to Him when He views injustice and evil. We say that we would expect to find anger in man because he is made in the image of God, and would reflect God's wrath on evil. Sadly enough, although man is often angry at evil, more often his anger is, itself, an evil.

Human anger, we should say at the start, is a doubtful quantity. We are generally angry for reasons different from those of God. We get angry at restriction, at being thwarted, being defeated, being unable to fulfil our plans and do our own things. Sometimes we get angry at injustice, and are sure that anger is justified, yet angry man often does unjust things to get justice! Our righteous indignation can quickly become self-righteous anger, becoming condemnatory of others when we ourselves do similar things. Anger is very much a part of the human scene.

THE DANGER AND EVIL OF ANGER

Christ was the only man, we suppose, who ever expressed pure anger, i.e. anger without evil in it, and he was quick to warn us against anger. Matthew 5:21–26 ought to be looked at in detail:

'You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, "You fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.'

In essence Jesus was saying, 'Murder is a terrible offence and the local city court can indict you for this, but I tell you no less serious is anger against your brother. If you abuse your brother with contempt, then I say you should go before the Sanhedrin, or national court, so serious a crime this is. If you call your brother "Fool!", you so insult and demean him that you will go into the fire of hell. Be sure no one can bring any kind of indictment against you, for this will be carried out in judgement that exacts the last drop.'

Christ then warned us against something fearful in nature and character. Anger is not to be treated lightly. He who is angry with man—the image of God—is angry with God, and generally angry with God prior to being angry with man. Listen to some of the statements of Scripture:

For jealousy makes a man furious,
and he will not spare when he takes revenge (Prov. 6:34);

A man of quick temper acts foolishly,
but a man of discretion is patient (Prov. 14:17);

He who is slow to anger has great understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
but passion makes the bones rot (Prov. 14:29–30);

A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger (Prov. 15:1);

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
but he who is slow to anger quiets contention (Prov. 15:18);

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Prov. 16:32);

Good sense makes a man slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offence (Prov. 19:11);

The north wind brings forth rain;
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks (Prov. 25:23);

Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming;
but who can stand before jealousy? (Prov. 27:4);

Scoffers set a city aflame,
but wise men turn away wrath (Prov. 29:8);

A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and a man given to anger causes much transgression (Prov. 29:22);

For pressing milk produces curds,
pressing the nose produces blood,
and pressing anger produces strife (Prov. 30:33).

We have many persons in Scripture who are angry: Cain, Lamech, Ishmael, Esau, Joseph's brethren (especially Simeon and Levi), Naaman, Balaam, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar,

and Jonah. Jonah is an example of righteous anger, for he wishes to see Israel's traditional enemies destroyed and not spared by God even if they repented. He said, 'I do well to be angry—even unto death!' Well, at least it would have been his own death; but Cain killed Abel out of rage.

Hebrews 11 shows the terrible things done by those who were angry with men of faith, men of God. We see anger in Herod, in the elder brother, in Martha, in the Jewish leaders, for the more Jesus preaches truth, the more angry they become. The more he does works of compassion, healing and liberation, the more their anger hardens.

The fact is that there is always great anger where the truth is presented. 'Marvel not,' said Jesus, 'if the world hates you. Remember that it hated me before it hated you.' We see the most terrible anger of all at the Cross of Christ, as the lust-crazed leaders and the crowd cry for his crucifixion. Even Christ's fellow sufferers on the other crosses join the blasphemous madness.

Yet they are but a few amongst so many. Today we get angry at politics, at sport, at industrial unrest, at 'the establishment', at religion, at the human genders, at authority—anything. We have graffiti and vandalism from anger, along with abortion—anger at unwanted conception—pre-marital pregnancy as a hit at hated parents, murder and rape of the innocent to take revenge on the (so-called) guilty.

Scarcely an event happens at which we are not angry. We are angry in ecology and at it, angry at war, warring to get peace; we are angry at people who do not agree with us and do not immediately understand the wisdom of our evaluations and the actions we take to establish equality and justice in all the world!

Summing up this section, we can say that there is nothing which makes so irrational our thoughts and acts as intemperate anger. No matter how 'righteous' we may be in it, we will commit injustices far greater than those done, in order to get the justice we demand. Every 'cops-and-robbers' story, every 'goodies and baddies' plot, every 'cowboys and Indians'

play, story, novel and film grips us all as we wait breathlessly—and often endlessly—to see justice done. Perhaps most angry of all in our day are the utopian reformers, the ruthless terrorists, the hijackers and the political messiahs.

All of this tells us that anger is no light matter. We are probably most conscious of this fact, but prefer to ignore it, if possible. Suddenly—with a murder or a rape—it obtrudes itself and will not go away. How, then, shall we rid ourselves of anger?

RIDDING OURSELVES OF ANGER There are three basic ways of getting rid of personal anger: (i) suppressing it, (ii) ventilating or expressing it, and (iii) having it dissolved in love. So far as ‘(i)’ is concerned, we know that suppressing anger can bring us into terrible states of mind and body. Anger cannot be dissolved by repressing it. In saying this we do not mean that a temperate person cannot moderate anger, and in some sense contain it: he may achieve this in measure, but merely putting the lid on it can bring us to frightful extremes.

So far as ‘(ii)’ is concerned, we know that expressing anger in fits, explosive argument, and violent action does not lead to its obliteration, but only to its extension. Humans become guilty at their own anger, and guilty at expressing it, so that increased guilt compounds anger, and compounded anger increases guilt. Whilst ‘blowing a valve’ may bring temporary ease, this ease does not remain.

The method of ‘(iii)’—dissolving anger in love—sounds very far-fetched to ordinary human ears. This suggestion is treated with unbelief, scorn and rejection. The cry is often, ‘The human frame can stand so much—just so much! Then the thing is impossible.’ Anger is a multi-rooted and deep-seated thing, and has often been fed assiduously over many decades. Anger, linked with genocides, political and social injustice, racial suppression and the like, has long memory. No pious admonition to forgive is going to be well received!

We need to get to the roots and causes of anger, and to see how the Gospel can deal with this.

The Basis of Anger We have suggested that anger has to do with guilt. This is a complex matter. When man decided that he wished to ‘be as God, knowing good and evil’, he really opted to make his own evaluations on things. When a whole human race makes its evaluations, and these differ, then there will be trouble. ‘Every man did that which was right in his own eyes’ was a comment made on Israel at the time of the Judges, but it fairly sums up the human race.

If man could be easy about his own decisions, then that would not be a cause of disturbance. Man is guilty when he does not obey God’s will, when he does ‘his own thing’. He is also at odds with himself, because at odds with God, and at odds with creation. These disturbing elements put him on edge. He is conscious to some degree—through conscience—that he is under some kind of judgement. He then spends much of his time justifying himself before man and God—a counter-productive exercise, because everyone else is doing the same thing, and dislikes the competition!

So we could go on: man’s uneasiness makes him touchy. He must fulfil his own desires and plans, and so many things impede him in doing so. Here is a great cause for anger. His guilt with God makes him sense something of the ‘rightness’ of God in His judgements, but he denies the right of God to judge. He hates the thought of Divine anger, partly because it is deserved, partly because Divine anger angers him! He cannot accept the thought that God should have *this kind of anger!*

We have already seen that the child identifies God with its parents, and partly gets its image of God from them. This makes for problems in all human relationships, especially as authority is disliked. The security the child called for and did not seem to receive, the love and acceptance it looked for and did not find, are all grist to the mill of anger. Anger builds

up in homeopathic doses, and ultimately—to mix figures—there is a saturated solution awaiting some dangerous and precipitating catalyst. Often this state is reached in adolescence, especially when the child is in conflict with parental values, but dangerous anger may manifest itself at any age or stage of life. It is worth noting that seeming compliance and a certain passivity on the part of a person does not mean anger is not present. It may, in fact, be even more present, and dangerous.

Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, did not give a method of getting rid of anger. He simply spoke against it as being wrong, i.e. out of context with true Godly living. Recognition and rejection of anger is the basis of deliverance from it. This we shall pursue in our next study.

7

Losing Anger and Finding Tranquillity—II

The Way of Tranquillity

LIBERATED FROM ANGER

We noted in our last study that suppression and ventilation of anger are not finally successful. References in Proverbs, the Sermon on the Mount, and other Scriptures put the onus on the person to be done with anger, as though (i) by an act of will it can be cast off, and (ii) by an act of will we can refuse to be angry. That principle obtains in Scripture for all prohibitions of evil and all admonitions to good. Man must do what God commands, although man—of himself —has no moral power to do anything. When man sets out to obey, God gives him the power to achieve it, out of His grace.

We saw that the causes of anger are all rooted in man's alienation from God and his determination to act according to his own plan. In seeking to do so, he comes into conflict with the plans of others who are thus in competition with him. In the processes of conflict man receives hurts, wounds,

and builds up resentments at injustices (imagined or real), so that he is never really free from anger until somehow his ‘can of worms’ is destroyed, love liberates him from his guilts, and a new dynamic charges his motivation, i.e. he is ‘constrained by love’.

How, Then, Does This Happen? Proverbs 14:29–30 runs, ‘He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot’. The word ‘passion’ here is in Hebrew *qinah*, and carries the idea of ‘envy’ and ‘jealousy’, and, in this immediate context, of an intensity which is the opposite to tranquillity. This means it is a passionate state of mind which cannot come to peace. The context shows it is linked with anger, and indeed is anger itself. To be in a true state of mind, man must pass from anger to serenity.

We have seen the *qinah* of men like Cain, Lamech, Ishmael, Esau, and Jonah. Even a fine person such as Martha had *qinah*. Jesus told her, ‘Martha! Martha! You are anxious and troubled about many things.’ Judas had *qinah*, and so, in another way, did Peter, who was an intense and hasty person. We have also seen that through fear of death men and women are all their lifetime in bondage (Heb. 2:14–15). I John 4:18 identifies this with the fear of judgement and punishment. Man’s insecurity and anxiety stems, then, from his guilt. Only the abolition of his guilt will bring him to tranquillity. One theologian said that man is not afraid of death because he *has* to die, but because he *deserves* to die.

Man, then, is liberated from anger through the Atonement, and, in practical experience, when the work and fruits of that Atonement are applied to his whole person. When he is justified by grace he knows the penalty of sin is remitted. When he is forgiven he knows God has obliterated the heinousness of his sins. When he is totally cleansed of his moral pollution he knows he is pure. When he is given the gift of sanctification he knows he is securely

planted in the true people of God. When he is given the gift of the Spirit he is also given the gift of love, and knows he can now love. His liberation from anger is a simple thing, but then a very profound happening.

GOD’S PEOPLE THE UNANGRY ONES Because redeemed man has been reconciled with God—and thus with others—he is now at peace. This is the peace Jesus promised his disciples when he said, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid’ (John 14:27). Notice that he does not give peace *from* himself, but his own peace.

Again, John says, ‘In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgement, for as he is so are we in this world’ (I John 4:17). He means that since fear relates to punishment (the day of judgement), so the perfect love of the Atonement banishes fear, for in regard to judgement we are as free from it as Christ is. ‘As he is [in regard to judgement] so are we, *in this world!*’ All of this dissolves man’s *angst*, his guilty dread. It liberates him, filling him with love, joy, and peace—the fruits of the Gospel which are the fruit of the Spirit! ‘Wherefore being justified by faith we have [or, let us have] peace with God.’

This is why we say that Christians are the ‘unangry people’. The whole rootage of anger—‘lock, stock, and barrel’—has been taken away, for Christ has ‘abolished death and brought life and immortality to light’ (II Tim. 1:10). God is now seen as love, and not in the former images of grimness, foreboding, and judgemental action. Redeemed man loves God, is reconciled to Him, and to his fellow man. What others have done against him he has forgiven. What he has done against others has been forgiven by God because borne by Christ in his Calvary suffering.

Does this mean, then, that a redeemed person does not get angry? No! We know we all get angry from time to time.

We battle against the temptation to be angry. However, the *nexus* with the past has been broken. Anger is not part of the new life, and is not the true expression of the new pure heart.

The redeemed person does not have to get angry, because he knows that God is working all things for his good, and that He will never let anything separate His children from His love. The anger that fallen man has against God because of injustice, the child of God does not have to have because he knows that ‘the Judge of all the earth does right’, and that ‘God speedily avenges his elect’, and that ‘his judgements are righteous and true altogether’. Knowing these things, he does not get angry with God for being uncaring, tardy in judging, slow in executing righteous judgements.

The Continuing Destruction of Anger Paul said, ‘Let all bitterness and wrath and anger be put away from you with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you’; ‘But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth’ (Eph. 4:31–32; Col. 3:8). He meant that anger and wrath are foreign to the believer. By a decision he can be finished with them. By an act he can put them off. By a decision, too, and by an act of the will—aided by the power of God’s grace—he can put on ‘compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience’, as also ‘love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony’ (Col. 3:12, 14).

This, then, is the daily destruction of anger, and the positive way of peace.

TRANQUILLITY: ‘A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh.’
THE NEW LIFE OF PEACE We have seen how God gives peace to the redeemed person. Far from being a severe God who ‘reaps where he did not sow’ and uses man to grind away at living for Him, God

takes the initiative and ‘gives us all things richly to enjoy’ (I Tim. 6:17), because ‘everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving’ (I Tim. 4:4). ‘Every tree of the garden was good for food and pleasant to the eyes.’ Indeed, ‘the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof’ (Ps. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26), so that nothing is denied us.

Again, Romans 8:32 tells us, ‘He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up [abandoned him up] for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?’ In I Corinthians 4:7 Paul asks, ‘What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?’ God, then, is prodigal with His gifts, and He knows our needs even before we ask Him, and will supply all our needs ‘according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus’.

There are, then, ‘treasures of pleasure’ in God. He withholds nothing that is needed, even *the gift* of suffering! (Phil. 1:29; cf. Rom. 8:17ff.; II Cor. 4:16). Most of all He supplies us with relational and emotional fulfilment. The psalmist (36:7–9) writes:

How precious is thy steadfast love, O God!
 The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.
 They feast on the abundance of thy house,
 and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights.
 For with thee is the fountain of life;
 in thy light do we see light.

In another place a psalmist says, ‘God, my exceeding joy!’ and, ‘My soul is feasted with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips’ (43:4; 63:5). The ultimate is written in Psalm 17:15: ‘As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied with beholding thy form’.

We conclude, then, by noting that anger is not only destroyed but that peace comes and we do not ‘maintain the rage’ but ‘maintain the peace’, especially in the context of God’s love.

8

How, Then, Shall We Heal?

HUMAN SICKNESS NEEDS HEALING Sin is not, itself, sickness, but sickness in man results from sin and its guilt, as we shall see. To call certain states of human experience ‘sickness’ is to give the idea that man becomes infected, or certain afflictions come upon him, when, in fact, he is responsible for them. In such cases healing cannot take place, because man sees these things as visitations and not as arising from his wrongdoing.

A fair example is seen in Isaiah 1:4–5. In verse 4 God says,

Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.

Note that Israel is simply evil, doing wickedness. In verses 5–6 we see the outcome of this attitude and action:

Why will you still be smitten,
that you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores

and bleeding wounds;
they are not pressed out, or bound up,
or softened with oil.

The same principle is found many times in the Psalms. The classic example is in Psalm 32. In verses 1–5 David says, in essence, ‘Look! The most blessed state of a man is forgiveness and justification—from God. I had terrible guilt, but would not acknowledge (i.e. confess) the fact, and so illness gripped me. It was terrible. When I confessed—following repentance—then I was forgiven, and so my illness departed.’

Look, in verses 3–4, at the nature of the sickness which resulted from encapsulating sin within himself:

When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Now look at the healing. Verse 5 says,

I acknowledged my sin to thee,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’;
then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.’

Note that sin alone is not forgiven, but ‘the guilt of my sin’. Guilt is a dynamic factor in human experience. Psalm 103 supports this fact that sickness comes from sin, and healing from forgiveness—i.e. the removal of guilt—when it says, in verse 3, ‘who forgives all your iniquity, and heals all your diseases’. First there is forgiveness, and then healing.

This principle is seen in the New Testament when Christ heals the man who was a paralytic (Matt. 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26). When he says, ‘Son, take heart, your sins are forgiven,’ the listeners (mostly Pharisees and teachers of the law) take umbrage. They say, ‘This is blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins.’ Jesus then tests them, saying in effect, ‘You

believe with me that this sickness comes from sin. The test that this man is effectively forgiven his sins is that the sickness will now disappear, and he will become whole. Very good, watch me, for I say to the man, "Rise up, take up your bed and go home."'

This group of critics was powerfully convinced that the man was healed because forgiven, for they 'glorified God, who had given such authority to men', i.e. 'to forgive their sins and to heal their diseases' (see Matt. 9:8; Mark 2:12; Luke 5:26).

We need now to verify the claim that sicknesses can come from sin, and that forgiveness can heal. Before we do this, we must note that we are not saying, 'All sicknesses come from sin, and so all sicknesses can be healed by forgiveness.' Firstly, not all sicknesses are from sin, as is seen in John 9:3: 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him.' Secondly, not all healings are dependent upon—i.e. require—forgiveness, and this is clear from reading accounts of Jesus' healings.

GOD IS THE ONE WHO WOUNDS AND WHO HEALS

The One Who Wounds

A statement such as our heading is anathema to many who have simplistically said that all sicknesses come from Satan, and that God never visits human beings with sickness.

That is not the tenor of Scripture. It is clear that Satan is permitted to visit people with sicknesses, and with spirits, but only under the sovereign control of God. It is God's world, not Satan's.

Deuteronomy 32:39 says, 'I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand'. Hannah says, 'The Lord kills and brings to life' (I Sam. 2:6), and the king of Syria asks, 'Am I God to kill and make alive?' (II Kings 5:7). In regard to infirmities, God asks Moses, 'Who makes him [a man] dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?' (Exod. 4:11). Amos asks the people, 'Does evil

befall a city unless the Lord has done it?' (3:6). God claims, 'I form light and create darkness, I make weal and I create woe' (Isa. 45:7). Isaiah 31:2 records, 'He is wise and brings disaster'.

These examples could be greatly multiplied. God seeks to kill Moses over the matter of circumcision (Exod. 4:24–26), He permanently damages Jacob's thigh, destroys Uzzah when he seeks to steady the Ark, afflicts Pharaoh's house with plagues because he takes Sarai, Abram's wife. In the Exodus era God brings plagues upon Egypt, even to killing first-born sons. Miriam is made leprous as a judgement, and King Uzziah also, for sacrificing at the altar. Many of Israel are destroyed at Baal-Peor because of their terrible sin. In I Kings 13:4ff. the prophet of God is destroyed because he will not obey the Lord implicitly. These are just a few of the afflictions God brings because of human evil.

In Deuteronomy 4:15ff. Moses warns Israel against idolatry, lest God destroy the people. In 7:15 he says God will not lay upon them the diseases they had known in Egypt if they will obey Him. In 28:15ff. there are some fearsome warnings. If disobedient, Israel will receive 'curses, confusion, and frustration'. 'The Lord will smite you with fever, and with consumption, inflammation, and fiery heat, and with drought, and with blasting, and with mildew.' 'The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers and the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed... madness and blindness and confusion of mind.'

In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira perish at God's hand. Elymas is blinded. Herod is smitten with mortal sickness. Those who do not 'discern the body' are judged, so that 'some of you are weak and ill, and some have died' (I Cor. 11:29–30). That believers should be judged in this way comes as a shock to many.

The Book of the Revelation is filled with accounts of horrific plagues, famines, earthquakes and the like which have come to man from God's hand. We need to read this Book without being squeamish, knowing the fact that God's judgements are 'true and righteous altogether'. Only then

will we see that God is the Smiter as well as the Healer.

The One Who Heals God is the true Healer, yet His healing and His smiting are together. In Exodus 15:26 God says:

‘If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your Healer.’

Many take this statement ‘I am the Lord your Healer’ out of its context. He is not only Healer, but also ‘Giver of sickness’.

Without quoting all the Scriptures verbatim, we refer, in the following order, to some—though not all—which relate to healing, namely: Exodus 23:25; II Kings 20:3ff.; Psalms 6:2, 9; 30:2; 41:4; 103:2; 107:17–20; 147:3; Jeremiah 33:6–9 (cf. Jer. 8:22; 30:12–17; 46:11); Isaiah 57:18–19; 58:6–9; Ezekiel 37:1–14; 47:12; Revelation 22:1–3. The healings by prophets (such as Elijah and Elisha), and by Christ, his disciples, and the early church are all included in God’s work as Healer.

We conclude this section, then, by summing up the principle of sickness and healing as generally found in Scripture. Much—though not all—illness is the result of sin and its guilt. Guilt lays the foundation for sickness. Repentance and confession can bring healing, but it is God who personally heals, and healing is not simply a process which takes place, of itself. Every sin is against God, and He must forgive before healing can take place. The paradigm for this principle is found in Psalm 32:1–7 and Jeremiah 30:12–17. These two passages demand much thoughtful study.

HOW, THEN, SHALL WE HEAL? We come now to see how we can bring the healing of God to people. In this we must firstly understand that there is no true healing apart from the Atonement. In Matthew 8:16–17 we read:

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.’

This passage seems, at first sight, to be linked with the Atonement as set out in Isaiah 53. This, however, may not be the case. For example, when Christ forgave people their sins we find no immediate link with the Atonement. His forgiveness seems rather to flow from authority to forgive, which God had delegated to him, i.e. ‘That you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . .’

Notice that Christ ‘took’, i.e. ‘*took away*’, from the sick what they had, i.e. their sicknesses. He also defeated the evil spirits with a word. This means that these things—sicknesses, infirmities and demons—were therefore no longer with them. He also ‘bore’, i.e. in some way took from them their sicknesses, and bore them himself. The context shows he had authority and power to do this, but in no sense did he—at that point—bear the guilt that was the cause of those sicknesses.

In Isaiah 53:4 we read, ‘Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows’, which can also be translated, ‘He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains’. However, the context shows that ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed’.

This makes the matter clear. On the Cross (i) he took the sicknesses and infirmities which are the result of sin, and bore them, and, (ii) he took the punishment for the sins which caused the illnesses, and so there are no grounds left for such illnesses. Since this sort of illness cannot be separated from its guilt, therefore all guilt has gone, and consequent illness is defeated.

This is a tremendous message for the ill. On the one hand it gives them hope for healing; on the other it warns them against expecting to be healed apart from healing of the

guilt. Christ has borne the guilt, so he can now heal them. The need for repentance and faith (both of which are gifts of God) must be stressed, but always it must be taught that grace precedes faith, and indeed faith springs from the word of grace (Rom. 10:17).

In Matthew 8:17 Christ healed by virtue of the authority given, but—at that point—he did not suffer vicariously their guilt, so that their healing—at that point—was not, as such, healing from guilt, but only of the sicknesses which resulted from guilt. Of course, some of the sicknesses which he healed were *not* from guilt. Christ did not require attitudes of mind, even attitudes of repentance, before he would heal, though on some occasions lack of faith was a hindrance. He healed gratuitously, even without repentance, and most never returned to thank him! On at least one occasion he warned against further sinning which would bring even worse sickness (John 5:14; cf. 8:11).

Elements to be Considered for Healing

We may now bring together all that we have said in our previous seven studies concerning Godly wisdom, the wisdom which tells us how to advise man, i.e. man as a person in various states, man coming to be his true self, and to the ultimate fulfilment of glorification.

This wisdom comes to man through the revelation of Christ, and by the aid of the Spirit, so that in being reconciled to God man could become reconciled to his fellow man. We have seen that man sins by his rebellion, and needs to see God as the true Authority, i.e. as Love. Thus love can flow in man's own relationships. The anger against human fathers, mothers, and family can be the cause of deep problems and many illnesses. The anger that man knows can destroy him unless he comes into the tranquillity of God through redeeming and sustaining love.

Now the counsellor needs to understand the counsellee in all these states, and particularly at the point of his need. Indeed, he must perceive what this person has heard of the

word of God, what understanding he has achieved, and where he 'stands' in regard to those words, i.e. the word of God. By this we mean that the wisdom concerning created man, fallen man, man redeemed, man seeking holiness, man serving God, man anticipating glorification and ultimate identity—this is the wisdom the counsellor must draw upon, and bring into play.

The illnesses of which we have spoken are not always physical and organic. They may be illnesses of the mind and the spirit, but the cause and basis of them is found in the moral (or, immoral) realm. Where anger remains, full renewal of the person has not taken place, or has been arrested—so to speak. Generally we find that anger against man is anger against God, and mostly arises from four elements. These are: (i) parental upbringing, (ii) heredity, (iii) circumstances, and (iv) environment. An interesting study in Scripture would be to trace human protest (and anger) at these four elements.

What, however, concerns us is that human beings generally deny accountability for the four things we have set out above. They are really angry because such things have 'happened' to them. Obviously they think they cannot be held responsible for them, but then God can be held responsible! He alone could have (and should have) ordered them differently, and He did not! That is man's basic gripe against God, his basis for so-called righteous indignation.

Accountability a Key to True Healing

In the Scriptures man is responsible for all his own actions and choices. Ezekiel 18 should be studied closely, for here the principle of personal accountability is set out clearly. Some in Israel had said, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' They meant, 'We are like we are, and do what we do as the result (only) of what our parents were and did.' In other words, there is no taking of responsibility for the sins one has committed. This is suicidal, for if God is to forgive sins He can do this

only where those sins are acknowledged as having been committed, i.e. where the sinner takes responsibility for them.

Ezekiel 18 hammers the point that the father shall bear his own sin, and the son shall not bear his father's sin, and the son shall bear his own sins, and not the father. Likewise, if a son has an evil father, it is his responsibility to reject the evil ways of his father, and to walk in the righteous way, by which he shall save his soul alive. Again, if a person has a good father, but chooses to walk the evil way, then he will perish. Nothing could be clearer. Man, from the cradle to the grave, makes those choices which determine life or death for him. He cannot off-load this responsibility onto God.

A number of theologians have pointed out that although such things as heredity, environment, circumstance, and parental upbringing may be adverse to a person, yet they do not *per se* shape him up. It is the person's reaction or response to these things which helps to determine what he becomes. James Denney said that heredity 'may be said to fix our trial, but not our fate.'^{*} We are not responsible for what 'comes upon' us, but we are responsible for our reactions and responses to such things.

Problems We Meet in Seeking to Heal

Probably refusal to accept accountability is the greatest problem we meet. Human beings are prone to self-pity, and this is deadly. Linked with what we have said above, people blame others or God for their condition. Again, there is talk of, 'One can take so much, but there is a limit to what a human can stand!' In fact this is not true, since love 'bears' and 'endures' all things. Anger is linked with self-pity, especially when a person is said to be 'hurting'.

North Americans have devised a verb 'to hurt', i.e. 'to feel hurt', so that it then appears to be a normal part of life 'to hurt'. In fact no Christian should be 'hurting'. Hit on one cheek we should immediately turn the other. We cannot

afford to cultivate 'hurt', which, anyway, is generally compounded of righteous indignation, a sense of injustice, more than a dash of anger, and a large portion of self-pity. 'When he was reviled he reviled not again, but committed himself to him who judges righteously.' That was the way of the Master, and it should also be the way of the servant.

What should be understood is that Christ not only bore our sins and their guilt, but he also 'bore our griefs and carried our sorrows', which must mean that these griefs and sorrows, too, have been obliterated. The principle is (was), 'In all their affliction he was afflicted', to which is added, 'in his love and in his pity he redeemed them' (Isa. 63:9). Since it is written, 'By his stripes [wounds] we are healed', then we must be healed also. So then, we have nothing over which to moon, ponder, and about which to get angry!

A woman once said to me, 'You don't mean to say that you will not leave me even my hurts? Why! They are the only things I have left.' She wished to wallow in their bitter-sweetness, and for ever have a case against mankind, and perhaps, even God! What needs to be recorded is that everything a human being conceals in the 'secret heart' (Ps. 51:6)—i.e. pain, shame, hurt, reaction, bitterness, resentment, hatred, shock and horror—has all been experienced by Christ on the Cross, expressed, and borne to extinction.

We mean that when he 'bore our griefs and carried our sorrows', then he had gone down to the depths of us and borne those hurts, griefs, sorrows, pains, angers, resentments and bitteresses *away from us*, dealing with them himself in his suffering. He suffered them out to exhaustion, playing them out to extinction—their extinction! Therefore they are no more. This is definitive. They only exist to our unfaithfulness where we reject the record and assurance of his total suffering. Objectively they have been dealt with, but faithlessness retains them as real. Thus we make play with ghost-guilts, ghost-hurts, ghost-shame—and so on.

The psalmist said, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord!' He meant, 'I have cried, out of the depths of

^{*} *Studies in Theology*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1895, p. 91.

myself, all that is there in the hidden depths of me.’ Christ, in his terrible cry of dereliction, expressed for ever all the sorrows, griefs, shames, pains, anguish, shock and horrors of the human spirit, and in so doing obliterated them. They are no more! He cried ‘out of the depths’, but then those were the depths of all of us, and without that crying of his we could never be healed. This is what is meant by ‘he . . . was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sins of many’ (Isa. 53:12).

Conclusion to Healing *The first thing we need to see is that Christ came to heal, and this is what he does. He announced what this would be:*

‘ . . . he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord’ (Luke 4:18–19).

When John the Baptist was tempted to doubt his Messianic being and mission, then:

In that hour he [Christ] cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them’ (Luke 7:21–22).

Peter later spoke of his healing ministry: ‘He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.’

The second thing we need to see is that healing lies in forgiveness. When we are forgiven, the cause of much illness is destroyed. Being forgiven demands that we forgive. Sin against us is primarily sin against God (Ps. 51:4), so we dare not withhold God’s forgiveness from anyone: ‘Freely you have received: freely give.’ Forgiving others is healing to us.

If we deliberately retain hurts, angers, resentments and

the like, i.e. if we refuse their healing, and refuse to forgive others, then we impede our own healing, as well as the healing of others. Forgiveness is liberating to us, and is intended to liberate others. Those who demand that others should plead forgiveness do not really understand God’s grace. Those who think others have sinned grievously against them ought to see whether or not most of the sin lies not so much in others as in their own reaction, and that this needs the forgiveness of God. Here total accountability should be seen and stressed.

The third thing for healing is that having been loved we love. ‘ . . . where I love I live,’ the poet Robert Southwell said correctly. This means that parents must love children, husbands wives and wives husbands, members of the family must love all others, and all believers must love all mankind—no matter how unlovable others may appear. Love forgives: love ‘covers the multitude of sins’. Love builds others up, not breaks them down. Love, in fact, is the only true constraint, the only true control over human actions.

The fourth thing is that healing must be deep and total. Unfortunately some people like to exercise priestly power and seek to hand out healing and wholeness. Only God can heal: only Christ can bring to wholeness. Paul said, ‘The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation’ (Titus 2:11). The word ‘salvation’ has the ideas of saving, delivering and healing. The word ‘salve’ (salv-ation) is embedded in these ideas. True healing must be deep, because human illness from sin is very deep.

On this score Jeremiah’s prophecy is most vocal. Jeremiah, as we see in a detailed study of 30:12–17, sees sickness coming to Israel as the result of its sins. It is both a consequence of guilt, and the punishment, too, for sinning. God promises, nevertheless, ‘I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal’.

Unfortunately there were amateur healers in Israel, people who had medicine which was ‘alternate’ to God’s healing balm. Of these God exclaims, ‘They have healed

the wound of my people lightly [i.e. 'slightly', as though it were not serious, 'a light scratch'], saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace' (6:14; 8:11).

Jeremiah sees Israel's sickness and wounds as deep: 'The virgin daughter of my people is smitten with a great wound, with a very grievous blow.' He says, 'For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded,' and he asks, 'Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?' To him this illness and wounding is very deep. In 30:13 he addresses Israel: 'There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you.'

If we apply this material to human illness resulting from sin and guilt, we then cry with Jeremiah, 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' The answer is, of course, that the balm of God—the 'salve' of salvation—is the Atonement. True healing never takes place apart from grace. The taking away of a sickness does not necessarily mean the healing of a person.

We have said the healing of a person must be whole and total. The whole thrust of the New Testament is that whilst physical healings may take place as gifts of God (cf. I Cor. 12:9, 28), yet salvation (true healing) is never something effected by an intermediary. We have power to proclaim the Gospel, but not to effect the healing of forgiveness, love, the purification of dead works from the conscience (Heb. 9:14), and so on. Grace alone can set a person free by justification, forgiveness and cleansing. Only the Spirit can apply these things to the human spirit.

In humility the true counsellor, the man of God's wisdom, must proclaim the word of grace, the saving Gospel, and leave the rest to God.

PART TWO

Counselling For Our Comfort

The Kindness of Counselling

The Wonderful Counsellor and His Under-Shepherds

—

—

Counselling for Our Comfort

Introduction to the Essays on 'Counselling for Our Comfort'

A GENERAL REMINDER REGARDING COUNSELLING Words have a way of meaning one thing in one age and of changing that meaning in another. The noun for *counsel* in the Old Testament (*etsah*) simply meant 'advice', but advice that came out of wisdom. In the New Testament *counsel* has the idea of advice, but generally as it relates to will and purpose. God's *counsel* is that will and purpose which is founded in His wisdom. It is in fact the outworking of that wisdom. We could say, then, that *counsel* in the Scriptures means 'the giving of advice from the basis of wisdom'. Whilst knowledge and wisdom are related (Hosea 4:1–6), wisdom is not necessarily knowledge, or knowledge wisdom (I Cor. 8:1–2).

Probably some modern counselling would not agree wholly with the biblical idea of counselling. Much of modern counselling is not the giving of advice, and some of it is not directive, though it seeks to stimulate the counsellee to come to personal understanding of himself (herself)—with a view to useful personal decisions and actions. For

the purposes of the following essays, counselling is that action which incorporates sympathy, understanding, discernment and perception by means of which it can bring comfort and aid—where possible—through the means of the biblical wisdom pertaining to the nature of God, man, creation, redemption and the ultimate glorification of all things. It is wisdom which takes into account the glory and sinfulness of man, which employs love, but which does not hesitate to confront man with his accountability as a moral creature, present him with his responsibility for his actions—as against the prevalent doctrine that man is a victim, needing only to be pitied and aided. Such counselling informs man of the grace and love of God which can lead him to full rehabilitation and dignity as a moral creature, and give him great hope for an assured future.

In giving this description of biblical counselling we are not being critical of counselling which is not biblical.

THE MATTER OF COMFORT Comfort is a rich word. It speaks of serenity, security, personal assurance, well-being in life, relief from tension and pressure, release from a sense of oppression and domination by other persons, events and elements. It speaks of good relationships with God, man, one's self, and one's world. A mother comforts her child. God comforts Israel. Christ comforts his people. The Holy Spirit is called 'the Comforter' in some Bible translations, and this very word actually means 'Counsellor'. Thus true counselling brings comfort—given that the counsellee can accept what will be helpful for him.

In all the essays following we will assume the limited wisdom of us as persons, our inability to be 'fix-it persons', and yet—at the same time—assume the wisdom of God in His word, His gifts of wisdom at points of need, and His presence with us as we seek to love, understand and discern the needs of others.

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN COUNSELLING We must recognize that wisdom has always been in the world, even if all of it has not been 'Biblical'.

In rebelling against God man lost true wisdom, but there have always been men and women of faith, and so counselling is an old practice in the human race. Tribes and peoples have always had elders—the older, wiser ones—and all cultures seek after wisdom. Whilst it is true that our knowledge of man—anthropology with all its associated branches—has greatly increased, it can be questioned whether our wisdom has increased proportionally. For those who think wisdom has arisen only in the late twentieth century, and in order to put the record straight, we make the following observations:

- (a) People have always been helped by other people. We have not had to wait until the twentieth century to do this. Israel not only developed a great 'wisdom literature', but its Scriptures are the path to true wisdom. Likewise the Christian Scriptures are at one with the older wisdom of Israel.
- (b) The Christian church has always had the work of 'the cure of souls'.
- (c) The ministry of the healing of *persons*—i.e. not only of organic diseases—has always been part of the church's programme. It has always sought to bring comfort to people.
- (d) The church has always recognized that man is basically a sinner and that his primary problems derive from his separation from God by the Fall, by his continuing guilt, and by his enmity with God.
- (e) The church has always recognized that the conscience of man is dynamic, needing the ministry of the Gospel until it is cleansed and the person is thus set free.
- (f) The church has always recognized that the universal sinfulness of man means that relationships across the human race are greatly out of kilter. Man's inhumanity to man—i.e. his personal selfishness—has been recognized, and also the consequent hurt, pain and terror that the human race experiences from its own source. So much so is this that many folk are actual victims of the principle of 'every man for himself' ('Blow you, Jack, I'm all right!'). In such situations the aggressive seem to win!

- (g) Man, because of his innate moral failure, has always had the problem of seeking to prove himself right—i.e. self-justification and self-vindication—in the eyes of others. This has led to rivalry, and since in one way it is linked with man's fear of death, the rivalry in effecting one's own security has added to the problems of human living. It has also given rise to the sense of injustice which dogs the offended human spirit.
- (h) Linked with this, hatred, jealousy, selfishness and anger have always been part of (fallen) human living. The church—through the Gospel—has sought to effect the obliteration of anger and its related elements, and promote love, fellowship, unity and harmony. It seeks to set the person at harmony with himself and others, and then the community at harmony within itself. This is by the revelation of the love of God, which draws out the response of persons to it.
- (i) The Gospel has always taught the judgements of God through God's wrath being revealed from heaven, within man's history, and the problems which confront man in this respect, especially where he has culpability before God. This is the question of human guilt—perhaps man's major problem.
- (j) The matters of law, authority, responsibility and accountability have always confronted man, but they have also represented problems to man in his drive for autonomy, his desire to privatize himself, and to assert himself within his society. The matters of government by elders (tribal and national), the parental authority within the family—along with the imperfections of those in authority—have always posed problems, and have been at the root of disenchantment, rebellion, anger, and so often have had consequent suicidal and homicidal outcomes.
- (k) The matter of human sexuality, the drive for companionate love, the rage resulting from sexual deprivation, rejection, and betrayal have always presented problems for the human race, especially because love—both sexual and affectional—has always been regarded highly by humanity.
- (l) Vocation and hope are closely linked, and persons without hope are desperate persons. The church has sought to teach regarding man as a vocational creature, and the ultimate goal of glory which God has set for the human race. Such teaching, by nature of the case, can only be rooted in the biblical promises which themselves arise from God.

These matters listed above have always been extant in the

human scene. Idolatry, human self-effort and human wisdom have presented their systems and solutions, but the system of the authentic worship of the true God—such as we find in covenant, the giving of the law, man's sonship of God, the revelation of God's glory, the resultant worship—has always ministered to the needs of man.

Given in all this, we find that humanism—man's preoccupation with himself—has penetrated into the church and conditioned its thinking, so that we have such man-centred questions as, 'What does God do for me?', 'What do I get out of the Gospel?', and not 'Where do I stand with God?', 'Do I not justly deserve judgement, and what hope is there for me?' We rarely present God as One Whose holiness has been violated by man, who must thus be judged an ingrate.

In much modern counselling which arises from our anthropological and sociological insights, we tend to think of man as central, his needs as demanding primary consideration, and his healing of mental, physical and social problems of primary importance. The Christian church has always taken note of these things, but in emphasizing the love and grace of God towards man has nevertheless seen man not so much as being a victim, but as being a person estranged from God, and so requiring redemption. The true comfort for man comes from reconciliation with God, with his fellow creatures, with himself, and with the creation in which he lives.

It would seem, then, that we ought to avail ourselves of all insights regarding man which have come from modern research, but regard God as primary, and see man as God's primary creature. This should be helpful to all counselling—whether 'biblical' or otherwise.

THE HEART OF COUNSELLING IS CHRIST

Because this is the subject of our first essay, we will not expand the principle here. What we want to emphasize is that the

dwelling of Christ in the mind, heart and life of the believer is a significant doctrine of the New Testament. With it is also the teaching that the believer dwells in Christ. So John the apostle speaks of abiding in Christ, and abiding in God, and at the same time of Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit abiding in believing man. Christ—in John 15—bids his disciples as branches to abide in the Vine. In John 14 he tells them that he, the Spirit and the Father will take up Their home in them. Paul says, 'Christ lives in me,' and 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' and has his famous doctrine of 'in Christ, through Christ, with Christ, by Christ'. Peter enjoins the readers of his First Letter to 'sanctify Christ in your hearts'. Paul and John would both say that Christ dwells in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Divine Indwelling is a remarkable one. It means that all the resources of the Godhead are available to the believer—at least insofar as they are needed for pastoral ministry. The counsellor is not meant to help and to heal on his own. Of course, the personal indwelling of the Godhead is along with the corporate indwelling of the Godhead in the church, the community of Christ. This individualistic counselling is not the true order of the church. Our next essay will speak of the Wonderful Counsellor—Christ—and in fact he is the Source of all true counselling, and that counselling takes a churchly form—the ministry of the whole body of Christ—in which all the true gifts are utilized, as and where needed.

There is enormous comfort and encouragement to know that just one person—the counsellor—is not left alone to help the counsellee. That person can be encouraged, helped and supported by the whole community, especially when he is glad to be incorporated into the Body of Christ—the church. The counsellor is secure in the knowledge that his relationship with the members of the Godhead is a personal one, and that he will be given the guidance, ability and encouragement to speak to, and relate with, counsellees as the occasions require.

All this, of course, requires the personal devotional life of the counsellor to be intimate with the One indwelling him, through the means of grace such as obedience, the word of God, prayer, worship,

fellowship and the life of love. The essays which follow all presuppose a loving relationship of the counsellor with the ones under his care, and that that relationship springs from the love of God to the counsellor and in him.

1 The Source and Sense of All Relationships

ALL LIFE IS RELATIONAL Biblically all life is relationships. In creation man related to God, and God to man, and man to man, and man to himself. Christ said, 'And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' John the Apostle said similar words: 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' Jeremiah had said, many years before:

Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.'

Knowing God is life eternal, but is at the same time life lived here on this planet, amongst human beings. Relationship with God is life, and so it is also with others. John said, 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.' Paul could say, 'I know nothing against myself.' He related to himself in a healthy way. We would rightly conclude that good relationships make for good living, and bad relationships are against it. What then is the source and basis of relationships? The answer must be, 'God.'

THE SOURCE AND BASIS OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS To understand human relationships we must first understand the nature of God.

God is not a monad, i.e. an entity of bare unity, coldly one within Himself. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that the Godhead, though 'One', is a tri-unity, i.e. is constituted of the Three—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Leaving for a moment the way this is so, let us look at the implications of the Three being One. The Father was ever the Father, the Son ever the Son, otherwise such terms as 'Father' and 'Son' have no meaning. The Holy Spirit—in the Scriptures—is known as 'the Spirit of the Father', and 'the Spirit of the Son'. That is, in some way the Three are bonded as One.

We have no difficulty in human relationships in understanding two bonded as one, e.g. in marriage. Three bonded as one can be parents and a child, but the evenness of these relationships is rare, if ever it happens. We need a lot of research to show the unity of the Three, but the Father–Son relationship is not difficult to understand. That the Spirit in a sense bonds Father and Son as one is not hard to understand. When we see they are not three monads joined, but are essentially One, then we begin to understand the wonderful truth that 'God is love'. We see that the Father loves the Son, the Son the Father, both love the Spirit and the Spirit loves both. Many Scripture references would bear out what we have said.

ALL RELATIONSHIPS MUST BE OTHER-PERSON CENTRED Within the Godhead—the social Trinity—each Person is other-Person centred. The Father loves the Son and thinks in terms of him. The Son loves the Father and wishes to please Him. The Spirit serves both the Father and the Son, as all Three do, indeed. We know *nothing* about human relationships unless we understand that we derive from God and that as the Three are other-Person centred, and hence are centred

upon us—the human creations of God—so we are intended to be other-person centred. This is the very core and heart of family. This is what it means for a husband to love his wife, his wife to respond in love to him, and both to centre themselves upon their children, and those others which life has brought into their orbit. If this principle were observed there would be no need whatever for any kind of counselling.

ALL RELATIONSHIPS MUST BE OTHER-PERSON CONCENTRED

It is one thing to be other-person centred. Paul said, 'Think not every man upon his own things, but also on the things of others.' In the same context he said, 'Consider others better than yourself.' It seems he was saying, 'Put others before yourself.' Well, one can do that, with effort. Yet being other-person centred may also be a matter of ego—a relationship willed towards another, and even upon another. There must be something more to make it into a true relationship, for relationship is more than an attitude. It is a form of union with another, or of interrelationship, interpenetration of another. To be true and functional it must be mutual. That is, when both are *concentred* each upon the other, then that is relationship at its highest point.

Paul tells us, 'I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God' (I Cor. 11:3). This has been understood as a 'relational hierarchy'. That is, God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of the man, and the man (husband) is the head of the woman (wife). God is *over* Christ, Christ *over* the man, and the man *over* the woman. Yet this 'over', whilst it may be superordination, is not superiority of the one over the other. Jesus could say, 'The Father is greater than I,' and in the same breath say, 'I and the Father are one.' How? Jesus said, 'I am *in* the Father, and the Father *in* me.' Thus true relationships—and all relationships may prove in one way or another to be hierarchical—depend on the 'I in

him (her) and he (she) in me' principle. Thus, to be 'other-person centred' is to be in that one, and that one be in you.

The powerful prayer of Christ on the night of his betrayal bears contemplation, especially when we wish to think of 'other-person centredness'.

'I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that *they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one* . . .

Nothing in all that has ever been written can equal this prayer and statement of Christ. It is only from such abiding in God and God abiding in us that our human relationships can be full and free, for all familyhood on heaven and earth derives from the Father Who is above all, and through all and in all, and in Whom all is, and has its true being.

Human Beings Not Monads

Man can commune with himself! This is strange and wonderful. It is understandable because God said, 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness.' In one sense man is in the likeness of the Triune God, i.e. has a trinitarian likeness! Certainly he is one, without being a cold, bare monad. That is why he can reason *with himself!* God, then, is a social Being, and man, likewise, is a social being. What makes life so fascinating is that one human being can relate to another, and in fact such relationships constitute humanity's way of life.

ALL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS DERIVE FROM GOD

There are a number of ways of looking at this fact. Since we are made in the image and likeness of God we will reflect God's actions and being. Because the Godhead is a *social* Trinity our actions will be social. What fatherhood and sonship we know—and truly have—in life will

derive from the Godhead. God will be—so to speak—the *source* of these relationships. Since God made man (the male) and woman (the female), then maleness and femaleness will derive from God—whatever that may imply about God. Since 'male and female' are first called 'them' and then 'him' (see Gen. 1:26–27; 5:2), i.e. *Man*, then all relationships—male, female, and human—must derive from God. The first principle we derive is this: *no man or woman can be what he or she is apart from God*. The second principle is: since man and woman together (them) are Man, *then the human race—the male-female entity—cannot properly be itself apart from God*.

Paul has two statements: (i) 'every family in heaven and on earth is named' from God the Father; (ii) there is 'one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all'. The first statement can mean—paraphrased—'there is only one source for family, i.e. God'. It can mean 'all [human] familyhood derives from Him', and 'all [human] fatherhood derives from Him'. The second statement is that God's Fatherhood is over everything, and is through and in everything, in the universe. These two statements should convince us that without God there can be no true relationships anywhere. This is at once both a warning and a rich encouragement.

The conclusion we must come to is that all our relationships must be in God, deriving *from* God. Thus to be *in* God will be the only way to go to have right relationships—recognizing, of course, that not all human beings go this way. So then, instead of trying out every behavioural pattern, every method suggested, and every therapy offered, we should go straight to God, be *in* Him, and work *from* Him. This is the quickest way to the making and healing of relationships.

TRUE FAMILY DERIVES FROM GOD

We see, of course, we are only repeating what we have said above. We repeat it because people who are at odds with one another in relationships

can quickly see the way to go, i.e. to go immediately to God the Father, through Christ the Son, by the aid of the Spirit. Then their relationships can be healed, providing, of course, that the persons out of full relationship also wish to do this.

Even so, our mind is not primarily directed to the reconciling of broken relationships as it is to the building up, extending and establishing of all relationships within the family and the community. Families always exist within the context of other families—that is what makes for 'community'. Families which willingly derive their relationships from God can make progress, especially if they understand the principle of covenant—that gift of God which promises God's constant working in the midst of His covenant-people. So then we have a living principle to know and put into action, namely: 'By creation all human beings derive from God and are His creatures, His children and His subjects. As Creator, Father and King He cares for them. When they come to Him—whatever may be their present state—He will rehabilitate them, and heal their relationships, and establish their families.' If human beings can be friends with God, they can be friends with one another!

THE PRESENT PROBLEM FACING THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE

What we have said above may well sound theoretical, theological, and impractical.

Everyone knows that he or she is faced with a world in which relationships are not easy to build and maintain. Because that is so, then what we have said may sound merely optimistic.

Let us get a few things straight: the first is that theory—as such—is not necessarily a bad thing. Almost every advance of science has come through theory. The second is that theology, whilst it is not truth itself, is the way to truth, just as a street directory can be a guide to the address we wish to reach, even though it is not that place itself. The third is that nothing is impractical if we have derived its principle from

the Scriptures, provided of course we do not use it *apart* from God. In God, theory, principle, and practice are most useful.

Now, as to the problem facing the human race! The problem is that man has broken away from God in order to do his own thing, to be his own person, to plan his own destiny, and to try to fulfil it, on his own. Every person who has broken away from God is a threat to every other person who has done likewise. Since this is the case with every one of us, we are all in competition with each other. Every one is out to prove and justify himself or herself, hence the competition in the family, in marriage, and in the community. Hence—on the larger scale—family quarrels and human wars. Because we are away from God we feel inferior and guilty, and this drives us even more to prove (justify) ourselves. Until the matter of justification is settled we will get nowhere. Just think of what havoc these self-justifying endeavours produce in the world. Try to analyse and discern society at present on this basis. Imagine the 'hidden agenda' every human being has—from the cradle to the grave—and try to understand what drives human beings with a perfectionist drive, and think of the dynamics of guilt and failure which beset the human race, especially in its relationships!

**CONCLUSION: THE SOLUTION
TO THE PROBLEM DIVIDING
THE HUMAN RACE**

The solution from the biblical point of view lies in the doctrine and experience of reconciliation, i.e. 'In Christ God was reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them', and 'through him [Christ] God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace [reconciliation, oneness] by the blood of his [Christ's] cross'. When a person is reconciled to God he is at the same time reconciled with others and himself. The New Testament

knows of no believer in whom God does not dwell as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of no believer who does not dwell in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus the people of God are not only centred in God—as He is centred in them—but they are also centred in one another.

The true work of counselling is to bring persons to see this fact, and become part of being in God and having God be in him or her. Undoubtedly this has to be brought through as a revelation, through the power and ability of the Holy Spirit. It is the only thing which will effectively heal relationships. Only from it does practical centredness spring, i.e. only from God does love come, and only when that love flows through a person and out to others is centredness a reality.

2

The Dynamics of Human Birth

THE MATTER OF HUMAN BIRTH In Psalm 51:5 David said, 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' He does not see his sin as originating in himself, but of his self coming into being through a sinful conception. This does not infer that the act of conception was evil—an idea foreign to Scripture—but that his parents were sinners. How this entail of sin obtains is not told to us. In Romans 5:12–13 Paul points to what the theologians call 'original sin', i.e. the original sin which brought sin to the human race. Paul infers that no one can sin this original sin but Adam, but he does say that all humanity participated in Adam's sin: 'all did sin!' David speaks highly of his own mother, but at this point (Ps. 51:5) says she conceived him in sin. Matthew Henry comments, 'though she was, by grace, a child of God, she was, by nature, a daughter of Eve and not excepted from the common character.'^{*}

^{*} Something we have to take into account is the results of the fall of man. A close study of Genesis 3 shows us that a break came in the relationships of the man and the woman. The woman was to suffer pain in childbirth. The statement of Genesis 3:16 was, 'To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you"'. Children, then, would be involved in the pain of childbearing, and all that that would mean to the mother. The man was to be ruler over the wife—a departure from the creational norm—and the wife would have desire for her husband, which could mean (i) she would desire him even though he ruled over her, and she had pain in childbirth, or (ii) in the light of Genesis 3:16 'desire' could mean 'desire to rule', i.e. over her husband. Whatever the case, the child would be

Whatever original sin may mean, it is certain that whilst human beings may pick much up by way of imitation—especially by imitation of parents—yet they are sinful from birth. Indeed, they have an entail of sin, which means they do not come into this world wholly pure in their beings. This appears to be a harsh statement—especially in our current humanistic way of thinking—yet David knew that adultery and murder had not just happened *from* him. They were *of* him, i.e. he was a murderer and an adulterer. He did not blame his parents for the sinfulness innate in him and expressed overtly by him. He took it realistically to be part of human—albeit fallen human—being.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BEING BORN IN SIN Theologians will always argue about the doctrine of human sinfulness, especially that doctrine called 'original sin', and the terms 'Pelagian' and 'Calvinist' will be bandied about, but the fact is that all human beings, whether babies or adults, show equal insistence on doing their own will. It is the fact that our sinfulness in this life has to do with the past of the human race which ought to be taken into consideration. It is a troubling idea. Do we understand the entail of human sinfulness? If not, then we may misunderstand human behaviour and fail to see elements of self-criticism and self-rejection that seem inherent in the human race.

Theologians may argue as to whether a child is born with the entail of original sin, and whether this carries with it also the guilt of that original sin. If the whole human race as a solidary body participated in Adam in that original sin (cf. Rom. 5:12–21), then original sin represents a powerful

born into a less-than-ideal situation. This would greatly affect the child. Such thinking should be thoughtfully taken into consideration. The new-born baby does not enter into an ideal world!

psychological factor in the affairs of humanity. If the whole human race carries some kind of guilt for its primal rebellion and fall, then this fact must be taken into consideration when we seek to understand human beings. We have surely discovered that human beings have some kind of existential guilt. We mean *they are never free from the guilt of not being what they are essentially*—i.e. should be—by God's pure creation of them, in Adam. This is surely one of the factors which helps to cause what we now call a 'poor self-image', or a 'low self-esteem'. Low self-esteem is a powerful factor, either in driving one to seek high attainment, or to live in self-despair and depression.

If to what we have here called 'existential guilt' we add the guilts of sins committed or 'things left undone', then we have a massive force of guilt facing the child—let alone the adult. All of this must be seriously considered. At the same time we must not forget that each person is also created in the image of God—a matter we will examine later.

HUMAN RATIONALIZATIONS CONCERNING THE ENTAIL OF SIN

In Job 14:1, 4 and 15:14, Job, Eliphaz and Bildad ask the question, 'How can a man be righteous before God? How can he who is born of a woman be

clean?' This seems to be in the same vein as David's statement in Psalm 51:5, and seems to accord with Paul's statements in Romans 5:12ff. Are these five men stating a moral—i.e. functional—truth, or are they rationalizing what appears to be the universal sinfulness of man? There is no demeaning of woman as such but of human nature, that which in the New Testament is called 'sinful flesh'.

Doubtless man has battled with the problem to discover whether he is born to the fate of transmitted depravity, and—this being the case—whether the responsibility lies with Adam or the person's parents or himself. Man being moral, sin is a matter of choice and so of will. Man is either

involved in the sin of his forebears or he is not. Few people are familiar with the concept of a solidary race, or the entail presupposed in such an idea.

The Sins of the Fathers The second commandment—the one against idolatry—speaks of God 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments' (Exod. 20:4–6). What we need to note is that the visiting of iniquity *is only in the context of idolatry*, i.e. the idolatry of the fathers, and *the continuing idolatry* of the children. It is not a general principle for the other nine commandments. Often, then, the children would blame their present state of suffering on the parents. It is against such a rationalization that we have the passages of Jeremiah 31:29–30 and the whole of Ezekiel chapter 18, where the use of the proverb 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge' is rejected. Every man is responsible for his own sins—the father for his own, and the son for his own. In fact one is not fated to follow one's father either for good or bad. Each man is to exercise his own will. This shows that the fatalism of children suffering punishment for their fathers' sins is not part of God's moral system.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY: NO ONE IS WHOLLY VICTIMIZED

In later studies we will see that every man must bear his own sin. Here we mention briefly the problem continually facing a counsellor, namely that his counsellor has been victimized by any—or even all—of the four following factors, namely heredity, parental upbringing, environment and circumstances. Man (even the child), being a moral creature, can—indeed must—make choices about the factors which seem to come against him. No

matter how dreadful the elements which seem to come against it, the will *can* refuse to be victimized, *if it will*. This is part of human responsibility and accountability, based on the fact that man was made in the image of God. We will pursue this matter later.

THE BIBLICAL PORTRAYAL OF THE PRENATAL STATE OF HUMANITY

Sinfulness from the Womb

We are here speaking about the babe in the womb. David spoke of being conceived in sin. He went back to conception. He may simply have been saying that his sinfulness began in the womb, and may not have been speaking in technical terms. In any case, he was saying he was sinful from the womb. This seems to be the view of the three persons in the Book of Job.

The case of Esau and Jacob

In Genesis 25:20–26 Jacob's wife, Rebekah, had difficulty during her pregnancy, for the twins—Esau and Jacob 'struggled together within her'. That is within the womb the two battled, each with the other. Esau was born first, and his brother Jacob had hold of his heel, *to throw him* or *supplant him*, which is the meaning of the name 'Jacob'. This was confirmed by the prophecy, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger'. Hosea 12:2–6 is an indictment of Jacob as having done a wrong deed in taking his brother's heel. This is confirmed in Isaiah 48:8, 'For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and that *from birth you were called a rebel*'. Again, in Deuteronomy 9:24 God says to Israel, 'You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I [Moses] knew you.' Moses means that Israel has ever been rebellious (cf. Acts 7:51). Attitudes, then, can be traced to the womb, and decisions—it would seem—can be made during

the foetal stage.*

Sinfulness from the womb

Psalm 58:3 says, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies'. We have seen such sentiment relates to Jacob and his unworthiness in the womb and in birth. Other Scriptures do not specifically use the term 'from the womb', but they do use 'from youth up', and probably there is not much difference in meaning. Genesis 6:5 says of man that 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually', whilst Genesis 8:21 has it, 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth'. We have seen above that Jacob's sin was both in the womb and from the womb.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 enjoins, 'Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth', probably meaning 'from the womb'. David pleads, 'Remember not the sins of my youth' (Ps. 25:7), and Job says, 'Thou . . . makest me inherit the iniquities of my youth' (13:26). In all this it is not simply the universality of young sinfulness that we emphasize, but the burden that is on humanity even from within the womb. Any system of counselling which does not take this into consideration must be deficient.

Godliness from the Womb

We now look at the action of God upon certain of His elect, from the womb. The case histories we examine are not related to any innate goodness of man, but the godliness which comes from the grace of election.

* Whilst we do not draw upon modern research to support the biblical examination of the child in the womb, yet much research has been carried out over the past decade or so in this area. *The Secret of the Unborn Child*, by Dr Thomas Verny with John Kelly (Sphere Books, London, 1982), claims that the unborn child from sixteen weeks old begins to kick, at twenty weeks can respond to speech patterns, at twenty-five weeks can kick in time to music, and understand the shifts in its mother's emotions, and respond even to the attention of the father. Kicking, Verny states, is part of protest. Undoubtedly the child evaluates, makes demands, and—he believes—is deeply affected by what goes on outside the mother's womb. The book has a good bibliography.

The case of Jacob and Esau We return to this case to see that both Esau and Jacob portray sinfulness from the womb. Esau seemed more sinned against than sinning, but his life shows him to be ‘a profane man’, i.e. one who had no spiritual yearnings. He was ready to dispose both of his birthright as the oldest son, and the blessing which went with it. Hebrews 12:16 calls him ‘immoral and irreligious’ and suggests he had ‘a root of bitterness’. Jacob, although exposed for what he was, is nevertheless told, God ‘formed you from the womb and will help you’ (Isa. 44:2, 21, 24; 46:3, 4; 49:1, 5). It was said, ‘The Lord *called* me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name’. It was also said, ‘you will not be forgotten by me’, and ‘[you] have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb’. The key to all this is in Malachi 1:2, ‘I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau’.

This, as in the following examples, is elective love rather than simply affectional love. However, the dynamics of election have to be studied and must be known in order to bring assurance to those needing it.

The case of Jeremiah God told the prophet, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’ This call and appointment of Jeremiah constitutes his life’s vocation—a theme we must examine thoroughly, since it is at the heart of true living. Jeremiah thus had a drive to life. On the one hand he had to contend with the fact of human guilt—both existential and objective—and on the other he was assured of true life and salvation in regard to his vocation. Hebrews 11 gives the roll-call of others similarly called. We note that all of this began in the womb for the child Jeremiah.

The case of John the Baptist John’s case is fascinating. His father Zechariah and his mother Elizabeth both had joy in the conception and

pregnancy of their son, a factor always conducive to a good birth. John leaped in his mother’s womb when she met Mary. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and we doubt not that this was the moment when John himself was filled, for the angel had said, ‘he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.’ It is notable that he, too, was called prior to his birth to be the precursor to Jesus, so that he had vocation—with all its reassuring elements.

The case of Jesus of Nazareth Doubtless we meet a mystery here, and something which is not necessarily normative for others. His conception took place in Mary by the Holy Spirit. It should be understood that he also was filled with the Spirit in Mary’s womb. Whilst he came ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’, yet he never came in ‘sinful flesh’, nor merely in the likeness of flesh. Given in the supernatural elements of his birth, since he was the Word becoming flesh, yet the principle of growth and development in the womb—coupled with the fact of call and vocation—marks out his birth as a true one, and not simply a prodigy.

The case of Saul of Tarsus Paul’s statement is most revealing: ‘when he who had set me apart before I was born [from my mother’s womb], and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles . . .’ Here the same principles as for Jeremiah and John obtain. He is sovereignly set apart prior to time, goes through the process of being ‘a called one’ within the womb, and comes to the time when his destiny is revealed, i.e. the ministry to which he has been called.

The case of Psalm 139:13–18 This passage needs to be read fully and thoughtfully, for it contains an intimate understanding of God and His work in human birth. This passage would be immediately

intelligible to persons such as Jacob, Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Paul. It should be no less intelligible to us, for it applies to all of us. In another way, we ought to see the high doctrine of man as God has created him in Psalm 8:3–8, where the psalmist asks wonderingly—as he gazes at the vastness of the heavens, and the creation of all planets—‘What *is* man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?’ He adds the astounding thought that the whole universe has been put under his control: man is a glorious creature.

If there is majesty in man’s creation, then there is also mystery. The Preacher observes (Eccl. 11:5), ‘As you do not know how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.’ Our biology of man does not admit us to the truth of his being as spirit—as spiritual.

With these thoughts in mind—man majestic and man spiritual—let us paraphrase the text we have written above, i.e. Psalm 139:13–18:

‘In the light of Your omnipotence and omniscience that I have spoken of in previous verses, I now see omnificence. You have made every part of me, especially as these parts make me powerful as a man. I was not formed willy-nilly, or by some force of nature. You made me a whole creature by Your intimate and personal fashioning. You are fearful and wonderful in such work, and as a result of it I am wonderfully made. In this intimacy You know me well. What I was being fashioned to be You know. As our first father was made of the dust, so have I been personally made of this same clay, but personally, by Your hand. When I was still in the process of being made, You knew me. You wrote not only my name in Your book of life, but all my details, and all the events of my life which would be, for it was You who formed all my days before I was conceived. What You have written, You have written! Hence such will come to pass for me. This understanding causes me to see the precious nature of Your thoughts. I cannot number them, they are so many. In numbering the innumerable, I fall asleep from weariness and wonderment, but now I find myself awake, and am still with You, and I will go on in this way—waking, pondering, wondering, sleeping and then waking. It is all so astonishing and delightful to me.’

If we need an analysis of this Psalm portion, it is that God

still makes us from the dust of the earth, but what He makes of us is a creature of incredible power, beauty and intelligence, giving us authority and richness of purpose. He is personally and intimately in the fashioning of every human being. The majesty of man and the mystery of his making bear much contemplation, unending astonishment and great gratitude.

The beauty of being created by God

With man’s sinfulness—i.e. the entail of sin—confronting us, we ought to understand the powerful doctrine of creation. God did not create man evil, or with powers of evil. He created him pure. When man fell, this did not cancel his high being as ‘the image and glory of God’. The image always remains in man even if its powers are used egotistically by egocentric (i.e. sinful) man. Thus man is *not* born as wholly evil. Unless we understand that man is always internally in conflict because of (i) his being in God’s image, and (ii) the entail of sin, then we will not realize the nature of man—formed in the womb and born from it. We must see the incredible glory that is man so that we can understand the fearful existential struggle that is for ever within him. He comes from clay, and his mortality is ever about him. God has breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), and has ‘put eternity in his heart’ (Eccl. 3:11), so that the hope of immortality is also ever about him! His loss of fellowship with God through sin does not cancel his innate drive to be true and righteous, good and holy, and lover of God and man.

The notion of calling and election

This is too vast a subject to enter into here, but we need to see from the portion of Psalm 139 (above) and other related passages that God sets man’s destiny before, even, he is born. Where this is the case, and man does not have to work out his own destiny, then the notion of election must be seriously taken into consideration. Destination is

linked with purpose and vocation, and without these two, man is rudderless. We ought to understand that human beings do have a sense of destiny—or a foreboding of it—and this is part of their entrance into life, part of the dynamics of human birth.

**A Conclusion Regarding
Sin and Godliness in,
and from, the Womb**

From the above biblical cases of what happens prior to, in, and from the womb, we can develop a helpful biblical anthropology or theology of human conception, gestation, birth and growth. It is true that we have only taken cases where vocation is primarily the matter discussed. Yet that should teach us something, namely that there is an ontological need in man to know and practice his true vocation. The cases of Cain and Abel could teach us much, seeing they were probably twins, had had approximately the same conditions for growth up to manhood, and yet had opposing views of God and life. Esau and Jacob were likewise twins who differed greatly. In the case of Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Saul of Tarsus, we have men from godly homes. In the case of Jacob, we are shown his sinfulness and at the same time his call by God, this call being effected in the midst of his human sinfulness.

We have also seen that there is no fatalism which damns man to evil even though he is fallen. Ezekiel 18 shows that a man can refuse the evil ways of his father, and take the path of righteousness. He can, of course, even reject the righteousness of his righteous father and go the way of evil. This choice might even begin within the womb. It is doubtful whether any of the cases we have examined are in any way exceptional. Such may be the case with any and every human being. Nevertheless the entail of sin must be faced fully, and the nature of grace be examined. By 'the entail of sin' we mean the fact that the human race is involved in Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12–21), and then that human beings are also involved in their own immediate families and so in the attitudes and actions of the parents.

**THE PRACTICAL DYNAMICS
OF HUMAN BIRTH**

We have but touched the edge of the subject. What we have examined above we need now to examine in depth. Other things which we must consider are children who are not in covenant relationship with God—i.e. children whose parents are not of Israel or the Christian church—the implications of calling and election, elements associated with idolatrous societies and cultures, the problems of families and persons lapsed from the Christian faith, matters which arise through connection with the occult, parental upbringing of children 'in nature' and not 'in grace'.

What we have to face is the sinfulness of society from which no one has any exemption—be they in covenant relationship with God or not—and the shock that comes to the child while as yet unborn, and then when born—the traumas of human selfishness, jealousy and competition which often greet children at birth. For example, the Leboyer method of birth is intended to reduce or eliminate the shock of birth for the child, but critics think that birth-suffering may be essential to a child coming into the world—and so on. Even so, what we are concerned about here is not even situations when in the mother's womb, or the problems of a difficult birth that might have had some impact upon the child, but the recognition of the whole human race in regard to its being as a solidary body, its participation in the primal fall, the dread of death which has since haunted and threatened it, and the guilt—both existential and objective—which always dogs it. Without that theology (or comprehension) of the nature of humanity, of 'man in nature and in grace', the counsellor is deficient in knowing the path that man treads apart from God. Equipped with this understanding he can set about the practice of leading to healing and regenerating those who are in need.

3

Conscience in Crisis and Comfort

A MAN OF CONSCIENCE Take a man burdened down with conscience. He might be Cain, who hated his brother and murdered him, or King Saul, who bitterly sought to destroy David. It might be a spouse whose marriage has failed, or a young person who has trodden underfoot the principles of moral living he—or she—had been brought up in. Wherever man is dogged by his conscience he is under great pressure. He may have to try, even, to kill his conscience; that is, if he cannot sedate it. P. T. Forsyth once said, 'That which goes deepest to the conscience goes widest to the world. The man or woman who is able to understand the conscience of man, and who is wise enough to help men and women to discover the true dynamics of conscience and guilt, is one counsellor the world will seek after. The only man who could ever do it fully and properly was Jesus, and it is to him we must go. He has gone down to the lowest depths of human guilt and suffering. He is the man of the pure conscience who can help us gain peace by a quieted conscience.'

THE MATTER OF CONSCIENCE The word 'conscience' is—strictly speaking—found only in the New Testament, and is a Greek word, i.e. *syneidesis*. The closest word to conscience in the Old Testament

is 'heart'. David said on one occasion that his heart 'smote' him, i.e. reproached him. The Hebrew did not think of a special entity called conscience, for he thought of his heart as the seat of feeling (affections), knowing (cognition) and willing (volition). Even so, his heart worked the principle of conscience.

The Greek *syneidesis* and the Latin *conscientia* have the same meanings, namely 'co-awareness'. The original word for conscience in English was *inwit*, which could mean 'an inward sense', or 'awareness of oneself' especially in regard to doing right or wrong. Various descriptions of conscience have been given, such as, 'Conscience is God in every man', 'A court of appeal which is not able to promulgate any statutes . . . but is able to deliver judgement on the cases that are before it'.* Probably the best description is that of Robert Sibbes the Puritan: 'Conscience is knowledge with God.' It is possible to think of man's co-awareness with God of what is true in principle and action. Sibbes expands his description: 'Conscience is not one power, but conscience is in all the powers of the soul . . . in the understanding . . . in the will . . . in the affections . . . and so it runs through the whole soul.' This comes close to the Hebrew idea of the heart.

We might take the matter a step further: a man with a clear or good conscience is a man who is first conscious of God and thus is then conscious of the true values of other things, especially in regard to moral action. We will examine the matter of law and conscience later, but we should note here that direct consciousness of law—i.e. apart from consciousness of, and with, God—develops an undesirable legalism.

**THE POWER OF
THE CONSCIENCE** It seems that the element or faculty of conscience is universally acknowl-

* For these references and others, see my monograph *The Conscience—Conquering or Conquered?* NCPI, 1987, pp. 4–5.

edged. The sense of guilt is a universal thing, and the conscience directly relates to the matter of guilt. We are not saying that the same things cause guilt universally, for the conscience has to do with the cultural, legal, and social mores of any given society, and societies differ in their mores. It is simply that the matter of conscience is in all societies and appears to be a constant, i.e. the common factor in them. That is why Forsyth said, 'Conscience is that which makes man man, makes him one, and makes him eternal.' We will examine the meaning of this saying at a later point.

We will see in the Scriptures that conscience affects a person most powerfully, and according to its particular state. Conscience has been spoken of as being 'good', 'pure', 'clean' and 'clear', or as 'evil', 'corrupt', 'defiled' and 'seared'. The state of any person issues from the state of his conscience. Thus to know the conscience state of a person is a great aid to knowing him, and being able to help him. Later we will return to look at the various states of conscience. At this point we can say without much dogmatism that a person with a clear conscience is a person who is virtually untroubled, who can be immediately confident in life, and who is reasonably secure, i.e. he does not have to justify himself.

Something About the Nature of Guilt

Because we often use the term 'guilt' to mean 'sense of guilt', it is surprising to discover the meaning of guilt is not merely a sense of guilt. Dictionaries define it, 'At law guilt means being justly liable to penalty'. It can mean a failure of duty; the offence, sin, or crime one has done; and even the desert or punishment itself. One then may be guilty without having a conscious sense of it, or even have a sense of guilt where no crime has been committed. We need then to see that guilt is, strictly speaking, objective. It may or may not be accompanied by a conscious sense of guilt. When dealing with people who *feel* guilty, we would need to see whether their feeling had any objective basis or cause. When dealing with a person who has objective guilt but,

seemingly, no sense of it, we would need to see whether the conscience has been 'seared', suppressed, or manipulated by that person.

Existential and objective guilt and guilt-feelings

What is sometimes confusing is the matter of *existential guilt* in contradistinction to the (objective) *guilts of wrongdoings*. If we take the fall of man into account, i.e. that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', we may discover that it is universal for man to feel that he is not being what he was created to be, i.e. he has an inner recognition of what is ontological, and so recognizes he has fallen short of that and so *feels* guilty. Because we usually relate guilt with *wrongdoing* and not with *wrongbeing*, a person who senses existential guilt will look around for some action of his with which to link the *sense* of guilt, i.e. he will look for some *wrongdoing* and so not realize that his guilt sense comes from *wrongbeing*.

Satisfaction felt on being punished

It appears also to be a universal principle that when a person is punished for his wrongdoings, then his sense of guilt disappears, for if guilt is in fact punishment, then there is no need to continue feeling a *sense* of guilt. It may be that man has invented the ideas of nemesis, retribution, hell, and fearful punishment out of the demands of his (human) conscience, but whether these are inventions or realities does not much matter. They are testimonies to the fact that conscience demands some kind of punishment.

DIFFERENT FORMS OR STATES OF CONSCIENCE

That conscience is not to be ignored is clear from Paul's writings. He uses such statements as, 'we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience'; 'what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience'. He also speaks of 'the

testimony of our conscience', claims, 'I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day', and says he has 'a clear conscience toward God and toward men.' He also claims that he serves God 'with a clear conscience'. He advises that deacons should 'hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience'. All of these statements advise us that the conscience is not a small thing and must not be trifled with. Indeed, a conscience that is true registers knowledge of the truth in an irrefutable way.

Three statements of P. T. Forsyth which show us the function and value of conscience are, 'That which goes deepest to the conscience goes widest to the world'; 'Conscience is that which makes man man, makes him one, and makes him eternal'; and 'Conscience is the most universal thing of all'. These, when pondered, prove to be valuable insights.

The Scriptures describe various states of conscience, as we now see, and each needs to be understood by those who would counsel their fellow human beings. We might add—by the way—that a person (counsellor) not yet justified by grace ought not to enter into the arena of human conscience.

States of Conscience

It is not possible to speak of an *innocent* conscience. The primal couple doubtless had this prior to the Fall, but the closest we can go to it is a *good*

conscience (such is mentioned in Acts 23:1; I Tim. 1:5, 19). The good conscience is a conscience that is conscious of good, i.e. it has no evil upon it. The person having this conscience is acting rightly, working according to his consciousness, and constantly kept right in moral behaviour. This would be the same as the conscience 'clear before God and man'. It is best to think of such a conscience as that of a justified person.

Probably meaning the same thing, there is also 'a *clear conscience*' mentioned in I Timothy 3:9; II Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:15; Hebrews 9:14; 13:18; I Peter 3:16, 21. This appears to be the conscience which was 'purified from dead works' (Heb. 9:14), and so is clean (or clear) from works that defile

the conscience (I Cor. 8:7; cf. Heb. 10:22).

An evil conscience

This is the conscience conscious of evil, i.e. the person has guilt, and carries with it 'dead works', i.e. sins and wrong actions from which he has not been cleared. This would be called today 'a guilty conscience'. It is mentioned in Hebrews 10:22, and referred to in Hebrews 10:2. It probably takes in the *defiled conscience* (I Cor. 8:7), and the *corrupt conscience* (Titus 1:15). Those having such a conscience are not free from the guilt of law, i.e. they do not understand justification by grace, and may be working to justify themselves by works.

A seared conscience

Such a conscience (I Tim. 4:2) appears to have passed from being *evil* to being *reprobate*, the kind of state described in Romans 1:28–31, where there is a refusal to discern the difference between good and evil. This must surely be linked with apostasy, blasphemy against the Spirit of God, and evil presumption.

A weak and a strong conscience

In I Corinthians chapter 8 Paul speaks of a Christian brother who has a weak conscience, as against a brother with a strong conscience. The same thought is found in Romans chapters 14 and 15, where Paul speaks of the weak in faith, and the strong in faith. It seems that a person weak in faith is weak in conscience. Certainly faith and conscience are related, for in I Timothy 1:19 Paul speaks of 'holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith.' It appears that the person weak in faith has a conscience which accuses him heavily when he follows the example of a stronger brother and does something that brother can do without being condemned by his conscience. To go against one's conscience is dangerous, for 'whatever does not proceed from faith is sin' (Rom. 14:23). That is why Paul tells the strong brother that whilst all things may be lawful, they are not always expedient.

The State in Which the Conscience Is Trustworthy Paul said, 'I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit.' The conscience, then, is only trustworthy in the Holy Spirit. This is assuming it is a conscience 'cleansed from dead works', and 'sprinkled from an evil conscience'. It is also the conscience which is 'in the sight of God'. That is, it is a good conscience, a pure conscience, and a clear conscience, and a conscience which operates only by faith in the truth as God has revealed that truth—primarily of course through His word.

THE VALUE OF KNOWING STATES OF CONSCIENCE The first value is to the counsellor. Unless he or she understands the principles of conscience and its functioning, then it is dangerous to deal with the conscience. No counsellor ought to counsel apart from the experience and standing of justification by grace. That is, the counsellor will be caught in the law-guilt and self-justification complex which puts every human being in competition with his neighbour, every person into the exercise of self-justification and self-proving. Even counselling itself becomes part of this self-justifying operation, as do almost all exercises.

By being justified (free from guilt of law and liberated from self-justification), the counsellor need not be existentially involved in the problems which arise from consciences not yet 'clear' or 'good'. This does not mean he has no sympathy or empathy, but that his objectivity frees him from being caught in the cross-fire of human guilts and their emotional outworkings.

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONSCIENCE Just as in non-biblical systems there is an epistemology, so there is a biblical system which has its own epistemology.

One must have a full theology in order to understand conscience—in the biblical sense. The proper question, then, for the counsellor, is 'How does God deal with the conscience, and how does He deal with it under nature and grace, or under law and grace?' When we know that, we can be of help, always remembering we work under the Lordship of Christ and the enablement of the Holy Spirit. The following points need to be kept in mind:

(a) *Without the benefit of salvation the conscience operates without faith, is laden with 'dead works'—i.e. the guilts of them—and the person is at enmity with God, and has to devise his own law or ethical system.* It will certainly have an orientation of idolatry. This will be the case with a person who has 'an evil conscience', or a conscience which is defiled (cf. Titus 1:15). It will be in largest measure with the person who has a 'seared conscience', and such a one will seek to compensate the conscience by a twisted and perverse legalism (cf. I Tim. 4:1–4, i.e. forbidding enjoyment of created things; cf. Col. 2:20–23).

(b) *The person who has received salvation should have a clear and good conscience, and know himself to be wholly free from the past.* This, however, is rare, and the person needs teaching and assurance of this reality (Heb. 9:14; 10:22). *The key word and principle here is faith*, i.e. faith in the completed work of redemption at the Cross (I Tim. 1:5; 1:19; Heb. 9:14).

(c) *The person who has received salvation must understand the law of love, the constraint of love for obedience, and the meticulous keeping of integrity without it developing into legalism.* At the same time, damage will be done where freedom is really licentiousness, or antinomianism (i.e. the view that the law does not matter at all). It must be shown that the law of Christ is the law of love, and the same law basically which has always been, i.e. the ontological law. Two sets of Scripture which will be helpful are (i) John 14:15; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 2:3–6; (ii) Romans 12:8–10;

Galatians 5:13–14; James 1:22–25; 2:8–13; I Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2.

(d) *The person who has received salvation now has a rehabilitated conscience, and because of its new sensitivity it will be more than ever open to accusation.* This will be particularly so when a person is seeking practical holiness of life. Evil powers will seek to reduce the person to a morbid conscience, i.e. an unduly demanding conscience linked with legalism. The renewed insistence upon justification, the grace of redemption, and the love of God should counter these accusations, i.e. these 'fiery darts of the wicked'. This will encourage persons to live in the rich freedom wrought by grace (John 8:36; Rom. 8:1–2; II Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1).

A SUMMARY OF CONSCIENCE

This study is merely an introduction to the subject of conscience within the biblical epistemology. The summary given below helps to make a bird's-eye view of the theme, and may prove helpful:

- Conscience is that awareness a man has, with, and of himself, in regard to what is right and wrong. Innocent man would have had awareness without condemnation and guilt.
- Fallen man's awareness is altered because he is out of God. Awareness is only vital and authentic in the presence of God. Conscience is then, indeed, co-awareness.
- Fallen man has conscience as an enemy, although it seeks the best for the person. It discerns, warns, and predicts punishment. When ignored so that wrong action takes place, it judges and executes something of a sentence.
- The effect of conscience outside obedience is to portray God as judgemental and without grace and love. With disobedience, fear and hatred are compounded.

- By the conscience evil may manipulate a person, and even use the law to do this. In fact it uses the law liberally, whether the law of God, of man, or of the idols.
- By the conscience the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement. If the person responds, and the gifts of grace are received and used, a person repents, believes, and receives forgiveness, cleansing and justification. This can be called *regeneration*.
- Through the work of regeneration the person and his conscience are rehabilitated. The conscience is now pure, good, clear. By this conscience a person holds the mystery of the faith. His faith in Christ's saving work and the love of the Father is the context in which the conscience now operates.
- Serenity and joy are known as the person, aided by the conscience and a new view of law, lives life daily in integrity of personhood. Such daily living involves the use of the means of grace, and heartfelt obedience to the command of Christ. All this is done in the context of the word of God, the Spirit of God, and the fellowship of the people of God.
- The Christian man discovers he is a person who will always need to be dependent upon God, as also aided by His power. The dynamics of evil are such that man cannot counter them by himself. The dynamics of grace are more than a counter for evil, and in the use of these the conscience is a powerful factor. It is not predictive of judgement so much as of reward. It does not prove judgemental but commendatory. It does not execute punishment so much as it gives reward.
- The operation of conscience is dependent upon grace. The objective work of Christ to destroy the guilt and pollution of man is that upon which the person can base his faith. In fact, it is on the Person of the Father, and the Person of the

Son that he really bases his faith.

- A Christian who is weak in faith will falter, and tend to come under legalism. He will tend to justify himself by good actions, or feel unjustified by failures. The man weak in faith is weak in conscience. Conversely the man strong in faith is strong in conscience. He must discover in love that he must make concessions to this weaker brother. This will strengthen him, making him even more mature.
- The testimony of conscience to the person is to be trusted only when that one is in grace and the Holy Spirit, otherwise he will tend, through the conscience, to legalism. His constant will to obedience will prevent lawlessness on the one hand, with the accompanying condemnation of conscience, and will encourage personal integrity on the other.
- The conscience, in grace, does not let the person off when he is guilty, but rather it rebukes where the law of love has been controverted, without bringing the person into legal bondage.
- In the ultimate, conscience, when it is good, is one of the primary factors in the flowing outwards (from that person) of love. This is because it is a joyous co-awareness (with God) of what a person truly is, what the law of love is, and what God is about in His creation as Father, Creator, and King.
- We conclude, then, that redeemed man is liberated from his conscience as a tyrant. He is liberated by the new awareness his conscience has of God, His creation, and His law. What Adam lost by his rebellion and sin, namely true awareness of good and evil, redeemed man can now know. This knowledge will be increased as man is renewed more and more in the image of his Creator (II Cor. 3:18; cf. Col. 3:10).

- The mature (or maturing) person is one 'who by reason of use [has his] senses exercised to discern both good and evil' (Heb. 5:14). When, one day, he comes to know as he is known, this experimental awareness will no longer be needed. He will see God as He is (Rev. 22:4) and he will be like Him.

4

Goodbye to Anger!

THE FACT OF ANGER Many non-biblical systems of diagnosis and therapy are increasingly taking note of the fact of both anger and violence. There is little need to describe the nature of anger, for we know what it is—by experience. We recognize it in the words wrath, rage, fury, indignation, malevolence, vexation, venom, resentment, provocation and bitterness. It is linked with the ideas of anguish, hurt, pain, inflammation, and even distress and sorrow. Human beings quickly recognize anger, and it seems to be inbuilt into human thinking that anger—unless wholly justified—is not good. Even when it is justified, the irrationality that so quickly comes with anger is a dangerous element, often betraying the angered one into hasty and wrong actions, and threatening the one who is the object of anger.

The notion that God can be angry disturbs human beings, since they generally think of anger as they know it in humans, and therefore project that image of anger on to God, with disastrous results. It may well be that they recognize God has a right to His anger, but fear Him having it. Certainly the irrationality that almost always accompanies anger is what men fear.

CAUSES OF ANGER Most simply put, the fact is that we get angry when we cannot get our own way. We become wrathful when things do not turn out as we wish. We plan, but something interferes with the plan.

We cannot live in a world which will fit in with our plans, desires and whims, simply because other human beings are also on the self-rule, self-endeavour, self-accomplishment trail!

When we seek to live autonomously—which we cannot do successfully (Jer. 10:23)—we become angry with a number of things, such as the seeming foolishness of God in His creation and (lack of) providence, the presence and action of authority (or the failure of others to recognize and obey our authority), and the factors which we think have wrongly conditioned us, such as parental upbringing, heredity, circumstances and environment. In other words, we can easily get angry with that on which we lay blame.

Righteous Anger There are causes for anger which also seem to be justified. We speak about ‘righteous indignation’ or ‘justified anger’*, generally where injustice has been done. This seems to be covered by Paul’s ‘Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger’. The failure to be angry when evil and injustice have been done shows some moral insensitivity. People certainly ought to—under some circumstances—be angry. However, refusing to sin in such a case is a most difficult accomplishment. It is difficult to prevent righteous indignation from quickly passing over into self-righteous indignation!

A WARNING AGAINST ANGER Jesus warned us against anger. In Matthew 5:21–22 he said: ‘You have heard that it was said to the men of old, “You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement.” But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever

* See my booklet *The Justice-Men and the Great Rage*, NCPI, 1985.

says, “You fool!” shall be liable to the hell of fire.’*

This is a strong warning. Jesus may be saying that anger can—even will—lead to murder. The judgement of a court deals with the crime of murder but it ought to deal equally with the crime of anger! Insulting a brother ought to go to the highest court in the land, and the demeaning of man—made in the image of God—makes the demeaner worthy of being cast into hell! So much, then, for the dreadful nature of anger.

THE WAY IN WHICH ANGER WORKS

The following Scriptures speak for themselves. Indeed, a study of them helps us to understand the

inner nature of wrong anger:

For jealousy makes a man furious,
and he will not spare when he takes revenge (Prov. 6:34);

A man of quick temper acts foolishly,
but a man of discretion is patient (Prov. 14:17);

He who is slow to anger has great understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
but passion makes the bones rot (Prov. 14:29–30);

A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger (Prov. 15:1);

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
but he who is slow to anger quiets contention (Prov. 15:18);

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Prov. 16:32);

Good sense makes a man slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offence (Prov. 19:11);

The north wind brings forth rain;
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks (Prov. 25:23);

Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming;
but who can stand before jealousy? (Prov. 27:4);

Scoffers set a city aflame,
but wise men turn away wrath (Prov. 29:8);

A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and a man given to anger causes much transgression (Prov. 29:22);

For pressing milk produces curds,
pressing the nose produces blood,
and pressing anger produces strife (Prov. 30:33).

We gather, then, that anger leads a man to irrational thinking, and so to irrational actions, many of which are highly dangerous and disastrous. He does not act wisely whilst in anger, and he stirs up anger in others. In other words, anger leads to terrible consequences, even if not expressed in overt acts. It destroys relationships. We know that it hinders the getting of wisdom, prevents a person coming to emotional maturity and indeed all forms of maturation. By contrast, of course, people of peace (*shalom*) show wisdom, ease of mind and spirit, develop in wisdom and contribute to the human race.

Examples of angry persons in the Scriptures are Cain, Lamech, Esau, Saul, Jacob’s sons Simeon and Levi, Balaam, Nebuchadnezzar, Jonah, Herod, the elder brother of the prodigal son, Martha, and Saul of Tarsus. With one or two exceptions these all did great damage to other humans. The irrationality of anger is shown in the case of Jonah, when he was indignant over the withering of a vine but desired the destruction of the people and animals of great Nineveh. God asked him whether he did well to be angry, and his answer was, ‘I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.’ He typifies people who insist on their anger. He had, of course, thought God to be unjust in not destroying the 120,000 persons of Nineveh—the traditional enemies of Israel!

DEALING WITH ANGER

It has been said that anger can be dealt with by expressing it, or by suppressing

* Old MSS. of Matthew 5:22 said, ‘But I say to that, every one who is angry with his brother without a cause shall . . .’, but the best MSS. do not include this.

it, i.e. disciplining oneself not to be angry or express anger. Neither of these methods can succeed. Expressing anger often develops shame and guilt at having done so, and increases anger. Suppressing anger only builds up the inner problem, and is not successful. Two elements are necessary to help the angry person, (i) discovering the causes, and (ii) helping to remove these. These will not solve the problem unless the person (i) comes to see God as love, and (ii) is motivated to love instead of having anger and hate.

Causes of Anger and Hatred

We have outlined a number of causes of anger above, and they seem to be reasonable and understandable causes.

Closely examined we find they are not. Indeed we must see the whole (biblical) picture of man, as follows:

- (a) Man, created in God's image of love, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth, has fallen into orbiting around himself—not around God and others.
- (b) He is a guilty person, essentially idolatrous, seeking to work out his own plans.
- (c) Anger and guilt are related, each constantly compounding the other. The story of Cain and Abel shows this, but Romans 1:18–32 describes it fully.
- (d) Because of guilt, man—alienated from God—fears Him, sees Him as judgemental, and hates and opposes Him. He reacts strongly to the idea that God has a right to be angry with him—man—and opposes the thought that God should have wrath.
- (e) Man constantly seeks to justify himself, and so gets more and more entrapped in his compounding guilt. He is threatened by others who seem to be self-justified and, so, successful. He compiles critical dossiers on others, and on God, thereby thinking he justifies himself!

Dealing with the Causes

If what we have said above is true, then this angry person must be shown—by revelation and not mere argumentation

—that God is love, loves him, forgives, justifies and cleanses

him, and does this at great cost—the measure of His love! If this love overwhelms him, and he surrenders to it, then the so-called causes of anger and hatred no longer appear to be rational, and they are rejected. This is particularly so when the counsellee comes to experience total forgiveness, justification and cleansing from the past. The dossiers are dissipated. Loving God, others, and one's self now becomes the new order.

What must also be communicated is that in the action of the Cross not only our guilts and sins were destroyed, but our griefs and sorrows were suffered by Christ so that we now have no cause for hurts. It is by Christ's wounds that our wounds are healed. If objectively this did not happen on the Cross then present healing will be impossible. If it is seen that our angers were also borne to extinction on the Cross, then the person will be fully relieved of the pressures and pains of the past, and so be liberated.

Leading into Peace and Love

Proverbs 14:29–30 says, 'He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but *passion* makes the bones rot'. Passion, in Hebrew (*qinah*), catches up the ideas of zeal, jealousy, envy, passion and bitterness—all elements of a hasty and intense spirit. The Hebrew believed his actual body became sick and his bones rotted when he continued in *qinah*. The Gospel is 'good news' and it is news of peace to the spirit. When the revelation of the Cross is given, then God's love is flooded into the heart of man, and he achieves love, joy, and peace. It is this new 'tranquil mind' which 'gives life to the flesh'. *Shalom* brings serenity, security, and assurance. In this state of mind such things as patience and gentleness and self-control become part of the life, and anger does not have the same rootage.

We have mentioned that persons often see four primary causes for anger, i.e. that parental upbringing, circumstances, environment and heredity

have so conditioned them that they are now like they are because of these four things. This is not true. Their reactions to these four things have certainly conditioned them, but they did not need to react. They could have faced these four elements and triumphed. It is often helpful to show that man can triumph over adversities.

5

Wisdom for Life

WHAT IS WISDOM? This is not an easy question to answer. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* says, 'Being wise; (possession of) experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically; sagacity, prudence, common sense'. This is a reasonable coverage. We recognize wisdom in the midst of hastiness of spirit and decisions, and see that it comes from experience, with the ability to relate and apply what one knows for the best outcome. Someone has said, 'Wisdom is the ability to use the knowledge we have.' Certainly wisdom is linked with knowledge, although knowledge is not always linked with wisdom.

WISDOM ORIGINATES WITH GOD The biblical view of wisdom begins with God. He is 'the only wise God' (Rom. 16:27; Jude 25). This, of course, is as against the idols who are dumb, lifeless, and foolish. The following references help us to see the wisdom of God:

The Wise God, His Word In Jeremiah 8:9 the word of God is equated with wisdom. In Isaiah 31:2 God is wise in punishing those who go against His will. Daniel says that to Him 'belong wisdom and might', and says that 'he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding' (Dan. 2:20–23;

cf. II Sam. 14:20; Prov. 21:30), and this is seen in His gift of wisdom to Solomon. His word and thoughts are above those of men (Isa. 55:8–9). Who—amongst men—can teach wisdom to God? None—see Romans 11:33.

God's Wisdom and Creation 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In *wisdom* hast thou made them all' (Ps. 104:24). 'It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world *by his wisdom*, and *by his understanding* stretched out the heavens' (Jer. 10:12; 51:15).

Many Scriptures show the creation to be functional, beautiful, and all parts appropriate within the whole. It has been wisely made. It could not be more wisely made.

The Wisdom of God's Purpose, Counsel and Plan The mystery of God's plan for time and eternity cannot be known apart from the gift of wisdom to the person desiring to know, and indeed Paul prays for a 'spirit of wisdom and of revelation' for his Ephesian converts (1:17). God does all things 'according to the counsel of his will' (1:11; 3:11), for God's will (plan, wisdom) is the primary thing of all history, and that counsel is His wise knowing, His wise plan, His wise action in the creation. The creation is not only made in wisdom, but all God's plan through time is wise, and brings the proper end to come to be. That is why we can 'entrust our souls to a faithful Creator' (I Pet. 4:19).

THE LACK OF WISDOM IN THE FALLEN HUMAN RACE It must be presupposed that in his state of innocence, man was not in ignorance but knew the wisdom of God. Romans 1:18–25 tells us that man lost that wisdom, substituting a (so-called) wisdom of his own. In fact he lost wisdom when he 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie'. He has—since that

time—lived in abysmal ignorance of the truth. He has developed a (so-called) wisdom of his own.

It is apparent that if man does not know God, His will and His plan, then he is in ignorance. This is not to say that fallen man is not able to think or even to be brilliant. He is brilliant, but his wisdom has at its core an anti-God bias, and an insistence upon independence from God. The moral chaos in which man lives calls for wisdom in counselling him, should the occasion arise.

THE COUNSELLOR'S NEED FOR WISDOM Every counsellor needs wisdom. He may be able to obtain knowledge, but he needs to have the wisdom to understand God, man, and the creation, as also to see God's plan working throughout history. He can obtain wisdom by sheer study, experience and application, but that wisdom may not be enough to assist his counsellee. James urges us to ask God for wisdom, for He will grant it (1:5; 3:15–17). The Book of Proverbs has much to say about wisdom and the getting of it. Charismatically there is an *ad hoc* type of wisdom—'the word of wisdom'.

Biblical wisdom is obtained by coming to understand the mind of God through the Scriptures. Biblical knowledge will greatly assist, but personal knowledge of God is true knowledge and will bring wisdom. When we know God (Jer. 9:23–24), know man, and know the creation, then we obtain wisdom. Such wisdom is not quickly gained.

When dealing with a person, we need to have the rich apparatus of a good theological understanding of God, man, and the creation. This we will not find in what is called 'the wisdom of the world' (I Cor. 1:18–25). This wisdom (so-called) is the egotistic endeavour of man to establish himself by whatever means possible. Man has fooled himself by rejecting the knowledge of God and devising his own 'system' which is no system, since he has devised it.

The counsellor, then, needs to have the wisdom of God

in order to be able to help others. Non-biblical systems are not necessarily foolish, for they are devised in order to help the human race. Good as they may prove, they cannot touch the nature of man as 'moral' and 'spiritual'.

THE COUNSELLOR AND THE WISDOM OF GOD

Christ is God's wisdom. Paul said that Christ is 'the power of God and *the wisdom* of God' (I

Cor. 1:24) and that God 'is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.' Elsewhere Paul says 'all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' in Christ. He said of Christ, 'in [him] are hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and knowledge.' He then added, 'You are filled full in him,' i.e. with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Brought down to simple terms, all this means that the only way man can get out of his foolish and dangerous predicament is to see that God planned Christ to be the means of man's salvation and that this *is* the wisdom of God. This wisdom is from the beginning of creation, through the Fall, down through the ages, and moving towards the *telos* where the wisdom will be vindicated. Christ is that wisdom in every one of, and all of, those things.

It means, then, that the counsellor must come to know this wisdom—this wisdom which Christ *is*. This requires the counsellor to know the 'whole counsel [plan, wisdom] of God' (Acts 20:27).^{*} We are not saying the counsellor needs to have a full theology, but he does need to know the nature of God, the nature of man, the nature of creation, and the nature of history as it works out under God. He needs to know (i) man as created, (ii) man as fallen, (iii) man alienated from God and so existentially both depraved

^{*} For a minimal theology I suggest using the theological outlines contained in my *Practical Christian Counselling* (NCPI, 1981), and for a full cover of theology to use my *The Things We Firmly Believe* (NCPI, 1986). Of course, there are many manuals of theology, but the principle of Jeremiah 9:23–24 ought to be kept in mind.

and deprived. He needs to know what man is, in sin and moral darkness, denying his ontological self, denying ontological worship of God and ontological union with Him. He needs to know (iv) the way to God through Christ, and how the Atonement meets the moral–spiritual needs of man in radical salvation, thus liberating him from his past and into union with God. He must also understand the nature of redeemed (regenerated) man, his present sensitivity to sin, the workings of his conscience, the drive towards the goal of God—the *telos*—and so the nature of faith, hope and love, for it is in the context of these he can truly counsel man. This requires knowing something about ultimate man, i.e. eschatological and glorified man—the basis of true *hope*.

For the most part we are all pragmatic in the business of life. We use what systems come to hand, and they serve us—often even well—for the moment. The biblical wisdom is indeed a system having its own epistemology. It is not quickly acquired, but when it is known it certainly shows itself as God's true wisdom. Psalm 90:12 offers good advice: 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom'. The getting of wisdom is the persistent advice of Proverbs 2:2; 22:17; 23:12; Ecclesiastes 7:25; 8:9, 16.

RETURN TO GOD'S WISDOM

Jeremiah 10:23 tells us that the way of a man is not in himself, that it is not in a man to direct his own footsteps. Man needs to be directed, and directed wisely. Who will do this? How will it happen? It will not happen except man be shown the way, i.e. The Way—Christ, the wisdom of God. The application of the knowledge we have in its distilled wisdom will then see man in creation, fallen, alienated, redeemed, living in holiness and service, and being conformed to the image of Christ. The counsellor will need to share each element of this wisdom of God, and so bring sinners to relief in forgiveness and justification, aid them in the drive for holiness, and encourage them in the hope for the great

dénouement of the Lord's Day. The shepherd who does not show these to the sheep starves them even while they are in the richest of pastures.

TWO WORLD VIEWS AND TWO WISDOMS AND THEIR TENSION

From the biblical point of view there are two wisdoms, i.e. two *systems* of wisdom—that of man, and that of God. Paul speaks of the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1:18–31 requires close study. Not only are these two systems opposed—each to the other—but God is out to destroy the wrong system (I Cor. 1:19; Ps. 33:10; Isa. 29:14). Romans 1:18–32 shows that man chose his own system of knowledge and thought, and that is his wisdom. Any system which works—pragmatism—seems to have wisdom. Undoubtedly through history much practical wisdom has been accumulated by various cultures. Scientific research regarding man, his behaviour and his environment has been, and must be, of immense benefit. However, when it comes to the matter of man, not only as an observable race but man as a creature before God, all human wisdom is lacking to deal with him. Romans 1:21–23 speaks of man having lost true knowledge and true wisdom. He has learned to live without God as far as is possible, substituting surrogate gods for the true God. The Bible speaks, then, of two wisdoms, and with them of the two aeons—i.e. *ages* or *systems*—the first being called 'this corrupt age', and the second 'the age to come'. The world system of man is led by evil powers, the system of God by Christ, who is God's true wisdom. One has to go through new birth in order to enter the true system (John 3:1–6). In the true system there is true wisdom. The conflict believers have is to live without the world system corrupting the mind and present practice of life. Because man has great intellectual ability, his research is of great value and must not be thought of as evil *per se*. It is only the bent of his mind which may be evil, so that the way in which he

uses the *knowledge* he has will always be ego-centred, in which case it will not constitute authentic *wisdom*. Whilst man may oppose the truth of God, he also has a thrust *to* the truth, hence his painful tension in living. Belonging to one wisdom, and having his own (substitute) wisdom, he can never really feel free in his 'worldly' wisdom.

THE GETTING OF TRUE WISDOM

In our notes we have suggested that the word of man will always be deficient, but the word of God will be the only reliable word of truth; hence our primary wisdom must come from it. This being the case, we can then wisely utilize all the fruits of genuine research, and not despise the *general* wisdom which man employs in order to live within this world of time and space. Having said that, man does not have true wisdom apart from God, and needs to come to Christ, who is the true wisdom of God. In doing this, he needs to be aided by the Holy Spirit, who is 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord' (Isa. 11:2).

THE MATTER OF MYSTERIES

Moses told his people, 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may *do* all the words of this law' (Deut. 29:29). He was saying that God has revealed all we need to know, and what we *know* leads to what we *do*. Romans 11:33 makes it clear that we cannot know all of God's ways, and do not need to. We may know what we *need* to know.

In the New Testament the term 'mystery' (*mysterion*) is often used, in fact some thirty times (cf. Dan. 2:28, 29, 47). The term means 'that which is clear and plain to the initiated, but hidden and closed off to others'. Thus we have 'the mystery of his will', 'the mystery of Christ', 'the mystery of the gospel',

'the mystery of the faith', 'the mystery of our religion', 'the mystery of lawlessness', 'the mystery of God', 'the mystery of the woman [Babylon]'. Both that which is good and that which is evil are mysteries. This is because 'the natural [psychical] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit' (I Cor. 2:14; cf. James 3:15; Jude 20; cf. John 3:3-6). The mystery is not something occultic. Man, because of his darkness of mind and natural wisdom, cannot perceive the truth of God. Both good and evil are not really known by him.

THE USE OF TRUTH IN THE GETTING OF WISDOM

The biblical system of truth, as we have said, has its own epistemology. In a lifetime a person could never absorb all the truth contained in the

Scriptures, not only because of the extent of its contents, but because truth is something first known from God and then lived out, and the *knowing* and the *living* bring wisdom. It is out of the *knowledge* and the *practice* that true counsel can be given. This being the case, close and extended study of the Bible will be of great value, since its contents can be trusted. Man's wisdom does not affect it. It is a *revelatory* source of the truth and so of wisdom. From it we can know God, man, creation, the reality of redemption, the basis of hope, and the glorious goal of all history—the encouraging and sustaining climax (*telos*) which makes history intelligible. Out of this knowledge and wisdom we may counsel others.

The resources for knowing the Scriptures are almost endless. Bible commentaries and dictionaries, theological word books and theological dictionaries abound. Brief as they are, some of my own writings may also be helpful. The Living Faith Study No. 35 'The Wisdom of God and of Man' (NCPI, 1979) covers the two wisdoms. A mini-theology is given in *Practical Christian Counselling* (NCPI, 1984), on pp. 8-23, and in *God's Glory: Man's Sexuality* (NCPI, 1988), on pp. 8-21. *The Things We Firmly Believe* (NCPI, 1986) covers the whole range of biblical doctrine.

THE APPLICATION OF BIBLICAL WISDOM IN COUNSELLING

Biblical wisdom enables us to discern where any human being is at any point, i.e. to know the anthropology of created, fallen, redeemed, and sanctified states of any person, with the understanding also of man as a being-fulfilled and yet-to-be-fulfilled person, progressing towards glorification, i.e. man living in hope. All this knowledge is invaluable. The wisdom of dealing with the troubled person, especially in the supportive context of the people of the community of Christ, can be applied, as the counsellor gives time to the counsellee to share his feelings, problems, difficulties, angers, hurts, resentments, aspirations, and other personal elements. This counselling of acquired wisdom is in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Lordship and intercessory ministry of Christ, and the securing Fatherhood of God, with the gifts of redemption, personal healing, of love and of authentic living. The scope of the wisdom is endless. Nothing of it is foolproof, and no demand can be made upon the counsellor to heal anyone, solve anyone's problems, or draw any matter to a conclusion. True wisdom understands the obduracy of man, the intransigence of his will, and the fact that any human person at any point of his life is never deserted by God, that God has many servants waiting in many wings to assist those who need His mercy, and that no one—of himself—has such wisdom as to effect the perfection required of human beings.

6

The Cleansing of the Memories

TRAPPED WITHIN OUR MEMORIES

Some people seem fated never to escape from their memories. On a television screen we have seen witnesses at the trial of a war criminal, as their minds are taken back to the days of their sufferings within a concentration camp. Their memories flood in upon them with devastating anguish. They relive the terrible times when they watched their dear ones cruelly beaten and butchered, thrown into the gas chambers, or dying of starvation and sickness. It seems the mind cannot bear it. The floods of tears come gushing forth, and the old horror is back in their eyes and their spirits.

Others do not have to relive those memories, but other memories are terrible to them. It may be the recall of a family tragedy, a set of circumstances that still trouble the one recalling them. It may be of a life of hopelessness, failure, and inability to cope with one's own self or the society in which one has moved. Others—those with highly sensitive and even morbid consciences—shudder to face what they have been and done in the past. Others simply remember the cruelty and treachery that has come to them in their own family or circle of friends.

There are many memories—many, many memories. The

question is, 'Does a person have to live with such memories? Can the past be neutralized in its affects upon one? Is there a way out of the pain of the past?' We should be able to answer, 'Yes, the past can be so dealt with that it need not harm us in the present, or even trouble us to the point of recurring pain.' Let us see if this can be the case.

THE VALUE OF MEMORY— GOOD OR BAD

As those who have suffered loss of memory—amnesia—can tell us, such loss is not pleasant. The person who is in this state can experience great anxiety as to who he is, or was, as to what he may or may not have done, as to what continuity he can sense in life. It is better to have a memory even of bad things than to have no memory at all. The uncertainty regarding the past can be most unpleasant. Also there can be a loss of identity. Most people have enough difficulty in understanding their own identity when in full possession of their faculties, let alone becoming amnesiacs. The past is so essential to living in the present, and to anticipating the future.

During World War II Japanese prisoners in Burma and Thailand felt the terror of their memory draining away under the constant pressure of starvation, hard labour, tropical illnesses, and deprivation of their families and loved ones. Some went into certain states of mental lethargy. They became like zombies. Those who were there remember the dead, unlooking nature of their eyes, the eyes being sunken in the head so that the very skull seemed to be those of the deceased. Rehabilitation was not impossible, but to be effective for such people memories had to be restored. Whilst many of these former survivors have died, those still living can even go back to memories of their suffering with a certain pride in living through the events. Such memory of suffering is not wholly intolerable.

We repeat: it is better to have bad memories than to have none at all. Of course, no life has been without its wonderful

memories, and how tragic it would be not to be able to recall them. Probably memories of good times, people and things could far outweigh what we call 'bad memories'.

**THE PAST,
THE PRESENT
AND THE FUTURE**

We have already hinted that vocation is indispensable to true living. The human race is called to live together, to live in this world, and to live *now*. We live better *now* when we have had a good *then*, a good *past*. Those who have had a bad past generally look to the future for something better—for some form of compensation. If they have been badly affected by the past they may not expect much of the future. It has often been observed that *now* is the *future* passing to the *past*. There is some truth in this thought, but if the past is unhelpful then a person will want to flee from it—to the future—hoping something better may be found there. Some become cynical of the future because of the past. In both cases the present—this now-time—is not attractive. The true Christian believer has great hope for the future, and more so because the past has been purified by Christ and his Gospel, through the ministry of the word of God and the Holy Spirit. Such a person, then, can enjoy the present because the mind and conscience are clear from the past and there is rich hope for the future.

Thus, from all of this we can see the need to attend to the past, to bring release, relief and comfort to the counsellee.

**THE MEMORIES
TO BE CLEANSED**

The first thing is that memories cannot be erased. Whatever elements cause persons from time to time to come into states of amnesia, it is no business of ours to try to erase memories. Those memories need to be there—and they will remain. The work of grace is to so denude them of their guilt, their shame and their pain that the person will

not be constantly bowed down by them. What we have to face clearly is that where there is human guilt before the holy law of God, and before the Holy God Himself, then there can be no true rest and serenity in the human spirit. The Scriptures teach clearly that all sin is against God (Ps. 51:4), and since it is a breaking of His law then the person must come to judgement. The human conscience—especially when awakened—knows this to be the case. Take the following Scriptures:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

... the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21).

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? (Jer. 17:9).

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man . . . (Matt. 15:18–20).

That, then, is the state of the human heart before grace comes to it. Proverbs 4:23 states that the issues of life flow from man's heart as it was created by God. It warns against defiling the heart. Proverbs 25:26 says, 'Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked'. It is concerning this polluted heart—filled with the guilt-laden memories—that people cry out, as below:

Remember not *the sins of my youth*, or my transgressions;
according to thy steadfast love *remember me*,
for thy goodness' sake, O Lord! (Ps. 25:7).

There is no soundness in my flesh
because of thy indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

For my iniquities have gone over my head;
they weigh like a burden too heavy for me (Ps. 38:3–4).

For thou writest bitter things against me,

and makest me inherit *the iniquities of my youth* (Job 13:26).

When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer (Ps. 32:3–4).

We can see, then, that the sludge of sin—let alone the hurts and wounds that come from outside—is what deeply troubles man. When David was confronted with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and his murder of Uriah the Hittite, he cried out in anguish,

‘Have mercy on me, O God,
according to thy steadfast love;
according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!’ (Ps. 51:1–2).

We are driven to see that the only way of cleansing the memories is for God to utterly take away the guilt of sin, and cleanse away its impurity and pollution. The question is, ‘Can this be done *utterly*?’ The answer must be, ‘Yes!’

THE CLEANSING OF THE MEMORIES

The promises of cleansing which God gives are many. In Israel the sacrifices cleansed the worshipper of ‘an evil conscience’, although, as Hebrews 10:1–4 puts it, such cleansing by sacrifices had to be repeated time

and again for successive defilements by sin. The promises of ‘a better covenant’ than the Mosaic Covenant are found throughout the prophets (Isa. 1:18; 4:2–4; 44:22; Jer. 31:31–34; 33:8; Ezek. 36:24–28; Micah 7:18; Zech. 13:1). John the Baptist said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’

The Fact of the Cleansing of Sin

The purification which the Jewish worshipper knew through the sacrifices must have been of immense comfort

to him—even if only temporarily. The writer of Hebrews told his readers, ‘When he [Jesus] had made purification for sins . . .’; ‘he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’; ‘the blood of Christ . . . purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God’; ‘let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience’, so that the readers could know they were utterly purified.

Paul said, of very sinful people, ‘you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.’ He also spoke about ‘the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit.’ Peter spoke to his readers about ‘Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth’, whilst John said, ‘the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.’

THE WAY OF THE CLEANSING OF SINS

The following Scriptures show us that Christ took our sins into himself, bore their guilt and their pollution, thus freeing us from them:

... this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28).

God . . . sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I John 4:10; cf. Rom. 3:24–25).

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (I Pet. 2:24).

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was *the chastisement that made us whole*, and with his stripes we are healed . . . the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:4–5, 12).

For Christ also died for sins *once for all*, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God (I Pet. 3:18).

For our sake he [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (II Cor. 5:21).

Whilst we cannot understand the mode or process of the purifying suffering of Christ, we can know that as a result of that suffering we are wholly purified. We are cleansed, we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified. The guilt of sin has been taken away utterly, and so our memories of sin need not trouble us. *Since our sins have been purified then so are the memories of them!* Such sins were not only forgiven by the kindness of God, but the moral basis for their forgiveness was laid in the propitiatory sufferings of Christ on the Cross. We are forgiven our sins, the guilt of our sins has been cleansed, the moral impurity of our sins has been purified, and the penal guilt so borne that it is no more.

LIVING WITH CLEANSED MEMORIES

The counsellor needs thoroughly to know the cleansing of his/her own memories. The promise of Isaiah 1:18, 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson they shall become like wool', is a powerful—almost incredible—promise. All our sins are now white and pure. They have been cleansed to this purity, therefore we need not fear them. When we remember them—or are reminded of them—we must see them as rendered harmless. This gives point to Paul's statement, 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.'

The counsellor must be sure he has nothing about which to counsel, except that the past has been purged of its disastrous elements, for (i) all sins have been purified, their guilt removed so that they can no longer accuse or be the basis for Satan, others, and one's self to accuse; and (ii) all griefs and sorrows, hurts and wounds, angers and resentments have also been borne on the Cross and have had their pain effectively removed. The person must believe this, not as 'positive thinking'

but as 'reality thinking', i.e. *the event* of destroying our sins and purifying our consciences *has happened*—once for all—on the Cross. It has been applied—once for all—by the Holy Spirit in regeneration (I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5–7), and the person is free. *The objective event of the Cross and the Resurrection must be reckoned upon continually.*

God Does Not Remember

God promised Israel in regard to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:34), 'I will forgive their iniquity, and *I will remember their sin no more.*' If God does not remember, then why should we? He also said, 'I, I am He who *blots out* your transgressions for my own sake, and *I will not remember your sins*' (Isa. 43:25). In Jeremiah 50:20 is the amazing statement, 'In those days and in that time, says the Lord, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and *there shall be none*; and sin in Judah, and *none shall be found*; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant'. This is very close to saying, 'They will be justified from all sin', the great truth of the death of Christ—*being justified by His grace* as a *gift*. In this respect Micah 7:18–19 is apt:

Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He does not retain his anger for ever
because he delights in steadfast love.
He will again have compassion upon us,
he will tread our iniquities under foot.
Thou wilt cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

This thought links with Isaiah 44:22, 'I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; *return to me*, for I have redeemed you'.

There are many Scriptures which can help to assure the willing counsellor of the whole cleansing of his/her memories, such as, 'I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; then *thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin*'; and,

'Lo, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but thou hast held back my life from the pit of destruction, for *thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back*'.

**Man Remembers,
with Pain and Shame,
but Can Come to Peace**

In Ezekiel 36:22–36 there is the prophecy that God will bring back Israel into its land after its exile because of its sin. God promises

purification from all uncleanness and idols, and says He will give a new heart. The outcome of this cleansing will be a new obedience. God will give material blessings also. Strangely enough, the result of all this cleansing, forgiveness and regeneration of heart will be that, 'Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds'.

This certainly seems strange. Far from *not* remembering their sins, the effect of forgiveness and cleansing is to bring them to remember their sins with loathing. Does that, then, not go against all we have said, above, about God's great grace of purification? No! In fact it is part of it. Until the person sees the enormity and uncleanness of his sins—now purified and forgiven—he will not understand the sheer nature of grace, will not understand the cost of purification, and will not be grateful for what has been done, but rather will take cleansing for granted. When he sees the reality of his sin, and the objective action of the Cross to purify him and forgive him, then the self-loathing that he has *as a crisis of recognition* will help him to understand the radical nature of forgiveness and his total freedom from the past. Such an experience is rightly called 'repentance'. The power-

ful thing about it is that once experienced—i.e. the self-loathing and reception of purification—one can then go back into the past without any fear or apprehension. Its guilt dynamic has been neutralized. The past is no longer a reproach. The richness of liberation is now known in all its fullness, the freedom from the past is complete.

**DEMANDS RELATING
TO THE CLEANSING
OF THE MEMORIES**

Some people do not wish to have their memories cleansed. They do not wish to be forgiven and cleansed, for that is

humiliating to them. Hence they must live with their memories. Others are prepared to receive forgiveness and cleansing, but stop short of seeing it as total, as present, and as immutable. The truth is that some of us get a certain amount of (illicit) pleasure out of going over our sins. The danger of this is that it again gives life to past sin, since we view it outside of faith and the objective work of the Cross. For this reason, then, some will not want to surrender their sins to the oblivion of forgiveness!

Others will wish to retain memories of the past where they relate to injustice and hurt. There can be a bitter-sweetness in judging others, in self-pity for the hurts that have come to us, and in our desire for vengeance or self-justification. Thus we revisit the past, trying to demand justice for wrongs done, or dreams shattered, or relationships broken. This is a foolish, futile, and even dangerous practice. Many Scriptures tell us to leave vengeance or the getting of justice to God—He will deal well with that. Deliberately retaining hurt, anger and resentment will be dangerous. If God has forgiven us, then we must forgive others. We must never say, 'There is only so much that flesh and blood can take, and then . . .' What we mean is there is so much we will take, and after that, no! That is a decision we make, to our loss.

**The Healthy Demand
for Clear Memories**

The joy of memories neutralized and purified lies in our prepared-

ness to face up to what has been sin, error and failure in our lives, look it clearly in the eye and acknowledge the whole of it. If we do this then the whole of it will have been dealt with and we are free to pursue life.

That means there is nothing left to hide, nothing to rationalize away by self-justification, nothing to visit us with

accusation. We can now live in the freedom of memories cleansed. Of course Satan and his evil powers, our enemies —and sometimes our friends—will accuse, will sneer at such cleansing as ‘a handy but impermanent rinse’, but these things will not move us.

We can now enjoy our past and so be free in the present. This means we can face the future with serenity, and in the hope God has set before us. We can look back into the past, acknowledging the dreadfulness of our sin, the experiences we have had of being hurt, wounded, desperate and lonely, and yet not be caught in anger, depression and bitterness. This is the dynamic of total cleansing, and how wonderful it is!

7

The Comfort of Continuing Covenant

THE COMFORTING PRINCIPLE OF COVENANT As man was created, he related with warmth and responding love to God his Creator. This is how we think it would have had to have been. One in union with God, he would have known complete joy, serenity and purposefulness in living, especially as God had placed creation under his hands. Vocations with love, joy and peace must have been as full a life as one could imagine. This, however, was shattered when man decided to go it alone—to live on his own resources, without God. The primeval couple were storing up pain and shame for the generations to come.

The biblical picture of covenant is a wonderful one. The Book of Genesis was written after Israel had been liberated from Egypt, and it was wrought in the rich context of covenant. Covenant is an agreement God makes with man, God taking the initiative, and man being drawn in as a covenant partner. Theologians find covenant a rich and thrilling theme. Up until the twelfth chapter of Genesis the Book is about creation, about man’s separation from God, about people of faith who believed in God, and about others who didn’t.

To a great degree it is about families, and opens up to the family of Abraham—‘the father of multitudes’—in the twelfth chapter. Briefly, God says He will be Abraham’s God, and Abraham’s people will be His people and He will dwell with them. The comfort of God’s presence brings man back to being man. The presence of the Presence restores from ‘the presence of the Absence’, i.e. ‘the absence of the Presence’, and in covenant man is again secure.

Israel knew this Presence—typified and certified as it was by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. God dwelt in the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies where the celestial cherubim overshadowed the Mercy Seat. In practical fact the God who was Israel’s God was ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty . . .’

Israel, then, could live, travel, work and sleep in security, because of the irreversible covenant. Every provision was made for a pure heart, a sincere faith and a good conscience. Provision was also made for everyday living. Widows, strangers and the poor were catered for, and every provision was made to have a strong, wholesome morality as the norm for the nation. The laws of sacrifices provided for the taking away of guilt, and even for such contingencies as rape, theft, and killing ‘in hot blood’ as against ‘in cold blood’. God had also determined the heritage of Israel—a most important fact among the nations, for it meant they knew their place of living and dying.

All of this—and more—constituted the covenant of God with His ancient people, Israel. What, then, of the peoples of the world? Has no arrangement been made for them to be one with God in covenant? The answer is, ‘Yes, the outcome of the covenant with Abraham is that in Jesus Christ, nations and their families can today become one with God in covenant.’ This covenant was established by Christ, and is open to all believers. On the night of his betrayal Jesus stood

among his disciples, breaking the bread, blessing the wine and saying, ‘This is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you *and for many* [i.e. those beyond Israel] for the remission of sins.’ Many centuries before, Israel had sacrificed animals to God, and the high priest had taken the blood of them, and sprinkling that blood on the altar, the book of the covenant, and the people, had pronounced the covenant of God with Israel. Now Christ becomes the paschal and the universal sacrificial Lamb ‘that takes away the sin of the world’, and in him the New Covenant becomes valid and effective. By faith we can all be in the New Covenant.

LIVING IN THE COMFORT OF THE NEW COVENANT

A sociologist who had faith in God would find the social implications of the covenant fascinating. Each country, i.e. each nation, has its own history, its development, its culture, its political structure—and so on. Not too many peoples could claim an exceptional structure, and one which could be a paradigm for other peoples. Israel could: its social structure was unique. When it was faithful to its Covenant-Father-Head it lived in peace, and in social serenity, knowing pleasure as a nation. When it rebelled against its Founder, and when it went after gods and idols, disaster always struck. It had to learn to be faithful. Then, indeed, its community life was most pleasant.

The Covenant of Blessing

Community life under the New Covenant of Christ is a wonderful life. By comparison it far outweighs the former covenant in substance and function. Whilst it has precepts by which to live, its laws do not condemn its people. The one sacrifice of Christ, made once for all, sets the covenant members to live freely in life—i.e. without guilt and constant remorse and insecurity. Paul calls it ‘the blessing of Abraham’,

for Abraham was justified by faith and promised universal blessing, for in his seed or offspring (Christ) all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. So then, to be in the New Covenant is to be blessed. Blessing is really substantial joy, peace, security and rich purposiveness in vocation.

The Everlasting Covenant of Peace It was also called ‘a covenant of peace’, i.e. it was structured for all to be reconciled with God, and so their neighbours, and so too even with enemies. No less they were to be at peace with themselves—these newly-made covenant people. Because it was called ‘an everlasting covenant’ there was no fear for the future. This is partly what is meant by ‘peace’. Death would have no terrors since Christ had withdrawn its sting, i.e. death and the horror of a Godless grave. God’s agreement was ‘to everlasting’. Even beyond the grave—indeed, better still beyond the grave—the heritage would belong to the covenant people, constituting glorification of the body, eternal life and lordship over the new heavens and the new earth, a new and dynamic royal priesthood to God and all creation. Today, when so much is transitory, the thought of ‘everlasting’ or ‘eternal’ is something substantial. Human beings look for something permanent and substantial, such as ‘the city to come, having foundations, whose builder and maker is God’.

Now all of this makes for a rich life in this world—even in the face of man’s depravity, the painful dynamics of guilt, the curse upon the earth—for when one accepts what happens in a partially sinful community, and one rests upon the covenant relationship with God, then one can enjoy life. One of the most beautiful things in a restless, insecure world is family-in-covenant.

FAMILY IN COVENANT On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out by Christ on his people, a remarkable unity and fellowship

of love was achieved. This unity was most practical in that there was a daily distribution of food and necessities to those in need. The community shared its corporate resources, and there was love in plenty. The social structure seemed implanted from the beginning. Elders were appointed who cared for the teaching, and emotional and spiritual needs of the people, and deacons carried out a practical form of serving which helped in most practical ways. This was all part of ‘the blessing of Abraham’, something which Peter called ‘the times of refreshing’.

Just as in the covenant system which God had given to Moses for Israel, so in the New Covenant—under its mediator and covenant-head, Christ—there was a social structure, provisions for worship, fellowship, and rich community living. The relationships which constitute first the family and then the community were unparalleled in human history, and continue to be so. The God of Exodus 34:6–7 (‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty’) is the same God of the new community of Christ. This community has God as Father, Christ as Elder Brother, Lord and King, and the Holy Spirit as Comforter, Guide, and Imparter of power.

Covenant and the Family Unit Many passages speak of familial covenant living, and this living is the kind which offers security to the children, from the cradle to the grave, even in the face of a sinful and often hostile world. Its social elements could well provide material for sociological research, since its elements are based on the relational nature of the Triune Godhead from which they are derived. Especially interesting are the principles set out in I Corinthians 7:1–31. The point we are taking here is that the believing spouse sanctifies the unbelieving spouse, and the believing parent sanctifies the children:

For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy.

Here Paul is simply taking his cue from the covenant familial system in Israel. To Israel were committed the oracles (truth and truths of God), and so children born into this holy nation (Exod. 19:5–6) were counted as holy by God, even if they lived unholy lives. The benefits and privilege of being children of God (Deut. 14:1) were limited to Israel, but then there was responsibility upon every covenant member to be faithful to God Who—towards them—was ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty’. This means that the covenant blessings are available to all within the New Covenant, even if—as yet—there are those who do not willingly live in God’s love and grace. The parents can remain assured that God has a special relationship with their children, and that He will care for them and guard them as He had done so with every Israelite. This is because He is ‘the God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all and in all’, i.e. His Fatherhood surrounds, protects, guides and matures all His covenant children. This is because all familyhood that is in heaven and on earth derives from Him. Covenant means ‘household’ (Num. 12:6–7), and household means ‘family’ (Heb. 3:1–6; cf. I Tim. 3:15).

This is dynamic covenant. When Paul tells the children at Ephesus, ‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,’ he is assuming they are ‘in the Lord’. Since whole households were baptized into the faith when parents believed, then the children could consider themselves under the grace of the New Covenant. Peter had said, ‘The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ He (the Lord) has said before—in relation to the children of Jewish

households—‘Of such is the kingdom of God.’

Children Are Forever Within the Covenant

The practical outworking of this is that Christian parents must not regard their children as outside of Christ and the love of the Father. They must encourage them to believe in the blessings of the covenant, and to live in them. For the parents of erring children there is the assurance that they are in the hands of the Covenant-Father. For the children there is the assurance that they are not as pagans—as ‘sinners of the Gentiles’. As we say, being included in the covenant does not *ex opere operato* bring the children to salvation, for the will of all is involved in surrender to God, but it ‘puts them in the way’ of the blessing promised to Abraham. Just as Jesus told the Samaritan woman that ‘salvation is of the Jews’, so in this era we can say, ‘Salvation is of the church,’ i.e. it resides within the new community of God—the people of Christ.

The value for counsellors is that they can see on the one hand the extreme pain that rebellious ‘covenant children’ suffer in their consciences when they try to repudiate the faith of Christ, and on the other hand the immense value of life that lies in a covenant family. They can work upon the basic truth taught to their counsellee as a child. They can help to break through the barriers the covenant child has erected against God. They can see that God has many ‘prodigal sons’, and so can be helpful. The fact is that all children of the covenant are always in the covenant unless they deliberately repudiate it. This knowledge is greatly stabilizing to the covenant children. The Father-God of the covenant is always pursuing them, whatever the earthly covenant parents may or may not be doing. The counsellor can always pursue this line with great benefit when he/she is counselling a covenant child.

The general value of covenant is the comfort it brings to all members participating in its community. We can rightly speak of ‘the dynamics of covenant’. They are unique in a

world which is so divided, and Christian counsellors will do well to pursue this theme to its good conclusions. How comparatively easy it is to live in covenant, how securing, how maturing, and how full of hope!

The Dynamics of Assurance One thing that must be kept in mind is that Exodus 34:6–7—the revelation of the moral glory of God, i.e. ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty . . .’—is the basis of all relationships. Israelites could virtually demand of God that He would be ‘slow to anger, and of great kindness’ and that He would always abound ‘in steadfast love and faithfulness’. In that sense the prodigal son would expect his father to forgive and reconstitute him a son—not of course that the prodigal son demanded that.

Now this assurance of the faithfulness of God has two important elements: (i) it means the covenant person can at any moment re-enter—so to speak—into full relationship with God, and (ii) that he himself is tutored in the same kind of steadfast love and faithfulness, i.e. towards others.

CONTINUING COVENANT AND THE FUTURE In other parts of this book we speak of the principle of hope. Hope presupposes a goal, and so presupposes purpose, and purpose presupposes vocation. These are most powerful elements in the living processes of humanity. Without hope we are hopeless, without a goal we are wayward, and without vocation we are layabouts, or simply fillers-in of time. God gave man his vocation at the time of creation—to be lord of creation. He gave man and woman together the vocation of fruitfulness. He set some kind of a goal or *telos* in urging them to fill up the earth. He repeated this mandate to man after the Flood.

He has given man of the Abrahamic Covenant a fresh mandate, i.e. to bring blessing to all nations. In the redemptional mandate given to His disciples is the goal of bringing the nations to the feet of Christ. To all covenant people He has given the goal of inheriting the earth, and managing it. He has promised an inheritance which includes resurrection of the body, glorification of the whole person, lordship in heaven and earth as a ‘kingdom of priests’. All these things are inherent in covenant.

The counsellor who misses the dynamics of purposiveness, employment, vocation and goal is missing a rich understanding of the nature of man. Most Christians—let alone others—are ignorant of the nature of covenant, and of its inner dynamics. To speak of ‘the comfort of continuing covenant’ is to draw a blank in the thinking of many.

**CONCLUSION TO
‘THE COMFORT OF
CONTINUING
COVENANT’**

What is the value to the counsellor of this bit of theology above? It is this—that God is a covenant God. His grace is such that He makes a unilateral agreement with man to bless him, even though he is a sinner. He will always dwell with him, always be in his midst, never leave or forsake him, and always keep him in peace of conscience, assurance of life, will give him true social relationships with Himself and all covenant people, and at the last—at human death—will bring him to eternal life. Now whilst these may seem to be theological elements, they are extremely valuable ones. The unchanging nature of God in His love, and in the grace which sinful man needs, can transform the life of a dispirited person. It can give assurance of forgiveness and love—two of the most needed elements today—and can give him rich life in an authentic social setting—the vast covenant family—under the Fatherhood of God. The ideas of peace and a rich future are also encouraging. Yet these are not simply ideas. They are the substantial realities of the

faith, and outside the faith of Christ such substantial elements do not exist. The counsellor has this reality by which to encourage those who need help.

8

The Dynamics of Sexuality— For Sinners Only

INTRODUCTION: A TITLE IN HUMOUR

The titles of this and the next study are written tongue-in-cheek or with a cheeky tongue!

Since we are all sinners we will need to look at this study. This will be how we have known—and perhaps expressed—our sexuality, being sinners. Sinners become saints in the sense that God forgives sinners and makes saints of them, and that without them ceasing—in many ways—to sin. As saints our eyes are opened to the meaning of the truth, and so to the true meaning, of human sexuality, in which case we learn to express our sexuality in true and rich ways. Even so, this present study is as essential for saints to read as it is for sinners!

THE DYNAMICS OF SINFUL SEXUALITY

Paul introduces the biblical aetiology (cause) of sinful sexuality.

In Romans 1:18–32 he speaks of man's rebellion against God and his rejection of Him. In verses 21–25 he speaks of the shift to idolatry, and says (vv. 24–25), 'Therefore God gave them up [*paredoken*: 'abandoned up'] in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God [*tou theou*; 'of God'] for

a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.’ That is, man seeks to derive his life, his pleasure and fulfilment from the creation *apart from the Creator*: the creation must serve him—man. Man establishes himself as its god.

We have to see that sexuality is a creational gift to man, to be used normally, and which obtains when the person acknowledges and serves God. In verse 24, where God gives man up to lusts, then this action of giving man up to wrong use of sexuality is really His wrath and His judgement. Man *appears* to exercise his own will to do immoral actions, but God actually smites him with his own perverse sexuality. Likewise the same principle obtains in verses 26 and 27:

For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons *the due penalty for their error*.

The *cause* for God’s judgemental wrath is idolatry, the worship of the creature, the exchanging of the (ontological) truth for the (anti-ontological) lie, and the *mode* of His wrath is the giving up of men and women to compounding perversion and destructive, painful guilt.

We must conclude then that immorality is perverse, and homosexuality is perverse, and both stem from rebellion against God, but become fixed or habitual because of God’s wrath. The principle of Isaiah 19:22 may well obtain—‘And the Lord will smite Egypt, smiting and healing, and they will return to the Lord, and he will heed their supplication and heal them’—but that does not alter the cause of sinful sexuality or mitigate the wrath of God whilst it is in action.

The Heart of Sinful Sexuality

When man sought to be ‘as God’ (or ‘as gods’) then he sought autonomy, i.e. his own rule, his own kingdom, his own pleasure, his own fulfilment. At the heart of sinful sexuality is the desire to gain something for oneself, and this *without*

taking genuine responsibility. Part of the pleasure experienced is that of illicit action, the defiance of God’s created order of the universe. In sinful sexuality ontological joy cannot possibly be experienced.

The essence of original expressed sexuality was ‘the two shall become one flesh’, so that the primal man—and all true husbands after him—could cry, ‘This *at last* is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ All sexual experience out-side of this principle is deviant sexuality. Thus, for example, masturbation is ‘mono-sex’, i.e. the attempt to have ‘closed-circuit love’, whilst other deviant forms such as homosexuality, voyeurism, and transvestism are really refusals of the ontological ‘one-flesh’ principle. In homosexuality there can be no ‘bone of my bone’, so that in fact male–female unity as an entity cannot exist. In one sense these forms are really mono-sexist.

We will simply note here that the true order of sexuality was, ‘Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.’ One first leaves and then cleaves. Sinful sexuality is cleaving before leaving, in which case there is neither authentic leaving nor cleaving. The impossibility of true fulfilment causes the subject to take up an endless pursuit—a striving for ontological fulfilment, which by nature of the case cannot be obtained. This is the judgement within the rebellion which thwarts the subject so that anger grows, dissatisfaction enlarges and sexual endeavour becomes a compulsive, vain, and even terrifying pursuit. The sheer joy, ease and beauty of authentic sexuality is missing, and man angrily persists in his wrong pursuit of it—an action which, by nature of the case, continues to be counter-productive.

WHAT WE MEAN BY SEXUALITY

Human sexuality is difficult to define. In fact we can give no simple and easy definition. We have a problem

in that whoever describes it is a man or woman, and so sees what it is from his or her perspective, and none can be totally objective. I have described it in another place* as follows:

Sexuality is the essence of human personhood, especially as it is directed to the goals God has set for His created and functional universe. It is plural in form—i.e. male and female—but the plurality forms the essential oneness of true humanity. The dispositions, direction and operations of this sexuality are so diverse as to defy full description, yet that diversity in fact constitutes the amazing unity which lies in the created human race.

This description covers sexuality in its widest sense, embracing the whole race and all its living. The narrower sense is simply the matter of man, woman and sexual relationships.

Man Is a Male–Female Entity, i.e. a Unity

In order to understand Man we always have to start with God, for Man was made in His likeness and image. Genesis 1:27 says, ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’. Genesis 5:1–2 says, ‘When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created’. If these two accounts are complementary, then Man (Gen. 5:2) must mean ‘the male and the female’, so that Man is a male–female entity. There are, then, not two human races, one male and one female, but one race which is ‘male–female’. We cannot, of course, fully understand this functional and creational union as it existed when Man was in innocence.

* See my *Man, Woman, & Sexuality*, NCPI, 1986, p. 15. The subject of human sexuality is covered more widely in my *God’s Glory, Man’s Sexuality*, NCPI, 1988, and *God, Man and Woman in Today’s World*, NCPI, 1986.

MAN AS A MALE–FEMALE ENTITY REFLECTS THE UNITY OF GOD

Relationships Stem from the Triune God

God is One. The three members of the Triune Godhead are One in being God, in being love, in being Each-Other centred, in divine social fellowship. Man reflects this unity as the image of God. Therefore the male–female entity is a true ontological union. Man and woman must be each-other centred. Leaving out sexual elements from the subject, man–woman (Man) must reflect male and female elements of God. Such elements will be one in God, and—we repeat—have no sexual connotation. In fact, since God is always referred to as ‘He’ or ‘Him’, then the elements we regard as male and female in the human situation (i) do not exist in Him as such—as seen from the human point of view—i.e. we cannot think of God as union of male and female elements, and (ii) are subsumed under an ineffable masculinity which we call—without truly understanding—‘He’, ‘Him’ and ‘His’.

If this last paragraph is confusing then that is nothing to wonder at. When we try to comprehend an archetype we find we cannot, since—humanly—we try to work up from the ectype to the archetype* The word ‘masculinity’ is likely to be misleading because we think of it in human terms. Yet we have no other term, so that to say ‘Divine Masculinity’, whilst it is insufficient, is probably the way we have to go.

Knowing Sexuality—A Problem in Our World

On the human level we do know something of what constitutes ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. Each person has a practical sense of his or her gender situation, and each knows something of the drives of sexuality. Even so, we have problems in this kind

* By archetype we mean ‘the original pattern from which copies are made’, and ectype ‘a copy’, i.e. of that issuing from the archetype. In this sense we can talk of God’s Fatherhood being archetypal, i.e. the true Fatherhood, and man—being in God’s image—having a derived fatherhood, i.e. an ectypal fatherhood—and so on.

of understanding because we are sinful persons. We all fell in Adam. The Adamic and Evic fall was on the basis of humans being able to become 'as God' (or 'gods'), i.e. each being an independent unit. The created union or essential oneness of the man-woman entity was broken. The human race is somewhat split. Males are males and females are females. It is almost as though there are two races. The woman has great pain in childbirth. According to the curse man rules over woman. It seems the woman would rule over man, also. So see Genesis 3:16, 'your desire shall be for your husband', and Genesis 4:6, 'Its [sin's] desire is for you', i.e. 'to rule over you'.

Our Relationships and Enquiries Are Imperfect

We come to each other in society—man to woman, woman to man, each person to the other—as sinful people directed by our own egotism. We will not so much be other-centred and other-loving, as self-centred and self-loving. This is what we mean by our title 'The Dynamics of Sexuality—For Sinners Only'. The truth is that we do not approach our subject objectively. We all have 'hidden agendas', secret predilections by which we operate. That is why we cannot debate—if debate be the word—the matters of sexuality, femininity, masculinity and relationships.

The closest we can get to useful enquiry, dialogue and interchange is when we are living in the fullness of justification. It seems to be a fact that all human beings seek to justify or vindicate themselves—whatever stand they may take about anything! Justification by God means we do not have to justify ourselves (though many justified people continue to do so), and so we can be—for the most part, anyway—impartial, if we will.

If, then, we can see—and admit—that the sexuality matter is carried on in inadequate ways, we may be free enough to examine the insights which come to us through the Scriptures and other research.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF MAN AND WOMAN

A Method of Understanding Man and Woman

If we begin at creation, then we have a certain view of man and woman. If, however, we commence elsewhere, then our view may be greater. If—for example—we look at Man glorified, then we will have a wider view than simply seeing man as created—if indeed that is wholly possible—for we will see him as completed. If we see what is true masculinity in Christ the Bridegroom, and true femininity in the Bride—the Church—then we will have a fuller view of what is true masculinity and femininity.

Understanding Man and Woman through Creation

For our present purposes we will start at the biblical creation—i.e. what Man was at the beginning. Man—male—female—was made in the image of God. The two—man—woman—reflected God in His Being. They were 'one flesh', i.e. in total union. The purpose of their being and their union was to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'. It was to this end that God blessed them.

The man did not rule the woman, but the two were one in union. He called her 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' because God created her out of man. He was created first and then she from him, and was called his 'helpmeet', i.e. he was given a commission and she was in it with him. As we have indicated, the break in relationships came when the man and woman refused God's word, and listened to the voice of the serpent. First their relationship with God was broken, and so their (true) relationship with each other. Paul speaks of death coming upon the human race through Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12ff.). He also spoke about the change that came in the human race (Rom. 1:20–32) by the same rebellion. Man refused the nature of God, i.e. refused his

affinity with Him and refused to truly worship God. He became idolatrous, related to (unauthentic) gods, and this immediately brought changes in his sexual behaviour (1:21–27), which further resulted in a breakdown in all human relationships. We can sum up what happened in the following terms:

- (a) All creation was a perfect functional whole (Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 3:11), and the man and woman—reflecting God—were a male–female unity, full partners in the vocation set out for them by God, and in this they were related (i) to God, and (ii) to one another.
- (b) In wishing to become ‘as God’ or, ‘gods’, they broke relationship with God and so broke relationship with each other. They became ‘self-centred’ instead of ‘other-centred’.
- (c) The result of this fall was that the full unity of the man–woman (one-flesh unity) was impaired. Idolatry resulted (i.e. worship of the true God now directed to idols who were ‘surrogate gods’, to some degree satisfying man’s ontological drive to worship—whatever!), and idolatry always involves wrong (immoral), false and/or deviant sexuality. This is what we may term ‘the sexuality of sinners’.
- (d) Such sexuality—resulting from rebellion against God, and attachment to idols—was to become the factor which deeply disturbed, dislocated and distorted the flow of true human relationships (from being other-centred as are those of the Godhead), so that true sexuality could not be expressed. It is these aberrations, deviations and dislocations that have become endemic within the human scene, and which cause the most painful and disastrous breakup of human relationships.
- (e) Under this relational breakup man is not ‘blessed’, does not fulfil the creational command of God, and does not have or fulfil true vocation. He is thus both *depraved* and *deprived*. He has the urge for emotional and vocational fulfilment, but cannot attain it. This then becomes a great cause of anger and frustration from which violence may erupt.
- (f) Sexuality now becomes a thing for pleasure, for seeking some required relationship—albeit temporary and unsatisfying. In fact all sexual relationships outside of marriage are not part of the ontology of creation, and by nature of the case cannot satisfy but only bring guilt. All wrong forms of sexuality can be called rebellion against

God and His ontological order. Such sexuality is a protest against God as Creator, and an endeavour to use what God has created for one’s own satisfaction.

We now need to examine human relationships more closely, particularly looking at their creational origins.

ALL FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS DERIVE FROM GOD THE FATHER

Ephesians 3:14–15 says, ‘... the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named’. This is capable of meaning, ‘the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name’ (*JB*), ‘the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name’ (*NIV*), ‘all fatherhood everywhere derives its name’ (J. A. Robinson). It really means that wherever family (*patria*) or fatherhood (*pater*) is found, it derives from God the Father. This is reinforced in Ephesians 4:6, ‘one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all’. When God *created* Man He gave true family relationship out of His Fatherhood. In *redemption* He renews this (John 14:6; Gal. 4:4–6). In I John 3:10–11 and 4:19–21 it is clear that not to love God is sin, and not to love one’s brother is not to love God. To hate a person equals murder. All of this, then, pertains to true sexuality across the human race. To lose true sexuality is to bring misery. This may be called the perverse dynamics of sexuality—for sinners!

THE MISERY OF ASYMMETRIC SEXUALITY

When what—in the New Testament—is called ‘divine love’ (*agape*) is (was) lost to Man through the Fall, then substitute forms of love are required. Hence self-love. The Greeks called altruistic love for others *eros*, and forms of genuine affection they called *phileos*. The word *agape* was little used but was Christianized by the early church to mean ‘God’s love to us, and that love working in us and t

through us to others'. Today we talk about *eros*—erotic love—as relating to biological sexuality. The Greeks did not do this, nor should we. *Agape*—rightly exercised—covers all forms of love.

Sexuality is really the whole matter of man–woman relationships, and as such covers all forms of relationships—whether male to female, male to male, or female to female. That each of us has gender is both a biological and psychological fact. Whilst the question of biological sexual relationships does not always obtain—i.e. father with daughter, mother with son, brother with sister—yet the matter of gender is always present.

When our relationship with God is not true, and when a breach is made, then our essential sexuality becomes asymmetric. That is, when a child is out of relationship with one or both parents, it has a deficient relational situation and develops wrong images of father and mother, and so of male and female. These wrong images often develop aberrant and deviant forms of sexuality-approaches, such as incest, homosexuality, bisexuality, and transvestite patterns. They can also produce frigidity in sexual intercourse, or what has been termed 'oversexuality', i.e. undue sexual pressure and demand of the partner. Such undue pressure comes from belief in a satisfying sexuality, frustration at not achieving it, and an assertive attempt to do so, all of which may enlarge the frigidity of the other partner.

Whilst we tend to see human (biological) sexuality as a category in itself—missing as we do its wider connotation—then we seek to treat sexual problems within the category of biological sexuality, missing its wider framework, which is the whole of human relationships. Only when we treat the wider problems of parent to child, child to child, and person to person relationships can we even envisage healing.

What we must see is that Man's misery is not simply from his failure to achieve ideal or satisfying sexual goals, but derives from wrong, twisted, and deficient relationships, first with God and then with his fellow mankind.

THE SHORTEST PATH TO TRUE SEXUALITY

In the biblical system the way to be free from rebellion against God and the accompanying asymmetrical sexuality is to come under the grace of God. In I Corinthians 6:9–11 Paul points out the various moral aberrations in behaviour, namely immorality, idolatry, adultery, sexual perversion, theft, gluttony, alcoholism, and says that the way such things were finished was by Christ's 'washing, sanctifying, and justifying'.

The counsellor will have to know the truth of this before he can communicate it effectively to the counsellee. Once a person comes into the obedience of faith, then the true order of things is clear to him, and he sets about living by them. This brings true sexuality.

9

The Dynamics of Sexuality— For Saints Only

SEXUALITY FOR SAINTS We have observed that all saints are sinners in the sense that they have not wholly ceased from sin in this world, though their minds are set against it. There is in fact one true sexuality, and it is for all humanity to practise. We have said that whilst sexuality includes what some call ‘biological sex’ it is much wider than it. That is why it can reasonably be called ‘relationality’. Human beings can—and ought to—relate with all other human beings across the whole spectrum of the race. They can give of their persons which are in one sense a constant and a common denominator, and in giving can do this through the gifts of masculinity and femininity.

LEARNING RELATIONALITY We have already seen that within the unity of the Godhead the Persons are other-centred. Thus there is no privatizing of their Being. God is other-centred in that He is love and loves mankind. He loves enough to send His only begotten Son into the world to become the propitiation for

man’s sins. The Father ‘abandons up’ His Son to death and judgement, and to the limbo of the lost of humanity. This is the final suffering of the propitiatory Victim.

God’s *relationality* is the basis of true human social being. All familyhood derives from Him, for He—as Father—is above all things, through all things and in all things. Not only do all ‘live and move and have their being’ in Him, but they have the creational (ontological) thrust to relate to all within the human race.

What man rejected in the Fall, God has given back to him in salvation. He becomes one of God’s elect, the true people of the Father, the brethren who are the true family. He also relates to all men in love. That love works itself out within the social system of the race—the system of love which does no ill to its neighbour, which cares for the neighbour—even though he may be an enemy. Whilst each person is a person—whether male or female—yet the true gift of sexuality means there is a polarity of femininity and masculinity which creates a dynamic field of *relationality*. We look, then, to see what femininity and masculinity are in the unity of the male–female entity called Man.

THE TRUE UNION OF MAN AND WOMAN AS BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE

In Ephesians 5:21–32 Paul speaks of the nature of the marriage of the bride and bridegroom. He reveals, however, that he is not primarily speaking of man and woman as husband and wife but of Christ as the Bridegroom and the church as the Bride. This is sometimes said to be the archetypal truth of which human marriage is an ectype, i.e. a derived product or copy, working on the same principles as the archetype. The True Marriage, then, is the ontological reality of which human marriage ought to be a copy, and so—for the human scene—truly ontological. He makes it clear that he is not likening

the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb to human marriage, but—to the contrary—is likening human marriage to that of the Bride and the Lamb.

At this point we will not trace the vocational nature of the Marriage, but first see the Bride as the True Woman and see her in her vocational action. We can then see the True Man and his vocational action, and from these trace out the true nature of Man.

The Revelation of Woman as True Femininity

On this basis, if we can understand Christ's Woman, the True Bride, then also we can understand the truth of archetypal Femininity, and so of human femininity. In Revelation 12:4–6, 14–17 she is depicted as the Woman who brought forth the Christ-child, brought forth other children (the members of the Church), and was consequently persecuted by the Dragon, so significant she was and is in her work and effects.

In Revelation 19:7–8 and 21:1–3, 9ff. (cf. Eph. 5:23) we have the Bride, who in Galatians 4:26 is 'the Jerusalem above', and is depicted as 'the mother of us all', thus linking with Eve 'the mother of all living' (Gen. 3:20), and even Sarah 'a mother of nations' (Gen. 17:16). This shows in principle the vastness and power of femininity. Again the True Woman is depicted under the figures or realities of the Body of Christ, the Church and the Holy City. The Holy City has its gates open day and night and the nations pour into it, for in it is the river of life, the holy throne of God, and the tree of life for the healing of the nations. What dignity and power she has then, 'having the glory of God', and what holiness as she is 'clothed with fine linen, bright and pure . . . the righteous deeds of the saints'! This is the archetypal Femininity.

This Femininity is better understood by contrast with the unholy city, Babylon, who is 'mother of harlots', rides upon the Beast, kills the prophets and saints, and seduces the nations. Hers is a false femininity, dominating, lecherous, bitter, angry and ambitious. If she is a 'helpmeet' to the Beast, then it is only to be devoured by him, for he, far from being a true husband, is cruel and self-centred, i.e. beastly!

The Revelation of Man as True Masculinity The True Man is Messiah, the Son of God, the Warrior-King of all ages, the great Redeemer, Judge and Victor-King, to whom is to be 'the obedience of the nations' (Gen. 49:10; Ps. 2:6–8; Isa. 9:6–7; Dan. 7:13ff.). This Crusher of the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15), this Great Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18–22, and the Son of David, is the Bridegroom, the Husband of the Bride, the Head of his Church, the Lamb on the throne with God in the Holy City. He is the one who, having crushed his enemies, gives the Kingdom to the Father, reigning at His right hand.

The True Man and the True Woman Together This one's Masculinity is highlighted by the Bride's Femininity. As her Head he has cleansed her by 'the washing of water with the word', aided her in the preparation of her white garments ('the righteous deeds of the saints'), and his love is such that nothing can separate her from it. There can be no expectation of eternity without the Bridegroom and the Bride, for they are one in their vocation.

We conclude that her Femininity is outlined by his Masculinity, and his Masculinity by her Femininity. Their utter 'one-flesh' union tells us of the oneness of Man, the true humanity. When, then, we see the archetypal Man and Woman, and understand their union-in-vocation, we can go back to the creational accounts of Man—man and woman as a 'one-flesh' entity—and know what it is to be a man and a woman, and to be Man as one.

THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE COUNSELLOR

Perhaps more in this than any study we see that man's problems spring from his lack of true relationship with God, and so his inability to relate to others. If we look simply at the actions of wrong and deficient relationships, and fail to see them as the spin-off of not relating to God, and therefore that they are symptoms

rather than primary causes of relational problems, then we have not read the matter aright.

If we would look realistically at the fact that human beings are sinners, that men and women are in conflict because they seek certain things from each other which they are denied, and if we can see it is not men only who dominate women, but women who dominate men and dominate other women, as men also dominate other men, then we can see that conflict is more often that of persons against persons than simply one gender against another.

As we suggested in our last study, the true way of healing the confusion, anger and aberrations of a person is to bring the revelation of God's love, through the Cross, so that the person comes to forgiveness, justification and cleansing from sins, and so to peace. It is then true femininity and masculinity reassert themselves—by regeneration—and the matter of practical relationality can begin to operate. This will be especially so when the person discovers the Fatherhood of God, with the security and joy that lies in that.

Given in these principles, there are situations of sinful sexuality which can be rehabilitated.

THE PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE OF TRUE SEXUALITY True sexuality in the biblical understanding of man–woman union is all contained within marriage. To commit fornication or adultery is sexual deviation. In one sense there is no such thing as 'sex' (i.e. true and full intercourse of man and woman) outside of marriage. The term 'having sex' for illicit situations is a misnomer. In one sense there is no such term as 'sex'; there is only 'marriage'. Nor would the modern euphemism 'love-making' find any acceptance in the Scriptures.

Marriage is Functional, That Is, Ontological The order of the man–woman union is, 'A man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his

wife, and they become one flesh'. To 'leave' means to leave the former relationship of the child to its parents and enter into the new relationship of man and wife. This happens—and can only happen—at the marriage. The father gives his coverage of his daughter to the bridegroom and a new situation is initiated. Both parents let their children leave—henceforth not possessing them.

If, however, two persons 'cleave' before they 'leave', they neither leave nor cleave. The dynamics of the bonding of the two—true union—are displaced and interfered with. The two have 'jumped the gun'. They have overstepped the functional (ontological) order. They cannot truly leave the parents or cleave to each other. If they try to get before marriage what they can only get in marriage, then they neither get it before marriage nor in marriage. One only has to think of the behaviour of Christ to his Bride, and her behaviour towards him, and the joy of their pure union. This is the archetypal bonding which is the pattern for us.

Healing the Failure Normally speaking, where young people are secure in their family situations they will not seek compensatory love in some other situation. Setting apart—for the moment—the natural burning with desire, young people who feel insecure, and/or rebel against moral strictures, and break the conventions and have pre-marital sex, often rationalize marriage as simply getting 'a piece of paper which legally permits'. However, it is the loss of purity which prejudices the bonding of the couple.

What needs to be thought about is that where a marriage does not bond, then relationships towards one another deteriorate, often resulting in difficult relationships between parents and children and all members of the family. These will always tend to repeat the cycle of 'no security: seek security in (sexual) love'. Of course, marriages can—and do—break up quickly, and divorce brings with it its enormous problems.

The healing—as ever—is at the Cross, in the forgiveness of sins, the purification of the person, the cleansing of the memories, the justification from guilt, and the revelation—through all this—of the love of the Father. With all this comes reconciliation and restoration. The counsellor should be able to show there is the restoration of the gift of purity. A true bonding can take place, and a marriage given a fresh start and impetus. True relationality can begin to grow, and grow outwards to many, if not all.

The Matter of Sexual Anger There is a sense in most, if not all human thinking, that true union of man and woman should bring rich emotional fulfilment, forge an unbreakable bonding, and bring the gifts of love, joy and peace. That is surely the deepest drive behind all (so-called) sex. When a person does not achieve this—for some of the reasons outlined above—he or she becomes disappointed and frustrated. Persons seek manuals on ‘How To Do It’, thinking that it is a matter of some technique which they have missed. This seems, too, to be the drive behind much deviant sexual activity. Far from achieving the true relational union, the joy and the emotional fulfilment, the very endeavour of the self to achieve its goal seems to defeat the purpose. Anger begins to grow, and anger acts like a brake on any kind of union. The problem compounds itself.

When a person comes to know the love of God—through Christ—and begins to love, out to the partner, and indeed to other persons, then the anger dies. A human’s fullest emotional fulfilment lies in loving God, and such love begins in true *relationality*. This then begins the restoration and rehabilitation of all relationships, and so the renewed persons turn to fulfil the vocational tasks for which God created them. Selfishness in sexuality diminishes and true sexuality begins to operate in profitable ways.

The counsellor would need to know the biblical truth of true sexuality. It is not good to counsel people when we ourselves are not free from the drive for emotional fulfilment, especially if we have not yet achieved it. There is one sense in which all counselling is a witness—and a witnessing—to the truth. If things required of us are not true to us, for us, and in us, then we ought not to embark on counselling.

10

Helping the Troubled and Discomforted

WHO ARE THE TROUBLED AND DISCOMFORTED?

Trouble is part of human experience. Eliphaz said, 'For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward' (Job 5:6-7). This may seem to be cynical, but in fact it is realistic. Man's troubles are many, his comforts not a few. The word or thought 'trouble' is much used throughout the Scriptures. The words translated in the Old Testament for 'trouble' have the various ideas of terror, trembling, shaking, agitation, disturbance, burden, pressure, destruction, labour, toil, affliction, distress, evil, travail, weariness, tumult, and anger. Much of this is also seen in the New Testament, where to be troubled is to be moved, disturbed, pressured, squeezed, tumultuous and afflicted. In the Old Testament troubles and evils are equated. So are trouble and anguish. There is 'the day of trouble', and it is a special thing—always to be dreaded. It is often called 'the time of trouble'. Man is born to trouble. Prayer for deliverance is made to God in time of trouble. Men cry to God in their trouble. God is 'a refuge in trouble', 'a very present help in trouble'. God knows how to 'deliver the righteous out of trouble'. Often, too, it is God who brings a time or day of trouble upon men.

If we analyse the idea of trouble in the Scriptures, we find it corresponds to our present ideas of trouble, especially with reference to stress and tension. It seems to point to 'being anxious', which Jesus warns against in the Sermon on the Mount. Some troubles come from circumstances, environment, relationships, as also local, national and international upheavals. Yet one does not have to be troubled by such things. One can live without anxiety. Anxiety is a reaction to, rather than a necessary accompaniment of, troubles.

What we ought to realize is that many of the troubles that mankind has had in history would today be analysed as anxiety states, neuroses, psychoses, and the like. Nothing has changed in the human race except, perhaps, that the pace of living has been accelerated. Even here many have shown the amazing adaptability man has to what Toffler has called 'future shock'.

TROUBLED MAN—IN NATURE AND GRACE

If we were to launch into a full description of man in his many troubles, we would need reams of paper. For purposes of clarity we will try to deal with man's troubles and discomforts under two headings, (i) The troubles of man 'in nature', and (ii) the troubles of man 'in grace'.

What do we mean by 'in nature', and 'in grace'? We take 'in nature' to mean man who has fallen from his original state of innocence before God, so we regard him as having his humanity within himself and not with God. By 'in grace' we mean man who has come under the transforming and enabling grace of God, i.e. God is working continually to do man good, and this is greatly helpful to him. We might think 'man in grace' would have no troubles and no discomforts, but that is not the case. Paul said, 'We who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body.' Paul, who was a man 'in grace', once cried, 'Who shall deliver me out of

this body of death?' He was certainly troubled.

We shall now proceed to our two divisions of troubled human beings.

MAN IN NATURE— TROUBLED AND DISCOMFORTED

Fallen man does not always appear to be troubled. We speak quite airily of 'happy pagans', and there seem to be many of these. Perhaps they just do not show their troubles or they fight bravely against them. There are many unhappy pagans, as our present day counselling services show. The ever-growing army of social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists testify to this fact. This army, of course, suggests that we have the answers to man's troubles within our capable humanity.

Biblical Anthropology and the Troubled Person*

The biblical portrayal of man in innocence is very beautiful,

* By 'biblical anthropology' (in which we treat 'troubled man', 'man in nature' and 'man in grace'), we mean that doctrine and definition of man as given to us in the Bible, in which man as a spiritual being has his essence in being related to God, to his fellow man and creation. Modern anthropology studies man and his behaviour, analysing human behaviour within the context of a modern world view—whatever that may be to the person carrying out the analysis. It is the task of the philosopher to look for reasons for the existence of man, his significance within history and his destiny—if any. The brief biblical theology and anthropology of man I have presented above is obviously inadequate. I therefore refer readers to my *I, The Man!* NCPI, 1983, and *Man of Dust! Man of Glory!*, NCPI, 1986, as also the booklet, *Man is—What?* NCPI, 1982. These, and other biblical anthropologies—of which there are many—give a full view of man, and this can be most helpful to those who study man in more 'secular' disciplines. I feel the source materials contained in the Scriptures are invaluable, since they get down to the roots of human problems, troubles, suffering and pain, and do not merely deal with them at the symptomatic level. It would not hurt anyone to study man through the biblical revelation that has been given to us. Few similar biographical and autobiographical materials are available which have such honesty and patent truth to them. Of course the biblical presentation sees man as a spirit, not only as a creature of body and soul, and sees his true being as spiritual, the reality of which few scientific anthropologies take into consideration. I am aware of course that the Bible is not accepted as 'scientific' investigation or truth. I see no reason for such a conclusion, since the Hebrews—and the later Christians—had richly developed an analysis of man in the light of the being of God, and the biblical philosophy of history which had emerged, i.e. that God is the living God, the God Who acts, Who cares for man, gives him destiny, and brings history to a purposeful and proper conclusion. They had a consistent anthropology, cosmology and theology, including a most dynamic eschatology. It is a

paradisical in fact. Total innocence posits peace, serenity, purposeful vocation and living, along with rich relationships between God and man, and person and person. It indicates a guiltless conscience, affinity with all creation, and lack of anxiety. In fact so wonderful is it that our minds cannot conceive it.

The biblical portrayal of man fallen is in sharp contrast. Through the Fall man became independent of God. This meant he sought to live autonomously. He desired to work out his own pattern of life. Were this a natural ability of man, then it would not matter. However, 'the way of a man is not in himself . . . it is not in man who walks to direct his steps' (Jer. 10:23). Man from the Fall is humanistic, believing he contains within himself all powers necessary to his well-being as a person and as a race. So far history has not shown this to be the case.

Biblically fallen man—man in nature—is *dead!* God warned him he would die if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so he died, i.e. *relationally* to God, to others and to himself (Gen. 2:17; 3:1–10; cf. Eph. 2:1–3; Heb. 9:14; I Tim. 5:6). The state of man is that he is (i) *deprived*, i.e. has lost the moral glory in which he was created, has deprived himself of dynamic relationships with God, his fellow creatures and himself, lacks true vocation within his world, and so has suffered the loss of ontological joy, peace, love—and so on, so that he is (ii) *depraved*, i.e. is not fully truly man. He is 'unmanned', less than man, a person with a strong ego-drive. In rejecting God as Creator-Father-King he has lost his creaturely dependence upon God. He is no less brilliant in logic and reasoning than when created, but he has been forced to re-rationalize God, humanity, and creation. His theology, anthropology and cosmology—as also his eschatology—have to be different. They cannot be

mystery why most anthropologists have ignored this valuable development of source materials. One is tempted to say that it may be because we are 'in nature', rather than 'in grace'!

ontological. This means that he will be constantly going against the Divinely appointed order.

When man goes against the ontological order then he has the kick-back of inevitable guilt. Romans 1:18–32 presents man as being under the wrath of God because of his sinfulness. God’s wrath is that He gives man up to his own sin and guilt. Given up to this, the guilt and sin of man further compound themselves. Man is deeply troubled—even though he seeks many forms of compensation. His trouble is that he is out of kilter with his true (created) self. He is awry, dislocated, out of joint—away from his true being. He suffers from two forms of guilt, the first being existential—guilt for not being his true self in a functional universe—and the second, objective guilt for the wrong things he has done, or the right things he has left undone.

Biblical theology does not portray fallen man simply as a loner—doing his own thing in the universe—but also as the object of attacks by evil powers. Indeed these powers enslave him, and taunt him with his guilts as they seek to enlarge his enmity with God. No wonder, then, that any man—every man—is in deep trouble and much discomfort. The tragedy of his evil compounds his existential pain, shame, agony, and emptiness. He is, indeed, in deep trouble.

**COMFORT,
DELIVERANCE
AND HEALING
FOR MAN ‘IN NATURE’**

It is clear from the Scriptures that Christ came to deliver man from his troubles and discomforts. Paul says he came preaching *peace* to those who were afar

off—the Gentiles—and those who were near—the Jews (Eph. 2:17). He quoted Isaiah 61:1 when he announced his ministry:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’

Peter later described this ministry: ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil’ (Acts 10:38).

**Christ’s Presence and Work
Brought Relief to Man**

Whilst it is true that he did many healings of sicknesses, and exorcised evil spirits, and

whilst it is true that he gave sight to the blind, yet the quote of Isaiah 61:1 cannot be limited to such physical happenings, for he released no one from a prison—except perhaps Barabbas!—so that he must be seen as giving mental, emotional, moral and spiritual release and healing. Certainly as Messiah of the Kingdom of God he brought powers to bear in an unusual way to effect this (Matt. 4:23; 12:28; cf. Luke 7:18–23; Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5–6), but it was his redemptive work of the Cross and Resurrection which concerns us. His factual healings of human beings were not inconsequential, but the Gospel had to be forged so that its power could work through the centuries ahead to bring relief to troubled man.

**True and Full Relief
from Troubles
and Discomforts**

It had been predicted that he would save his people from their sins, take away the sin of the world, bring in the New Covenant, and liberate mankind from the fear of death and judgement. His work of the Atonement also had to do with the transforming ‘new birth’, i.e. the radical regeneration of fallen man, so that he would move from being ‘in nature’ to being ‘in grace’.

This was done because he bore the sins of mankind until they were no more (Matt. 1:21; 26:28; John 1:29; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38; cf. I Pet. 2:24; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 3:18). He cleansed the pollution of the human race by his death (Heb. 1:3; 9:14; 10:22; Titus 3:5–7; I Cor. 6:11). He justified mankind from the guilt of the law (Rom. 3:21–24; 5:1; Gal. 2:16–21), and thus destroyed the fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15; cf. I John 4:16–18). Through his Cross he caused men and women to become

'new creatures', as against the 'old' fallen creatures they had been (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:14–15; I Pet. 1:22).

The New Relational Situation

Man's original tranquillity lay in his relationships with God, his fellow creature, his self, and the creation. Awry and out of kilter relationally, his life was not truly enjoyable. Sin separated him from God, his fellow creature and his own self. In Christ peace came, i.e. 'reconciliation with all men' (Rom. 5:10–11; II Cor. 5:18–20; Col. 1:19–21; Heb. 12:14).

This new relational situation takes away the enmities, bitternesses, divisions, resentments, angers, hatred—and the like. This is, of course, on the part of the believer, not that all will respond to that person's approach and mind-set (cf. Matt. 5:9, 43–48; Rom. 12:16–21). This means that the troubles and discomforts which come from an accusing conscience, from divided relationships, and like things, need be no more, especially as we appropriate the grace of God, by faith.

THE TRUE BENEFITS OF GOD'S RECONCILING WORK IN CHRIST, THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Christ's Atonement has brought to the world the most radical change in human behaviour that can be envisaged. Whilst this is not always overtly shown to a great degree, yet the inner action of the Atonement is most dynamic. The following are some of the results of that Atonement as applied to the human heart by the Holy Spirit:

- (a) Man becomes a renewed creature before the Creator.
- (b) Man finds the Father (is found by Him) and so all the emotional relational needs and yearnings are fulfilled. This releases the person from any previous bondage (by anger, guilt, or possessiveness) from the father and the mother. Previous forms of compensation (use of surrogate parents, pleasure, or—negatively—anger and hatred)

no longer need obtain. This is because man becomes a son to the Father.

- (c) Essential filial, parental, familial and societal relationships—resulting from the Atonement—come into true operation. To be a son of the Father is to be a brother (sister) to one's own family, to the family of the church and to the wider family of mankind.
- (d) The old guilts—existential and objective—are finished. The shame of past pollution has ceased. In accordance with Study 6, 'The Cleansing of the Memories', the person is free to enjoy the present, and the future.*

TROUBLED MAN IN GRACE

The New Troubles

It would be easy to gain the impression from materials presented above that for man to move from *in nature* to *in grace* ends that person's troubles. This is not the case. Certainly man in grace does not have to bear the pain, penalty, pollution and discomforting reminder of his sins and guilts. If he will be free, then he may live in freedom from those formerly troubling elements. Yet his very freedom is attacked. Evil powers constantly accuse him, telling him this freedom is ill-based, and is in fact a myth. He therefore constantly has to wage a battle of faith, for in this world 'we walk by faith and not by sight'. In one sense it can be said that evil powers did not attack him previously *in the same way*. They had him in their grasp (Eph. 2:1–3; I John 5:19) and were mainly concerned to keep him in ignorance of grace (II Cor. 4:4) and in enmity against God (Col. 1:21). Now man in grace and evil powers fight an unceasing warfare (Eph. 6:10–18); hence the new set of troubles.

* Many readers will find these points most simplistic. They will think of the complex conditions of human beings—neurotic and psychotic—and the complicated matters of relationships, the memory that is always dynamic, the changing moods, the matter of temperament, disposition and mind-set, and will wonder how such a thing as conversion from *in nature* to *in grace* could effect such a vast change. The next study will show that the basis for a new and released life is laid in conversion. This, however, needs a rich understanding of God's action in grace, for His moving in grace is full and without cessation. In grace He uses all means that are at hand to effect love, peace and joy.

The Renewed Conscience Again we might think that having a conscience 'purified from dead works', i.e. cleansed from past pollution, would remove troubles, and although it does, the conscience is now so sensitive that we must be careful lest it tip over into morbidity. It need not, of course, for the truth of justification protects the new man from such morbidity. The renewed conscience is linked with the fact and experience of holiness of life. The new, pure heart is concerned lest unholiness creep back, and there can be disappointment and depression where the new life does not seem to work out. Doubtless understanding Romans 7:13–25 can be of great help here.

The New Sense of Vocation The new person in Christ is one with a sense of vocation. The original creational mandate of Genesis 1:28–29 becomes renewed for the person who has come into grace. Then to this is added what we may call 'the redemptional mandate', i.e. the preaching of the Gospel in all the world, so that in these two commissions the believer has a sense of vocation.

When we add to this the fact that every person in Christ is moving towards the goal and climax God has prepared for the creation and His elect people, then we see that man—as such, even the new person—is as yet incomplete. Each moves towards the goal of maturity, i.e. glorification of one's being, and participation in the rich new age, and this heightens the sense not only of adventure and privilege but also of responsibility. With responsibility come troubles of a new kind, linked with authority, obedience and useful accomplishment.

Temptations to Spiritual Pride Luther's famous statement that we are simultaneously sinners and saints is true enough, but not easy to accept. Whilst in one sense we have passed out of the category of those whose

main bent is to sin and live in separation from God, yet it is true that sin indwells man as a powerful force, especially if a person does not know how to cope with it (Rom. 6:12–14; 7:13–25). The fact that the new person has been called to be a saint may be a problem in that believers may see themselves as innately righteous and holy, whereas these things are only by imputation, and not personal accomplishment. Paul makes it clear in such passages as I Corinthians 10:12 and Philippians 3:9 that having one's own righteousness is something he dreads. In the two Corinthian Letters he also speaks against the pride of 'triumphalism'—the doctrine and practice of being something in one's self and of accomplishing great things, albeit some acknowledgement for success is given to God. Paul has a doctrine of human weakness, and of need to depend wholly upon the grace of God.

THE CROWD OF TROUBLES The 'new creation' is not proof against a number of the ills that visit the man who is *in nature*. He faces natural ills and sicknesses, calamities, and other stresses that come upon all humanity. The wearing away processes are common to us all. The psalmists are constantly concerned with the problems that face them in life's circumstances, the enmity of others, the failures one has in accomplishment, and so on. Christians fall into states of deep depression, melancholy, apathy, lethargy, anger, bitterness, into states of backsliding, often coming perilously close to apostasy itself. Their behaviour can deeply shock their fellow-believers. How then can we account for such things?

The truth is that these problems are faced in the Scriptures. There is not always an immediate solution to some of them. Indeed we do not know whether Ananias and Sapphira were true believers. Was King Saul a believer to the end, and was falling upon his sword a sign of a suicidal person without hope? Was Simon Magus delivered from his 'gall of bitterness'? Did those who died of sickness at Corinth

because they failed to discern the Lord's body in the holy communion die out of the faith? We do not know the answer to these things. What we do know is that the apostles are constantly going over the truths of the faith. They are urging people to awaken out of states of anger and desire for vengeance. They urge God's people to rekindle the flame within, to wake out of sleep, to desist from walking in evil, to put aside hatred, to love all men, to put away things of uncleanness, and they encourage believers to attend to the brethren in their material and emotional needs, and to perform works of love towards one another. The solution to these problems surely lies with the life of the church, within its members who bear the fruit of the Spirit, who have tenderness, kindness and love.

Down through Christian history the troubles of believers have been attended by others who seek to 'bear one another's burdens'. There has been sympathy and aid. Prominent have been the Puritans—mainly of the seventeenth century, but continuing even to today—who studied the Scriptures closely and deeply and came up with solutions to man's grief and sorrows. We should not ignore their great biblical insights. Of great help is William Bridge's *A Lifting Up For The Downcast*. Men like Sibbes, Adams, Charnock and Goodwin—amongst others—wrote essays on such subjects as 'The Soul's Sickness', 'Physic From Heaven', 'The Bruised and Smoking Flax', 'The Returning Backslider', 'A Discourse of Affliction', 'A Discourse Proving Weak Grace Victorious', 'The Art of Contentment', 'Spiritual Mourning'. One such discourse—'The Saint's Comfort' by Richard Sibbes—has such headings as, 'The children of God fall into extremity of misery and affliction', 'God upholdeth his [own] from sinking into trouble', 'Affliction stirs up devotion'. Of particular usefulness is Archibald Alexander's work, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*. Alexander was born in 1777 and died in 1851, after being President of Princeton Seminary for forty years. His book tackles the matter of the Christian's troubles.

In the last three decades we have had a spate of books, pouring out, on the troubles of man. The comparatively new disciplines of psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry have researched the troubled mind widely. Christian writings regarding the troubled person are quite profuse. How much of it is really useful time will eventually tell us. The fact is that probably very little that is new faces the person of today. It is to be

hoped that the persons researching biblical anthropology will not spare themselves, but dig deeply into the mines of information which are at their disposal, and not opt for quickfire methods which, as Jeremiah said so long ago, 'have healed the wound of my people *lightly* [i.e. as though it were a scratch]' (6:14).

HELPING THE TROUBLED AND DISCOMFORTED

True help cannot be given where those requiring help see their problems arising wholly from outside themselves. We mean that where there is a conviction of being victimized, and no thought is given to responsibility and accountability for one's adverse reactions or wrong choices, then little true help can be given. The person has laid the total blame elsewhere than upon himself.

Within the Gospel, within the church, within the Father, Christ and the Spirit, lies the aid that is necessary. 'As you received Christ so walk in him' covers the principle of continual living in the faith. 'Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world' points to the strength that enables. 'God is at work within you to fulfil his will' brings assurance that no matter what times come—good or bad, painful or sweet—there are no troubles which cannot be overcome by the grace that is working from God. The diagnosis and healing lies within 'the whole counsel [wisdom, plan, effective working] of God'.

11

The Dynamics of Deliverance

THE MEANING OF DELIVERANCE We need to define our terms. The words ‘deliver’, ‘deliverer’, and ‘deliverance’ are used about 400 times in the Scriptures, with various shades of meaning. Our English words have numerous ideas, most of which are found in Scripture. Some of the ideas which concern us in this study are those of ‘being freed, set at liberty from enemies and oppressors, being saved from many things, such as domination by enemies, evil powers, sin, the law, death, calamities and catastrophes’. The primary Hebrew verb *natsal* has the ideas of ‘to snatch away, defend, deliver, pluck, preserve, recover, rescue, rid, save, spoil, strip, and extricate’. The closest equivalent to *natsal* in the New Testament are the verbs *exaireo* ‘to deliver from’ (used three times—Acts 7:34; 26:17; Gal. 1:4), *rhyomai* ‘to save or rescue’ (used eleven times, and each significant for our study). The verb ‘to save’ (*yasha* in Hebrew and *sozo* in Greek) is used extensively for what is really the act of deliverance, although the verbs ‘to deliver’ and ‘to save’ are not, strictly speaking, synonyms. In the *Authorized Version* of the Old Testament the noun ‘salvation’ (*yeshuah*) and the verb ‘to save’ (*yasha*) are often used, but sometimes become ‘deliverance’ and ‘to deliver’ in modern versions, e.g. Judges 6:14; Psalm 3:8; 9:14; Ezekiel 36:29. In the

New Testament the noun ‘salvation’ (*soteria*) is translated ‘deliverance’ in some versions (Acts 7:25; Phil. 1:19).

We can assume, then, that deliverance is that act which releases, liberates, snatches away, or plucks up a person who is enslaved, imprisoned, in debt, or dominated by some power greater than himself. The question is, ‘Are there human beings who need deliverance?’ The answer must be, ‘Yes! There are such persons.’

MAN WHO NEEDS TO BE DELIVERED When we say that there are persons who *need* to be delivered we do not mean (i) they necessarily *desire* to be delivered, or (ii) that they necessarily *merit* being delivered. Some persons do not desire, even, to be delivered, in which case deliverance may not be wholly helpful. We must be wary of seeing such persons as being victims. By ‘victims’ we mean those people who have been caught against their own will, are kept captive against their own will, and though desiring to be free are unable to extricate themselves. Many are captives or slaves because of their own actions, foolishness, desires and passions. It may well be that they *ought* to be delivered through the compassion and pity of others, but all who are under domination should not see themselves as simply being victims. If we do not understand the doctrine of human accountability, then we will excuse those under domination and so demean them, instead of helping them to see they have been caught by their own decisions and actions. How many who are so enslaved are not responsible for the condition into which they have come?

There are, of course, people who have been sinned against, persons who have been engulfed by many things, and odds have been and are against them. It is certain that Christ did not look at people as though it had served them right, that it had been their fault, and as though they had better stew in their own juice! He healed people without demanding they fulfil certain conditions before he would treat them:

And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics and he healed them (Matt. 4:23–24);

When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36).

MAN IN BONDAGE There is no question that man is in bondage, and that the forms of his bondage are many. A theological statement may be correct—such as ‘Man is in bondage to sin’—but it seems so academic, so far removed from the practicalities of life. It seems like a statement for a seminary and not one heard in a supermarket. Part of the reason for this is that man has seemingly come to terms with life about him. He has joys and pleasures, pains and suffering, and sees it only as causes and effects, a continuum of living. He does not ask questions about it, or analyze his many problems as being sin or arising from it. He does not see himself in bondage, and his humanism assures him he can handle any problem that might present itself.

Yet he surely is in bondage. The biblical picture is that without the delivering grace of God man is in bondage to sin, i.e. its penalty which burdens him, its pollution which shames him, and its power which dominates him. He is enslaved to the flesh (his own autonomous ego). He is in the hold of, and under judgement to, law that is over him. He is obsessed by death because of his fear of it, and his horror of decay and the judgement which threatens to follow cessation of life in this world. Though he may not believe in a devil, yet he is in the grip of Satan and his hosts of evil powers, i.e. that system called ‘the world’. He also finds himself under the power of habits and lusts, of passions and idols. Anger and other passions sway him so that his will is not entirely free.

Blind to Bondage Because a person grows up in this state—the reality of which is mostly hidden from him—he thinks that this is what being a human being really is, e.g. ‘Life wasn’t meant to be easy’! He does not know there is a liberation of grace from his existential position into an experience and place of true freedom. In order to approach the matter of deliverance the person would need to be shown (i) the nature of his bondage, and (ii) the deliverance Christ can bring to him. In fact a revelation of what true freedom is would be the most powerful way of opening up the situation, and this would also require a revelation of Christ as the Deliverer.

The Nature of Bondage Biblically man’s bondage can be traced to his guilt. We must see—time and again—that man has both existential guilt as a participator in the original Adamic sin, and objective guilts from his sins committed. He may be intellectually unaware of his existential guilt—yet he suffers from a sense of being less than he was created to be; he seeks to prove himself—lift himself to a state of true nobility and vocational fullness. He is forced to rationalize his guilts of sins and crimes so that they do not trouble him.

Were he to have no guilt—existential or objective—then he would have no bondage. If some act in history could justify him wholly, then he would sense an incredible freedom. Cain, with his uneasiness because God had rejected his sacrifice, blazes into homicidal murder. Ishmael feels himself inferior and would harm his brother Isaac. Esau—insecure in his secularity—would murder his brother. The (older) brother of the prodigal son hates the grace which would justify his brother and demean his own ‘good works’.

Guilt is a powerful thing. If the counsellor does not understand this then he will not understand the roots and origins of what he calls ‘a sense of personal inferiority’, ‘low self-esteem’, ‘poor self-image’. A human attempt to boost self-confidence in another will surely fail. Guilty persons are

often wholly preoccupied with themselves, and are not 'other-centred'—the true way of being free in living. Guilty persons feel God's wrath upon them, but rationalize that as some enemy force concentrated against them. Saul was jealous of David and would kill him for his success when Saul was a man who could easily have succeeded. Hatred and anger bring irrationality. 'A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion rots the bones', Job 30:27 (AV) says, 'My bowels boiled, and rested not'. Such are the states of human beings under guilt, and/or, in stress. Psalm 31:9–10, 32:3–4, 38:1–8 are some examples of the strain and pain of people under guilt.

If we are always putting things down to 'natural' causes we will miss the theological understanding which tells us why people are in certain states of mind. We have unfortunately made a divorce between the truly spiritual (the functional, the ontological, the essential) and what we call 'natural'—that which we research—scientifically, failing to see the spiritual as the overarching element which gives us the true perspective of bondage and human suffering.

THE CRUEL LORDS AND THE DELIVERER

The Cruel Lords—Again

We have mentioned a number of these above—sin, flesh, the law, death, Satan, the world system, and the world powers (including the idols). If we add such things as the conscience, the (fear of) the wrath of God and judgement, and besetting passions, lusts and sins, we see how formidable are the lords which keep men in a state of enslavement. We have seen that it is guilt which keeps man under this bondage, and in personal misery. Scriptures which need to be read in this respect, studied and understood are:

Ezekiel 7:8

John 8:34–36

Romans 1:18ff.; 3:9; 7:1–6; 8:5–8, 12, 38–39

I Corinthians 15:55–56

Galatians 1:4; 2:16–21; 3:10; 5:19–21, 24; 6:14

Ephesians 2:1–3; 6:12

Colossians 2:14–15

I Thessalonians 1:9–10

Hebrews 2:14–15; 9:12–14; 10:22

I John 2:14–15; 4:17–18

These Scriptures show that man cannot—by his own efforts — extricate himself from one of these enemies. He knows in practice how caught up he is in his own lusts, passions and addictions. It would help if he could recognize that this divided state of being (divided into forced obedience to the many ruthless lords) is what makes him blame many things—circumstances, heredity, environment, parental upbringing—and at the heart of it all to blame God, who should order all things properly for him—the victim!

The Deliverer

Christ is the Deliverer. How does he deliver? He delivers man by bearing all his guilt—including his dread of penalty, his pollution, shame, and alienation from God. We must understand guilt to be most dynamic with its innate elements of pain, shame, burden, loneliness, sense of confusion, anger, heaviness, resentment, rebellion, dread, fear of judgement and wrath—a whole host of emotions, and reactions. It is the essential nature of this guilt that Christ bears when he 'bears our sins in his body on the tree' (I Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4–6, 11), when he is made to be sin (II Cor. 5:21), suffers as 'the just for the unjust' (I Pet. 3:18), takes into his crucifixion each sinner (Gal. 2:20), dies the death of all sinners (II Cor. 5:14–15), dies snakelike (John 3:14), as all Adamic humanity (Rom. 6:6), and as the world itself (Gal. 6:14; cf. 1:4), whilst the judgement of sin and flesh takes place in his body (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 5:24).

The *finality* of this work is seen in his cry, 'It is finished!' but the *substance* of it is seen in the cry of dereliction, 'My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?', whilst the *assurance* of it is seen in Romans 8:1, 'There is, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'.

**THE APPLICATION
OF LIBERATION**

The counsellor–teacher must be able to convey the wonder of this action of the Cross and Resurrection—its deliverance, and the totality and finality of it. The revelation will bring the person who is willing to perfect freedom, i.e. total liberation from the bondage named above. If the counsellor–teacher has any doubts about the radical action of the Atonement, then his counselling will be deficient. For example, if he believes the occult still has power over a person who has gone through radical rebirth by the action of the Cross, then he will convey a deficiency in the power of the Cross, and limit the freedom of the person.

The counsellor will need to know that revelation and application of liberation (of Christ the Liberator) come to man by the word of God and the Spirit of God. This means he must know the word of God and be led by the Spirit. Because we do not know the *how* of God's working, we should not attempt to supplement it by humanly worked out therapies which do not comport with the epistemology of the Scriptures. A close study of the Gospels, Acts and Epistles of the New Testament will convey the true criteria of proclamation, and if we compare our therapies with the direct action of the Gospel and the Spirit then we will know where we differ—if, indeed, that be the case.

**WHAT HAPPENS
IN LIBERATION**

In emancipation from the ruthless lords and idols, the person is first shown the love of God, His grace in redemption through the Atonement, and this revelation evokes the exercise of faith and repentance, two things which are, by the way, gifts of God (Acts 5:31–32; 11:18; II Tim. 2:25; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 1:29). The person is then forgiven all sins, justified from all guilt, purified from all moral pollution, is

given eternal life, given sonship of the Father (adoption), has the love of God poured into his heart, receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, is sanctified by faith, becomes a member of God's people, comes under the Lordship of Christ, and is given hope for the world (age) to come. He is thus freed from the domination of all lords, for guilt is removed, the fear of death dies, the domination of Satan, his powers and the world is broken, and the wrath of God is no longer a threat.

The way is then made open for a rich new life in the community of God's people, for love, forgiveness and holiness make for a rich and useful life. The true vocation God has for each person is then discovered and espoused. The person once bound now looks outward, becoming 'other-centred'. Of course this freedom has to be guarded, aided and nurtured by pastoral care and life within the body of Christ, but the freedom has come! The battle of faith must be pressed, the believer now taking up his stand on the promises of the word, living in the presence of Christ, refusing the charge of guilt, and living in every element of grace that comes to him—or her.

**DELIVERANCE FROM
DEMONIC POWERS**

The New Testament knows a system called 'this present evil age' (*aion*; Gal. 1:4), 'the world' (*kosmos*; I Cor. 1:21; I John 2:15), and sometimes these words are used interchangeably (I Cor. 1:20). The head of this system is Satan, i.e. 'that old serpent called the devil' (Rev. 12:9), and he is called by Jesus 'the prince of this world' (John 12:31; 14:30), and by Paul 'the god of this world' (II Cor. 4:4). With Satan are other forces known as '*principalities and powers*' (Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:14–15; Rom. 8:38). In the Old Testament some of these are thought of as 'folk angels', i.e. angelic princes who control the destiny of nations. See Daniel chapters 10–11 (cf. Deut. 32:8; Gen. 28:12; John 1:51). There

are also *demonic powers*, which are thought by some to be fallen angels, but we cannot be sure, biblically, of their origins.

In the Old Testament, demonic powers are mentioned (Ps. 106:36–37; Lev. 17:7; Exod. 22:20; Deut. 32:17; II Chron. 11:15; Isa. 13:21). In this respect see Deuteronomy 32:17 and I Corinthians 10:17–20. Deuteronomy—amongst other passages—forbids links with the occult.

Demonic Powers in the New Testament

Israel was cleared of its idols, but in the Gospels we see it was infested with demons—often called ‘evil spirits’ and ‘unclean spirits’. These demons related to possession of human beings (Luke 4:33f.), to sicknesses (Luke 4:40–41) and to the elements (Luke 8:22f.). The following references show the presence of these occult forces: Luke 4:31–36, 41; 6:18; 8:2, 26ff.; 9:1–2, 37ff., 49–50; 10:17ff.; 11:14ff.; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12; I Timothy 4:1; II Corinthians 11:3ff.; Revelation 9:1–11; 18:2.

Demons caused the following in their victims: nakedness (Luke 8:27), blindness and dumbness (Matt. 12:22), suicidal tendencies (Mark 5:5), casting down (Mark 9:17f.), homicidal tendencies (Matt. 8:28). They ‘possessed’ human beings even from childhood (Mark 9:21). Matthew 12:28 and Acts 10:38 show that Jesus cast out demons and delegated power to his disciples to do the same. It is clear that the apostolic church cast out demons (cf. Acts 8:7–8; 16:18; 19:11–20). In one case—that of the woman who had ‘a spirit of infirmity’ (Luke 13:11)—Jesus released the sick person, saying that she had been bound of Satan for eighteen years.

Deliverance From Demons

The word ‘deliverance’ is not used as such for exorcisms of demons. The word is used in Hebrews 2:14–15 which should be read along with Colossians 2:14–15. It can be seen from John 12:31 and 14:30–31; 16:11—along with Luke 22:53—that Jesus went to the Cross to defeat the powers of evil (cf. I John 3:8).

From Colossians 2:14–15 and other passages it is clear that when Christ took the guilt of man he broke the power of Satan (cf. Luke 11:14–26), and that he is ‘the stronger than the strong man’.

Normally speaking anyone who believes in Christ is ‘transferred from the powers of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love’ (Col. 1:13–14). They are delivered—as we saw—from the guilt, pollution and power of sin. Satan and his demons cannot now touch the new believer, but he must not give any opportunity to the devil (Eph. 4:27). Whilst a fair bit is spoken in the Gospels of exorcising demons, yet not much mention is made in the Acts or Epistles. It would seem from Hebrews 2:14–15 and Colossians 2:14–15 that *all believers at conversion are cleansed of demonic powers*. For this reason nothing is spoken concerning exorcising demons from believers. It would appear that if persons who are called believers have demons, then it is certain they were never truly converted. Romans 8:9–11 makes it clear that (i) no one is ‘in the flesh’ who has the Spirit of God; (ii) Christ indwells believers, and so does the Holy Spirit, in which case such indwelling is not compatible with the indwelling of demons!

In the Gospels Jesus cast out demons through the power of the Holy Spirit, commanding them to come out. The disciples cast out demons by delegated power. Matthew 28:19–20 shows the apostles to have had that power delegated to them. Philip the evangelist also cast out demons (Acts 8:7) although it is not said he did this by command, but rather that ‘unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed’. (Luke 11:15–20 suggests that some of the Jews exorcised evil spirits. Acts 19:13–17 shows some such exorcists were not successful when they used Jesus’ name.)

Deliverance from Demons Today

Believers have been delivered through forgiveness, purification, justification, adoption, and the gift of the Spirit. They may—we assume—deliver others primarily by

the preaching of the Gospel. Christian history has shown that Christians have always had power over demonic forces (cf. Mark 16:17–18) when they have relied on the power of God.

Because of poor understanding, the works of the flesh have been mistaken for possession by demons. A glance at Galatians 5:19–21 will show how terrible are the works of the flesh. Exorcists have attempted to cast out these or similar *works*, calling them *demons*, i.e. ‘a demon of idolatry’, ‘a demon of jealousy’, etc. When Christians are told they have demons, unless they are secure in Christ and their salvation they will think first that they *can* have a demon, and then that they *must* have a demon or demons. This means that their salvation is not complete and secure. Fear rises, and people give way to forms of panic and hysteria. Such states seem to indicate and confirm demon possession, and so the person is further convinced he is demonized. Whilst a temporary relief may be experienced because of the (so-called) exorcism, yet the fact remains that the person thinks demons can and may come at any time. Christ is no longer invincible Lord of his life. John said, ‘Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.’

We must come back to the promise of ‘free indeed’ (John 8:31–36; cf. 10:38; Heb. 2:14–15; Col. 2:14–15; cf. I John 4:4), refuse insinuations that we can be possessed, or are being possessed, and live in the rich freedom of the Gospel (Gal. 5:1).

12

The Liberation of Grace

GRACE IS FOR ALL THINGS

We will have seen in our previous studies that persons with disturbed consciences, with chronic anger, with sexuality problems, and with pasts which hold them oppressed and gripped, can only be fully liberated by the work of Christ, and particularly that work which we call ‘atonement’, i.e. the work which was completed at the Cross and in his Resurrection. It may seem strange to continually emphasize the centrality of the Cross, and to appear to bypass other systems which are based on scientific investigation into man as a psychological creature.

We do not at all argue that this is the case. Man has what we call a psychological aspect to his nature, and this involves the biology and physiology of a person also. These are areas of which many theologians and pastors are largely ignorant, and such areas must not be ignored. Some Christian psychologists, doctors and therapists seek to incorporate all elements in their diagnosis and therapy. At the same time there is a biblical understanding of sickness. It is as follows:

- (a) Man is a creature who, by creation, has an affinity with God; all his personal elements correlate with God, in whose image he was made.
- (b) Man, by rejecting God, has set himself against the natural system of creation, and has devised a rationalization of it to suit himself. He therefore suffers insofar as he rejects the natural order and is out of kilter with it (Rom. 1:18–32).

- (c) He is thus a creature of (i) his existential guilt and (ii) his personal guilts from sins of omission and sins of commission. His guilt causes him both psychological and physiological problems.
- (d) Sin is not sickness, but sin can, and often does, cause sicknesses. In Isaiah 1:2–4 Israel is shown as disobedient and sinful, and in 1:5–6 sickness follows as a natural consequence. This is also the order in Isaiah 24:4–6. In Psalm 103 the Lord is said to forgive sins and heal diseases—in that order—i.e. the same order. This is sometimes seen to be the case in the New Testament, e.g. when Christ forgives the sins of the paralysed man prior to actually healing him.
- (e) The Hebrews generally thought of sickness as coming from one's own sin, the sin of others, and as being a direct judgement from God (Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6; Exod. 4:11; Amos 3:6; Isa. 31:2; 45:7). At the same time they thought of health as coming from obedience (Exod. 15:22–26; 23:25; Deut. 7:15; 28:3ff.).
- (f) Covenant people have a deeper obligation to obedience than non-covenant people, since grace is upon covenant people, and grace demands greater judgement than where there is ignorance: hence the passages in the law that warn against disobedience and its consequence, i.e. visitations of sickness.
- (g) Out of grace God often heals, but such healing requires repentance followed by the resumption of obedience. Christ, coming to Palestine as the King of the Kingdom of God, did not quite follow this order, although repentance was demanded for entrance into the Kingdom. His healing was gratuitous, having little to do with the attitude of the sick and demon-possessed. That is to say, it was grace.

We see, then, that man needs grace in order to be helped and transformed in his state of fallen sinfulness, his covenant-state—where that obtains—and his Christian life where he has already been transformed by grace.

LIBERATION OF THE PERSON WITH OR WITHOUT GRACE

If we think of grace as God's action towards a person which he does not merit, and to which

he has no claim, then it is a special element. In physical and mental healing a human being may be helped by surgery, by the use of medicines, and by valuable knowledge which is accrued from the study of our humanity. We do not directly call this grace, because we are using the gifts God gave to humanity at creation, including the gift of intelligence to utilize all that He has put into the creation. Anything pertaining to redemption we must—of course—call grace. Redemption—amongst other things—is the restoration of what we have lost.

The question is then, 'Can a man by elements or means other than grace be liberated from his problems and external oppressive forces which work upon him?' He certainly cannot be liberated by other than grace from his personal guilt, his moral dilemma, and those forces of evil which have entrance and power by his guilt. His symptoms of sickness, mental distress, and similar elements may be ameliorated or partially relieved, but if the cause is the person's sin then he will need the grace of God.

Liberation Without Grace

Man continually seeks to pursue his life without God, but ontologically this is impossible, and must end in disaster. Even so, man has recourse to occultic and psychic powers—whether his own or those of others—in order to stave off the final day of tragedy, i.e. judgement. Thus the prophets constantly referred to the false prophets, diviners and occultic workers who claimed to draw upon supernatural resources to heal people. For example, in Deuteronomy chapter 18 the false and the true prophet, the false and true word of the Lord were compared; likewise in Jeremiah chapter 23. Jeremiah often complained about superficial healing, and cosmetic peace (Jer. 6:14–15; 8:11; 8:18—9:1; 14:17f.; 30:13f.; 46:11). There appears, then, to be some kind of liberation without grace, but it cannot bring permanent freedom.

Liberation by Grace Our other studies have shown us the liberation which comes from grace. The studies on understanding humanity and its situation, our examination of persons in states of disquiet, anger, asymmetrical sexuality, as also those who have tyranny from the past and no hope for the future, show us that man's states arise from guilt, insecurity, anger against God, dread of Him, and fear of judgement, of the future, and of eternity. Whilst these all have psychological elements and are linked with psychosomatic states, aberrant human behaviour, and various forms of illness, it is still true that the matter of humanity is basically a spiritual one, i.e. of his spirit, and his relation to God who is Spirit. Grace, then, is needed to liberate man from these various forms of bondage. Even so, grace is not merely *one* way of liberation. Because of the nature of man's case, it is the *only* way.

The Coming of Grace in Christ This is a vast teaching in the New Testament. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt amongst us as the Son of God 'full of grace and truth'. 'The law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.' Also, 'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation . . .' Out of his grace all who met him received something—whether freedom from guilt, demons, or sicknesses, it was all grace.

His grace promised healing, liberation, and the life of freedom (Luke 4:18–19; 11:22; John 8:31–36; cf. Acts 10:38). Man was always bound to justify himself, but then he was justified by God. He sought to deny his sin or expiate it by so-called 'works of righteousness', but he was justified by God's grace as a gift (Rom. 3:24; Gal. 2:16–21; Rom. 5:1). Thus the need for varied therapies in the states we have described is not a true necessity: all can be healed by God's grace.

We must, however, understand the true nature of grace. It must be seen as total or it is no grace. It must be seen as dealing with all sin—root and branch. It is not grace which deals with man's *needs*, as such, but which brings man also

to repentance and faith, and transforms him by forgiveness, cleansing, justification and sanctification. There can be no understanding of this radical action until the work of the Cross and Resurrection is seen in all its power to deliver man from sin's power, from a disquieted conscience, from anger against God, man and self, from rebellion against God and misuse of His laws and His creation.

Grace, then, is not grace unless it first brings man out of all these things until he is a renewed moral creature who seeks 'to fulfil the just requirements of the law' (Rom. 8:4). Secondly, grace is necessary for the person's continuing freedom from evil (Rom. 6:12–14), so that the person can always live a holy life (Rom. 6:15–23). Finally, there is grace in the *telos* or end-time, which is of a magnificent order, so much so that in the now-time there is no point of comparison (I Pet. 1:13; cf. I Cor. 2:9). Substantial hope, then, is born of coming grace, and fills out the vocational sense of the person in this present life.

THE APPLICATION OF LIBERATING GRACE As in all counselling and ministering, we are anxious to know *how* to apply the knowledge we have.

Grace is of course God in His own action, so that we cannot direct Him in any situation. We can work as follows: (i) Be humble agents of God's revelation of the truth. This means we must know the truth, live according to it and be under it, i.e. subject to it. Such is the way and principle of revelation. (ii) We must use exhortation in its various forms of rebuking, admonishing, beseeching, and encouraging. By this we mean that the truth of God should not be presented in a way which allows people not to make some decision of will. If we do not believe the Word of God (the truth, the wisdom, the speaking of God) then we will have to use human thought, wisdom, brilliance, methods, systems and advice. By nature of the case, none of these can be sufficient.

Because man is wholly against grace—since it does not fit his system of autonomy—the application of grace will, of course, be difficult. Even so, we must persist, knowing that grace can prevail wonderfully.

In all counselling we must keep in mind that we do not live in the ultimate age, but in the penultimate age. We live in the tension of ‘becoming perfect’ but being ‘not yet perfect’. We live in ‘this present evil age’, but we belong rightly (and proleptically) to the glorious ‘age to come’. We seek to help one another with the tension that arises from being members of the two ages.

13

Living Hope —Life for the Listless

THE NATURE OF ‘LIVING HOPE’

Peter said, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.’ Peter means that when Christ rose from the dead, man—for the first time—has hope of rising himself. This hope does not even stop at the resurrection of the body, but also has as its further object an extraordinary inheritance, which is also eternal. The word ‘living’ was formerly translated ‘lively’, meaning it was active in itself. The terms ‘living Word’ or ‘living God’ tell us that God acts, and His word acts. So a living hope is a dynamic thing.

Hope in the New Testament is not merely ‘wishful thinking’, but a ‘fixed certainty’. God is the basis of hope—‘the God of hope’—and His promises are irreversible (Heb. 6:13–20). Being in Christ means being in hope, and in fact it is ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’—a matter we need to examine.

WITHOUT HOPE WE ARE HOPELESS This statement is not merely a play on words. One must have hope *or* be hopeless. Few people—in fact—are hopeless, but as hope is determined by the object of a person's hope, so too the hoper determines the object of his hope, so that these two elements constitute the particular action of the hoper. Most people have some goal (hope) to which they work. They may not think of it as a hope, but it is such since nothing can be certain whilst man is mortal, and limited in his powers: we mean that what persons do in the present relates to their *hope* for its outcome. Short-term hopes (goals) are moves they make very much within time and space. Such actions of hope are limited to the horizontal, i.e. refusal to look towards the vertical, to God, and place hope there. In one sense such horizontal hopes are assessable and generally hold little surprise. The hoppers generally hope that the fulfilment of hopes will bring enjoyment and richness of life. If such hopes do not have an element of fulfilment beyond time, then they are limited and do not promise anything beyond this world of three dimensions and five senses, so that such hope is temporal. This kind of hope does not in any way relate to what we call 'the vertical dimension'. Whatever relates to the vertical brings richness in the dimension of the horizontal.

As we have said, man must have hope or be hopeless, the state of neutrality, torpor, lethargy and what is sometimes called 'accidie'. For people in *accidie* life is tasteless, without promise or purpose. Such people often espouse *nihilism* (a philosophy of nothingness—that which denies all existence) or *anarchy* (a philosophy denying intellectual or moral order). Both are really rationalizations of the state of 'no hope', for refusal to hope is a vote against God, a denigration of His faithfulness. There are reasons for such states which—themselves—seem to be reactions against other states of being. The endeavours to defeat accidie may be seen in material-ism, stoicism, hedonism (e.g. epicureanism), and other systems which confine themselves to this life.

THE TIME FACTOR AND HOPE Memory, as we have seen in Study 6, is a powerful factor in human living. Memory contains what we have learned through our experience and study of life. According to our views we can live usefully in the present and have hope for the future. Having a 'bad' past will make for a tasteless present, and may either make us hasten to the future (perhaps hoping to gain something better) or make us dislike the thought of it—in which case we may move into the state of accidie as a form of escape. In both cases present living—which is our real living—will be influenced by no worthy hope. If we have hope then present living will be reasonable.

VOCATION AND HOPE The Christian speaks of 'calling'.* By this he means he has been created for a purpose (Prov. 16:4), and this is his vocation. Genesis 1:28f. (cf. Ps. 8:3f.) is the general vocation of man, in which each has his or her special vocation. God calls: man does not call himself. Vocation is an idea which troubles many. It appears to be ontological that a person have a personal vocation, and that that 'calling' is not only for his own benefit, but is related to the community of man. This is implied in Genesis 1:28f. Genesis 1:28 is not simply a mandate to do something, but a granting by God, a creational calling. That may well be the reason that unemployment is a difficult matter for most to handle. Deliberate refusal to work at all may well constitute a rejection of the principle of vocation. Where there is a strong sense of vocation then

* The doctrine of 'calling' in the Scriptures is an important and far-reaching one. In fact, calling covers every aspect of life. A believer really does nothing—and can do nothing—except that to which he has been called. Man is called before time, is called into life, into the fellowship of Christ, into the Kingdom and glory—and so on. Therefore not to be living in this vocation (calling) is virtually not to be living at all. Certainly not being in God's vocation (calling) is to be out of His eternal plan, which is virtual non-living or death. See my *The Matter of the Call or Calling of God*, NCPI, 1989, for an enlargement of this present study.

hope becomes a great dynamic. Viktor Frankl has shown this clearly in his principles of Logotherapy—a form of psychotherapy which is linked with vocation, purpose and hope.

A classic passage on vocation and hope is the first chapter of Ephesians. It was written for man who has fallen—sinful man—to show him that he has been chosen to be holy, predestined to be a son of God—through Christ and grace—and has the hope of glorification and inheritance beyond this life. The Christian man has two strings to his bow: (i) *the original creational mandate of Genesis 1:28*, and (ii) *the redemptional mandate given by Christ*—that he has to proclaim to the world.* At the same time each person has a special vocation, such as ‘butchers and bakers and candlestick makers’, for all trades and professions are needed for, and participate in, the creational mandate. Man—made in the image of God—is to glorify God by his way of living and his style of being in this life, and in the life beyond.

Unless the counsellor understands this biblical teaching he will miss many of the elements which greatly affect a counsellee. No sense of vocation, suspension or prevention of vocation, and failure in vocation will all relate to the expression—or lack of expression—of hope.

BEING HEAVENLY MINDED AND EARTHLY MINDED

We all know the criticism, ‘He/she is too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good’. Of course it can be the other way, also. The point we need to study is whether man terminates in this world or not, and if so then what is the nature of hope for one so mortal.

* What we should note regarding these two so-called mandates is that they must not be viewed simply as imperatives—although a case can be made out for their being imperatives—so much as they are vocational, i.e. that involvement in them—the very carrying out of them—is really the very life of responsive human beings. To refuse vocation is really to refuse life. Vocation in this case is not merely employment so that man will be usefully and gainfully employed, but rather it is partnership with God in *His* vocation, in which case the employment is a gift, and the fulfilling of man as man. It is his *raison d’être*.

If one goes beyond this world, then what is the nature of hope? Ecclesiastes 3:11 says,

He [God] has made everything beautiful [appropriate, functional] in its time; also he has put *eternity* into man’s mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the *beginning to the end*.

The word ‘eternity’ can also be translated ‘the universe’. Whatever its meaning, it is made clear that man moves in a wide dimension, and is a creature created not only for this world but eternity itself. Hope and vocation is not for this world only, but also for the world beyond. The vertical and the horizontal are the one.

The Eternal Nature of Hope and Vocation

The wisdom of God has destined man for glorification (I Cor. 2:6–10). His life does not stop at the human death event. Man is made for glory (II Cor. 4:16–5:8; I Cor. 15:35–57; Phil. 3:21). His glorification not only consists in living eternally, both as to quality of life and endlessness of being, but much is taught regarding his eternal employment. Much was said by Christ about being given responsibility and rulership consonant with the way life has been lived here on earth. All the elect—it is said—will constitute ‘a kingdom of priests unto our God’, and all will ‘reign upon the earth’ and all will ‘reign forever’. In fact the true elect people of God will inherit the earth, and inherit ‘all things’. Nothing will be outside the purview of God’s children—His overcomers.

Doubtless this will seem like ‘pie in the sky, when we die, bye and bye’ to those who are angry, frustrated, depressed, anxious and caught in ennui or accidie. These states of mind do not merely come about through ignorance but through some refusal to rise up to the vocation given to each one of us. Since vocation is an essential—if not the central—fact of life, then refusal, neglect or rejection of vocation is a serious matter. The true counsellor will seek to lead the counsellee to see this fact of human rebellion—whether active or

passive—i.e. the refusal to take up vocation.* The counsellor will also show the purposeful nature of history, the sovereign control by God of all things, the concern of God for each person—such as we saw in Psalm 139:13–18—and the fact that God has made everything for its own purpose (Prov. 16:4), and that He has designed true and purposeful vocation for us, here on the earth, and there in eternity.

**Knowing, Seizing,
and Holding Fast
the Hope of Our Calling**

Paul prayed that his Ephesian converts would have the eyes of their heart opened that they might *know* the hope of their calling.

Peter said, ‘*set your hope fully* upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ The writer of Hebrews enjoined his readers, ‘*hold fast* the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful’, and he also said, ‘we . . . might have strong encouragement *to seize the hope* set before us’. All of these statements call for an active faith-response in the Christian believer. Since there is no future hope of calling which is not linked with our present calling (cf. I John 3:1–3), then every exhortation in regard to the future is also an exhortation for the present. This gives us a high view of our present vocation, i.e. the ‘double-mandate’ calling, and the ‘vocation within the vocation’ which is our present task in life. When Paul said, ‘If any one will not work, let him not eat,’ he was saying there is no such thing as a layabout when the double-mandate vocation is before us. His doctrine of work is found in Ephesians 4:28, ‘Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that he

may be able to give to those in need’. There is double purpose here: (i) the refusal to steal and an insistence on working to maintain oneself; (ii) the seeking to help others who are in need. All this constitutes healthy present occupation whilst one has an eye cocked towards eternity.

**COUNSELLING THE
TROUBLED PERSON IN
REGARD TO VOCATION
AND CALLING**

Whilst many factors may partly condition the troubled person, yet the discovery or recovery of vocation is always a thrilling and renewing thing. For

example, the revelation that man is a fellow worker with God in history, both in regard to creation and redemption, is what gives dignity to man. That he is a covenant partner with God, and fellow labourer in the building of the City of God gives great worth to every one of his labours. That God has chosen him for good works, and then chosen good works for him (Eph. 2:10) does not represent restraint but constraint that is purposeful. In fact, every moment and every action of life becomes significant, and even eternally significant. Hope is one of the greatest motivating powers that humans know. Along with faith and love, life can be lived to the full.

* The Christian should be aware that the curse given to man in regard to earning his living by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:17–19) is something which the human race fights against, as it endeavours to escape the legitimate curse. Many a person sees this as a fine point for rebellion, just as many rebel against other principles of lawful living, e.g. by engaging in immoral sexual practices. Some persons find it impossible to work under—or even with—others. The counsellor should be aware of these elements and discern whether they may be at the root of the counsellee’s problems.

14

The Sons of God Are Servants of All

FULL VOCATION IS TOTAL SERVING: TOTAL SERVING IS FULL VOCATION

We have looked at the nature of vocation—the calling of God to be in that position in life which God has planned for us, and to move towards that goal which He set for each

of us personally, and for the human race and all creation, as a whole. Within that action we are called upon to serve God, our fellow human beings, and the whole creation. We have seen that the Christian man has two strings to his bow: (i) the original creational mandate of Genesis 1:28, and (ii) the redemptional mandate given by Christ—that he has to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

Serving is Ontological and Wholly Fulfilling

We have spoken elsewhere of the ‘ontological joy of obedience’. God gave man the mandate because man is

made in His own image, and is His glory. It is God’s glory to serve His creation. Jesus revealed that God—as Father—has always been working (John 5:17), and showed that he too has always been working. The conclusion is that God has always served His creation, and the Son has always

done likewise: ‘The Father has been working, and I work.’ This lets us into the secret of full vocation. For God to be God is vocation. Thus for man to be man is vocation. Any refusal to work God’s will and plan as set out for man will result in the loss of the ontological joy of obedience, and result in the listlessness and accidie of which we have been speaking.

Man Intentionally Against Serving God and Man

We have seen in our studies—time and again—that man’s world went awry when he refused the union of dependency that he had by creation, as (i) a creature of the Creator, (ii) a son of the Father, and (iii) a servant of the King. Listlessness and accidie would be only two of the bad effects of his rebellion. In Study 13 we have noted that man does not know where he is going, for it is impossible for him to set his goal for life—i.e. for death, for departure into the great unknown of eternity. The uncertainty, dread and fright that often visits man is what keeps him in wrong action, and perhaps listlessness and accidie are unconscious defensive mechanisms.

GOD’S GLORY LIES IN HIS SERVING OF THE CREATION

God is not only ‘a faithful Creator’ (I Pet. 4:19), but ‘faithful in all his ways’. He serves the creation by bringing it into being, by redeeming it into ‘the glorious liberty of the children of God’, and by bringing it to its ultimate wonderful climax of glorification. Hence the psalmist said, ‘All thy works shall praise thee!’ The Son, too, serves the creation, as also the Spirit of the Father and the Son serves the Father and the Son and then the creation. The three Persons are therefore involved in creating the universe, sustaining it providentially, redeeming it by the Atonement, and bringing it to its ultimate and eternal glorification. Man will only find fullness of life when he shares in these purposes of God. Ephesians 1:9–11

and 3:1–11 show that God does everything ‘according to the counsel of his will’. To be out of that will is to be miserable.

THE SON THE EXAMPLE AND PARADIGM OF TRUE SERVING Jesus said that he came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). Indeed, he was among them as one who served. His service was to ransom the human race, and this was most costly. Philippians 2:1–9 teaches us how to serve, i.e. (i) to count others better than ourselves (before ourselves), and (ii) to look on the things of others. Philippians 2:5–8 shows us the amazing humility and love of Christ, and only when we have ‘the mind of Christ’—through union with him—can we display and work the same. In the New Testament every believer is called to ministry, i.e. to serving.

ALL AUTHORITY IS FOR LOVE AND FOR SERVING Authority which is for itself is always authoritarianism—self-establishment, and asserting oneself at the expense of others, — or toadyism—ruling by deferring to men, hoping to have their praises. True authority is the exercise of that leadership delegated by God for the purposes of serving God, man and creation. The whole theme of worship is equally the theme of serving, since the primary word for worship in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is also the primary word for serving. Thus a parent exercises authority in giving affection, direction, protection, and correction with a view to effecting maturation. This should be the case with any authority.

Whether we like it or not, creation is itself ‘a hierarchy of authority’. Within the Triune Godhead, Father, Son and Spirit have a functional hierarchy of love. The words ‘subordination’ and ‘superordination’ have always been unpopular for two reasons: (i) they seem to infer inferiority and

superiority, and (ii) man has always been a rebel—since Adam. At the same time man cannot socially achieve a functional egalitarian structure, since he is ever in competition with his fellow man. ‘Subordination’ and ‘superordination’ are not ontologically inferior–superior categories but functional ones.

When there was war in heaven, and principalities and authorities ‘left their proper dwelling’ (cf. Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4; cf. Rev. 12:3–10), then the serving-hierarchical system went awry both celestially and terrestrially, hence much of the misery creation has experienced and still experiences. Only with ‘the reconciliation of all things’ will true harmony return, and full functional serving again obtain.

LOSS OF LISTLESSNESS: GAIN OF DYNAMIC LIVING When we willingly submit to God (Ps. 46:10; Isa. 28:16) we find peace, direction, purpose, and living occupation. Counsellors who know this will also know that only love will motivate in the long run (II Cor. 5:14; John 14:15; I John 4:19; I Cor. 16:14). It is well, then, to see where our serving lies:

- (a) We serve God.
- (b) We serve our neighbour and our brother.
- (c) Husbands serve wives, and wives husbands.
- (d) Parents serve children, and children parents.
- (e) Members of families serve one another.
- (f) Elders of the church serve the body and the members of the body serve the elders.
- (g) Believers serve the community of man in both the creational and redemptional mandates.
- (h) Leaders—both celestial and terrestrial—serve those under their authority, and the served serve the servers. These functional directions are based solidly in Scripture, coming both as commands and advice. Romans 13:1–7; I Timothy 5:1–3; I Peter 2:13–17; Ephesians 6:1; I Thessalonians 2:11–12; Hebrews 13:7, 17 all show the service that should be given to those in authority, and show those in authority their responsibility to serve men.

Counsellors, of course, need to see whether they have come to terms with the vocational call of God to them, and their own places in the functional hierarchy of love.

15

Richness of Relationships

THE GOD WHO IS ONE IN ALL

‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.’ Time and again this was the cry to Israel concerning the oneness, the unity of God. His oneness was not a bare monolithic or arithmetic unity, but an inner plural unity, a social unity. ‘Let us make man in our image’, and ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ are indications of the Them who is Him—the only Lord.

All creation is a unity because it issues from the decree of the one God—the oneness God. Within the Godhead the Father has always been Father, and the Son has ever been the Son, and ever the Spirit has been the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. This is the revelation which has come to man, progressively, in time and by the word of God. Undoubtedly we can talk about ‘a secret and hidden wisdom of God’, ‘the mysteries of God’, ‘God’s mystery, of Christ’, and ‘the mystery of Christ’, but God Himself is no mystery to any person who will know Him, since He has made Himself plain (I Cor. 2:7; 4:1; Col. 2:2; 4:3; cf. Rom. 1:19; Ps. 19:1). Man has to deliberately reject the knowledge of God in order not to know Him.

It can be shown theologically that all man’s relationships issue from God, i.e. from the life of the Triune Godhead. This functional fact is of great value and importance. Any break with God deeply affects all human relationships. To come to union with God will greatly assist human relationships.

**MAN WHO IS ONE
IN ALL HIS BEING**

Man—made in the image of God, to be the glory of God—is a unified being as he is in God, and not simply in himself. All his being has affinity with God, and in living in that affinity—‘deep calls unto deep’—man is total. He was created in the image of the Triune God. In him there is that which relates to God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. Each person is a unity in himself, and all the race is ‘of one’, i.e. one progenitor (Acts 17:26; cf. Rom. 5:12ff.), and so is a corporate unity. Each person participates in that racial unity.

All of this tells us why it is that man needs God. His deepest need is God. His deepest need is relationship with God and relationship with all his race—his fellow creatures. God being love, man must know that love, and he—man—must love. In this is his ontological joy and peace. Within the Godhead the Father, Son and Spirit are ‘other-centred’. Man too—to be man—must be other-centred. Relationships are everything to him.

**THE LOSS OF
HUMANHOOD**

The counsellor who does not know what man has become through the Fall does not know the deepest need of the human heart. Separated from God by that Fall—by his own deliberate rebellion—man has put himself away from God. ‘The mystery of God’ now confronts man, where once He was no mystery. Man in becoming self-centred cannot have true relationships. This affects him in every relationship he experiences upon this earth. Parent–child, child–parent, brother–sister, husband–wife, person–person and all other relationships are deficient because man is not purely ‘other-centred’. Relationships are self-centred. This is the loss of

true humanity. Man has become debased. Sadly enough he generally blames other people for inadequate relationships, blames God for the situations, and develops anger and hatred because he is thwarted in his drive for fullness in relationships.

**GOD IN REVELATION:
THE GRACE AND LOVE
OF COVENANT**

Man knew God but rejected that knowledge, thus depriving himself of reality in his universe. God moved in making a universal covenant through Abraham. By this covenant all nations could know blessing. God revealed Himself to Abraham and his descendants as ‘the God of grace’, i.e. of *chesed*, i.e. of ‘loving kindness, steadfast love and compassion’, and of *chen*, i.e. of gracious favour where such was not merited. In Christ this revelation blazed into full life. He brought with him the dynamic grace of God to (i) reveal God as the true Father,* and (ii) to save man from his sin and rebellion, restore him to the true image of God, and to give him ‘fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’.

**FINDING GOD AS FATHER:
GOD AS FATHER
FINDING HIS CHILDREN**

This is the heart of our present study. God was ever Father, and as Father He created man (Acts 17:28; Luke 3:38). ‘God is the Father of all men, but not all men are the children of God’ is a statement made because of the fall of man. Man denied his creational sonship. In Christ God has brought man back into true sonship (John 1:11–13; Gal. 3:26; 4:4–6). In Luke 15 the father seeks his son. In John 4:23 the Father seeks His children to worship Him. Repentant,

* For the whole theme of God’s Fatherhood, see my *Oh, Father! Our Father!*, NCPI, 1985, which is useful for counselling, and my *The God and Father of Us All*, NCPI, 1982, which is a series of biblical studies in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Also useful is LFS. 11, *Fatherhood, Sonship and Family: Heavenly and Human*, NCPI, 1975.

believing man is baptized into the *Name* ('The Lord our God is one Lord') of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Redeemed man has affinity. His 'life is hid with Christ in God'! Having fellowship with the Father he can now have fellowship with his fellow creatures. Pentecost brought and ensured this: 'And all who believed were together and had all things in common'; 'Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own'. Man became God-centred and so became 'other-centred'. Man—by becoming the son of the Father—has 'come to himself' (Luke 15:17), and so has come to others.

THE VALUE OF COMING INTO THE FAMILY UNDER THE FATHER

The counsellor who knows what we have outlined above can give the essence of Father-love to his counsellee in some-

thing like the following terms:

'You need God as your true Father. God is not *like* a father, or one father amongst many, but He is *the* Father. He is *Father*. Now that He is your Father and you are His son, you are in the family of God; in it are your brothers and sisters, and you may—indeed must and will—love them. This means forgiveness for all who have sinned against you, for you are forgiven by the Father. It means that all your relationships are transformed.

'Firstly, you are secure in the Father and His love. Your hurts and wounds and angers from the past have been borne by Christ and you are free of them. So you are now free to forgive and love. If you have been angered by your father and your mother, your family and others, and have been disaffected with them, then now you must see that all that has gone. God has forgiven you for what you have done against them, and you can (must) forgive them for what they have done against you—if indeed they have done things against you.

'You are now free to be "other-centred", i.e. to go out and love others. All of this happens in the Father, in Christ the Son and in the Holy Spirit, in the Family. Life from now on will be rich, however many problems and difficulties may present themselves to you.'

To all this the counsellor may add,

'Now you have hope in life, and hope for your ultimate future because you are in God. You will one day see the Father face to face, and adore Him and His Son—the Lamb of God. Having this future hope you can live richly in the present. What has happened to you is so wonderful that you must feel impelled to share the good news with others. Having found the Father you will lead others to Him. Being other-centred in this way, you will lose self-centredness, and be free towards all men, as God is towards you.'

THE VALUE OF COUNSELLING IN REGARD TO GOD'S FATHERHOOD

All counselling should issue from a Trinitarian groundwork. The tendency to emphasize the work of one Person of the Trinity to the neglect of another has always presented problems. God's Fatherhood is known only through the Son (John 1:14, 18; 5:19; 14:1–10; Matt. 11:27) and the Spirit (John 16:12–15; Gal. 4:4–6), and it is this Fatherhood which is man's relational and emotional need at the very deepest level. The problems persons have with human fatherhood or parenthood—let alone family problems—are open to healing by coming to God as Father. The counsellor, of course, would have to have experienced this. Even the theology of God's Fatherhood is not sufficient to communicate its reality.

In this study we have not touched on the vexed subject of authority and responsibility in relationships. Children generally identify their parents with authority, and this of itself is an affront to human autonomy. The identification of God with authority is the primary human problem, and so, naturally it arises within the family where parents are taken to represent that authority, or indeed any authority. Only a revelation of God as love can bring about a change in attitude towards authority.

16

The Profitable Pursuit of Pleasure

THE GOD AND THE 'GOD' OF PLEASURE

Pleasure is certainly something human beings desire and seek. For many it is the primary driving force of life, connected as it is with the human ego. For some, continuous pleasure is a sign of well-being, of 'God's in His heaven, all's right with the world'. Others cannot contemplate pleasure without guilt. Indeed the thought and experience of pleasure appears to drive them to guilt. Yet others get pleasure from perverse ways of life, even to inflicting and receiving of pain and cruelty. Pleasure is a 'mixed bag' for the human race. As we shall see, there is rich pleasure which God gives to man, and there is a human drive for pleasure which is fierce, frenetic and ruthless, controlling man's movements. He is gripped by a god of pleasure at whose altar he must continually do service. Wisdom is needed to help the person who is desperate because he or she cannot enjoy pleasure, as also the person who, being compulsive in the search for pleasure, is still unable to have reasonable enjoyment in life.

THE GOD OF JOY: MAN'S ORIGINAL PLEASURE

The doctrine of creation in Scripture is a pleasant one. Undoubtedly, God and man had joy together. Every day of creation brought the seal, 'It is good'.

The final day of creation brought, 'It is *very good*' (cf. Eccl. 3:11). The word good—*tob*—as used in Genesis chapter 1, carries the ideas of 'right, fitting, as a thing should be', so it really means 'functional' when seen in line with all created things. From this we develop the idea of 'appropriate, pleasurable, delightful', and so on. Whilst the idea of moral good is present, there is no moralistic sense. Thus 'every tree that is pleasant to the sight and *good* for food' (Gen. 2:9). This accords with 'everything created by God is *good*', and, 'God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy' (I Tim. 4:4; 6:17). Paul spoke of God, Who 'did *good* and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness' (Acts 14:17).

There was more to creation than sensual pleasures, for man was given *purposeful* as well as *functional* life. Living in vocation is ontological. Man derives pleasure from accomplishment by the work of his hands and the thoughts of his mind, and the energies of his being. He can derive great joy from 'creative' living, i.e. 'procreative living'. God being Creator, man must derive great satisfaction from reflecting his Creator. We can say that pleasure is the delight of living in things as they really are.

THE LOSS OF PLEASURE

Genesis chapter 3 shows man rebelling against God, and this theme is repeated in Romans 1:18–32. God is man's greatest pleasure and delight, but when man rejected Him and set up himself and his gods, he met the judgement of God in death, in the loss of true love, peace and joy, and the rich freedom and pleasure he had known. By nature of the case, it was now impossible for man to have pleasure in a natural way. From that point on he would have to derive his pleasure from perversity and illicit actions.

The curse (Gen. 3:14–19) has set misery in the midst of human living. Being cast out of Eden meant that that 'place of delights' was forbidden to them. Man's rulership over his

wife, the pain of her childbirth, and the need to earn one's living by the sweat of the brow took the original and innocent delight of man, and turned it into another thing. Man now has anger against God, against his fellow creatures, and against the creation. Gloom, a sense of doom, suspicion of God, man and the creation now pervade his thinking and actions. He can quickly grow cynical, bitter and chronically angry. The accumulation of guilt, the constant sight and experience of the curse all combine to compound this bitterness, anger and cynicism. The loss of self-esteem, the existential anguish of awryness in a world meant for delight and pleasure, further compound the existential misery of man. Nothing seems right: God is a grim and vengeful God, and man's heart hardens and so increases his misery.

THE HUMAN DRIVE FOR PLEASURE

It seems instinctive or intuitive to man to live in pleasure, since this was his experience of God, creation and his fellowship with others. When pleasure and delight are absent, man must make them. We have seen that things illicit evoke a certain 'pleasure'. Such pleasure increases guilt and misery. The counsellor meets the counsellee in this state, and ought to know the aetiology of this misery. To attempt to deal with it on the symptomatic level will not penetrate deeply. To seek to give apologetics for the goodness and love of God will not succeed. Man is compulsive in his search for relief, joy and delight, and only the Gospel can achieve that for him.

The fierce drive for pleasure explains the perversions of sexual attitudes and actions, the cruelty, masochism and sadism, the compulsion to obtain riches, power and domination, and obsession with sports, hobbies and achievements. It also explains the forced 'self-atonement' acts of such persons—gripped by their guilt—acts which do not absolve that guilt. To attempt to deal with these drives piecemeal will not succeed.

THE ATTAINMENT OF TRUE PLEASURE

Isaiah 52:7 speaks of great joy to come to the nations. It is part of the good news of Genesis 3:15.

Messiah is coming, and with him will come *shalom*—the true peace at the heart of which is joy and genuine pleasures. We know the wonder of Christ's incarnation, the coming of 'grace and truth', the joy of Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds and wise men, the quiet delight of Zechariah, Anna and Simeon, the release from pain and disease, guilt, misery and heart-sickness of the multitudes who followed Christ, and then the vast joy of Pentecost when the Spirit came, when the truth of the Gospel broke open and when 'great grace was upon them all'. The Gospel is the 'good news', and by it the world can know release from its guilt, its existential misery, its bitterness about God, man and the creation, and its anger concerning the same. It can be released from its poor self-image, its dread of death, its fear of life, and its purposelessness. It can be delivered from the deadliness of idolatry and brought into the richness of genuine worship of God. When the disciples saw the risen Christ they 'believed not for joy', but he had spoken the things of the Gospel 'that your joy might be full'. The Kingdom of God became their experience of 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'. Thus 'they returned to Jerusalem with great joy'.

Joy certainly comes through freedom from guilt and shame, the forgiveness of sins, and being brought into sonship with the Father. With the coming of the Gospel to Samaria 'there was much joy in that city'. Everywhere there has been much 'joy and peace in believing'. Believing, we have 'joy unspeakable and full of glory'. The fruit of the Spirit, such as love, joy and peace, bring true satisfaction and quiet delight to the new heart, yet also the new sense and experience of purposeful vocation, the true aligning of one's procreative powers in all exercises of work and accomplishment, also prove to be sources of delight. Genuine pleasure results from fellowship with God and with fellow-man.

**BIBLICAL STATEMENTS
ON THE PLEASURES
GOD GIVES TO MAN**

The following references are useful for seeing the theme of pleasure and pleasures throughout Scripture:

Thou hast put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound (Ps. 4:7).

How precious is thy steadfast love, O God!
The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.
They feast on the abundance of thy house,
and thou givest them drink from the rivers of thy delights.
For with thee is the fountain of life;
in thy light do we see light (Ps. 36:7–9).

Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise thee with the lyre,
O God, my God (Ps. 43:4).

Thou dost show me the path of life;
in thy presence there is fullness of joy,
in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore
(Ps. 16:11).

Yea, thou dost make him most blessed for ever;
thou dost make him glad with the joy of thy
presence (Ps. 21:6).

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
thou hast loosed my sackcloth
and girded me with gladness,
that my soul may praise thee and not be silent.
O Lord, my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever (Ps. 30:11).

My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat,
and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips,
when I think of thee upon my bed,
and meditate on thee in the watches of the night;
for thou hast been my help,
and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy
(Ps. 63:5–7).

The pastures of the wilderness drip,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,

the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy (Ps. 65:12–13).

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits . . .
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live (Ps. 103:1–2, 4–5).

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all the peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees, well refined (Isa. 25:6).

There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the man who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy (Eccl. 2:24–26).

Behold, what I have seen to be good and to be fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life which God has given him, for this is his lot. Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and find enjoyment in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart (Eccl. 5:18–20).

. . . God, who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy (I Tim. 6:17).

**COUNSELLING
THE PLEASURELESS
FOR TRUE DELIGHT**

We have talked about ‘ontological joy’, i.e. knowing the pleasure of doing God’s will. Christ said, ‘I delight to do your will,’ and, ‘*for the joy that was set before him* [Christ] endured the cross, despising the shame’. The counsellor, knowing the new delight of life in Christ, must point again to the Cross and the Resurrection as the place of release from misery into joy and serenity. The revelation of God as love—as we have seen time and again in these studies—is where frustration of (seemingly) being denied true joy dissolves, and the new

believer (or renewed believer) can find freedom.

Doubtless this may all sound simplistic, but it has ever been the way in Christian history. Christ promised joy, and for joy he came. When the old is made into the new, when the past ceases to torment and becomes the solid possession of the believer, then the present and the future are assured. They too are objects and vehicles of genuine enjoyment.

There will have to be teaching, rehabilitation and continuing emancipation from old misconceptions and false presuppositions concerning pleasure. Pleasure is an essential part of true life, but guilt-pressured people may have a compulsive drive to put pleasure aside as though it were wrong, and to live only as a 'workaholic'. Dualistic views of life make pleasure out to be sinful and unspiritual. Correction of these ideas must come from knowing Christ and living in him. Severe views of discipleship will also obscure the pleasurable freedom of the Gospel and turn it into a tyranny.

There will also have to be a facing up to the fact of suffering, especially one's suffering as a Christian. Christ said suffering for the Kingdom was a source of joy (Matt. 5:10–12), and the disciples rejoiced 'that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name', whilst the Thessalonians received the Gospel 'in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit'. There is no contradiction between joy and suffering.

THE THERAPY OF THE JOYOUS COMMUNITY

Whilst it is true that the church is a mixture of people and problems, yet at its heart lies the true joy and the genuine delight. Counsellors in the matter of teaching pleasure need the supportive healing context of the living church, the social community. The principle of joy is reinforced in the community of faith. Counsellors ought to recommend wisely in this regard.

17

Saints and Sinners in Stress and Severity

SOMETHING ABOUT STRESS AND SEVERITY

Stress is a word widely used today. Man has to live at the furious pace set up by his advances in technology, high industrialization, and all that goes with competitive world trade—to mention only a few of the many factors. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* gives a long, detailed note on this word, describing it as 'the overpowering pressure of some force or influence', and uses such words as 'hardship, straits, adversity, affliction', and points to the fact of strain and pressure being the actual stress, whereas we use the word more psychologically, i.e. in reference to what we feel or experience as the result of stress—the pressures that come upon us. It would seem we are most under stress when it seems there is nothing we can do about the matter.

Severity is described as 'strictness or sternness in dealing with others; stern or rigorous disposition or behaviour; rigour in treatment, discipline, punishment, or the like'. Whilst we will recognize that human severity is often a reason we react against divine severity, yet it is divine severity about which we will mostly speak. In Romans 11:22 Paul speaks of 'the kindness and the severity of God'.

**THE STRESS WE
FEEL FROM THE
EXPERIENCES
WE HAVE**

In line with the principles we have used in these studies, we look first at man in innocence, then man fallen, followed by man regenerated, and seek to view man glorified. We cannot really know man as he was in innocence, but we conclude that he had no stress in the sense we speak of today. He would not have felt the constraint of love to be a chafing restraint. His fall brought fearful stresses such as division between him and God, the break in relations between the man and his wife, the triumph of evil over the human spirit, the curses in its many details, the ejection from Eden, the loss of love, peace and joy, and the terror of death and elements of creation which now appeared to be hostile and dangerous. Man knows these same stresses today.

Redeemed man is a regenerated man, moving towards ultimate glorification and—*ideally*—should not feel stresses in the same way. He is convinced that God is good, that hostile forces cannot essentially destroy him, and that God works all things for good for him, and will ultimately bring total justice—through right judgement—to the universe. Ideally he is a person not anxious or fearful, taking the pressures as they come, and not being distressed by them. Paul gives two powerful examples of this attitude and ‘riding the breakers’, in II Corinthians 6 and 11. We have used the word *ideally* in regard to redeemed man, for redeemed man does come under stress and often reacts in most unhelpful ways. Ultimately man as glorified will be free of tensions, stresses and severities, but as yet he is in them. In Romans 8:22–25 Paul points to the fact that both believers and unbelievers suffer a universal anguish, and must live with this in this life. Whatever this anguish is—we ‘groan within ourselves’—we must view it realistically; *in this life we will never be free of such anguish and groaning, no matter how much the fruit of the Spirit may obtain*. A reading of the Scriptures—particularly the Psalms—will show us that both the godly

and the ungodly feel great stresses, and both can—and do—collapse under them, from time to time. Given in that the human spirit is incredibly resilient, dreadful states of mind and spirit result from collapse under stress or anger against the causes and tensions of that stress. We will look at a psalm or two.

Psalms 88 and 38

Psalm 88 is a psalm which might be called ‘A Man under Stress and Depression’. A thoughtful Israelite knew that God would not allow him to come under stress too great to bear, but would with the stress come with mercy and deliver him from it (cf. I Cor. 10:13). The covenant person was entitled to God’s steadfast love, and could anticipate His gratuitous mercy. In Psalm 88 there is no sign of relief from the terrible state in which the writer cries out to God. One fact, however, could go unnoticed, namely that *he cries out to God and calls him ‘my God’*, even though no relief is in sight.

Psalm 38 is one in which the author knows he is under the wrath of God, and although the stress is too great for him to bear, he has some *hope* of relief because of his confession and repentance. Even so, the psalm does not say it has come or will come.

These two psalms show us that believers do not always have it easy. They are but two of 150 utterances of the heart, some of which are joyful and triumphant, and others which reveal the intolerable stresses of life. Some even complain to God about God. There is something in them of the spirit of Job when he was under similar pressures and tensions. Two quite helpful classics on the matter of Christians suffering stress are Bridge’s *A Lifting Up for the Downcast*, and Archibald Alexander’s *Thoughts on Religious Experience*. The Puritans are superb in their analysis of human melancholy and stress experiences, as they are also in their treatment of the same. Today we have many psychological treatments, for the subject of stress is being highly researched.

**KNOWING AND
FACING STRESS**

The following points call for our attention:

- (a) Stress is a (or, the) pressure which comes upon us, and appears to strain us heavily or beyond endurance. It brings a measure of shock, acts powerfully within our human system, can bring distress and cause painful inner wounding.
- (b) Part of the shock comes from disappointment at such happenings. We have an ontological expectation in a God-created and God-managed universe of love, affection, serenity, and rich Divine-human and human-human relationships. When that expectation is not fulfilled we can become angry, bitter and cynical thus maintaining and extending the effects of stress. Stress thus compounds itself.
- (c) We may be shocked to think a certain thing can happen to *us*. Why should this be so? Why so personal? What have I done? Why *me*? Am I guilty, and is this punishment? Uncertainty regarding oneself, God and others results. Is this injustice? If so, why? The primary feeling of alienation from a warm Providence, and the insecurity—compounded by feelings of terror, uncertainty, and the concept of *unfair victimization**—are all factors within this shock. When self-pity, reactionary anger, and desire to avenge result, then a chain of cause and action is established.
- (d) The facts of man's sinfulness, his selfishness, cruelty, self-preservation attitudes and acts, and the universal competition which obtains—with resultant pain, shock, and traumas—ought to be faced *realistically*. There can be no better exposition of human sinfulness and no better teaching on proper godly response/s than the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. chs 5–7).
- (e) A sane view of our guilt, the sinfulness of us all, the objective theological reality of sin and grace, of the image of God in man and the results of the Fall, should enable us to experience minimal shock, anger, fear and *angst*. We should first be aware that Christ has not

* We should note the biblical teaching regarding so-called victimization in Ezekiel 18, and the prophetic insistence that we are responsible for all our actions in life—from the womb. We will not then blame God and others for all things, and will not react harmfully to what we have called 'the conditioning facts' of parental upbringing, heredity, environment and circumstances. Free from unnecessary anger and consequent depression, we will be better able to cope with pressures and stresses that come upon us.

- only borne our guilt of sins, and the sins themselves, but also that 'he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows', i.e. the shocks and effects of past and present stresses have been borne so that we are alleviated from them, and are thus free to live without an entail from the past.
- (f) We should be aware of God's forgiveness and purification of our failures, Divine protection against devastating accusations, admission of our own failures, and recourse to continuing forgiveness and purification, with recognition of the struggles of others in these same areas of human experience. We should be free of the legalism that increases guilt and compounds fear. Whilst all this is good for us, we should also see it as good for others, i.e. we should love and forgive others, recognizing that our own attitudes to others may have increased self-stress.
- (g) The doctrine of *the sovereignty of God* should preserve us from thinking God is arbitrary in His actions, that all evil is not under His control, that He does not requite and avenge all cruel happenings and injustices. This doctrine preserves us from thinking that our times are not in His hand. Likewise the doctrine of *God's providence* assures us that the Judge of all the earth does do right, that He is aware of our frailty and 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb', has mercy on us in our misery and works all things for our good, i.e. works in all things for our good. The doctrine of *the Fatherhood of God* should teach us that He is present in all that happens to us, and can—and does—give us Fatherly comfort.
- (h) We should recognize for ourselves and for others that certain states come upon us, i.e. states of depression that seem to overwhelm us, states of accidie, i.e. of unaccountable torpor, listlessness (cf. Study 13) and lethargy, of the sense of empty nothingness, meaninglessness and purposelessness. Some of these states may arise from organic causes such as chemical deficiencies, and from other unknown factors. Such states seem beyond our control, and beyond medical and other therapeutic management. People who have been victimized do not always have the knowledge or will to be able to cope, and to respond to what happens with resiliency. The capacity to do so seems innate in human beings, but not all show resiliency. It is interesting that Chaucer spoke of 'the synne of Accidie' (quoted in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*), and it may give us a clue as to our responsibility even in states which appear to be too overwhelming for our control of them.

We should recognize that Christ healed people, many of whom were responsible for their own states of suffering (John 5:14; cf. Matt. 9:5–7; Ps. 32:3–4), and that God has always had mercy on persons in states of misery which they have brought upon themselves. It is interesting to note that people often emerged clearly—for no apparent reason—from extended states of darkness, depression and accidie. This may relate to some organic or psychosomatic situation, but we cannot be sure, either way.

- (i) We need to keep in mind the ideas contained in I Corinthians 10:12–13: (i) that it is dangerous for a person to think he can stand, of himself—i.e. by himself and in his own strength—for Jeremiah 10:23 states this is not true, and (ii) no test, pressure, or stress which comes upon us is unattended by God. He attends. He gives ‘a way of escape’. The question is, ‘Do we—will we—take it?’ In the ultimate we can never really say, ‘All of this is too much for me.’

THE MATTER OF GOD’S SEVERITY We do not need to deal with this to any great degree. Romans 11:22 does speak of ‘the kindness and the severity of God’. In this context God’s severity is towards those who have fallen, i.e. deliberately sinned against His covenant. Even so, they too can be restored, *if they will*. Our problem is not that God is *unduly* severe, but that in our guilt we think, irrationally, that He is *unduly* severe to us when it may be that He is not, or that He is simply chastising us for our good (cf. Heb. 12:3–13). It may even be that we do not understand His grace and love, and so react to Him out of fear and despair—something we do not need to do.

CONCLUSION TO OUR STUDY We conclude that pressures and stresses do come upon the human race, and that these relate to universal human sinfulness, and that the effects of them are linked with our attitudes and understandings regarding the nature of God, and the nature of man. It appears that—under God—we can cope if we will, especially if we will live

under the grace and love and mercy of God. We can help others under stress, especially in the context of the Christian community, with its corporate love, care and healing powers. We must not be harsh and unsympathetic to those who falter under stress but seek to help ‘the weaker brother’ —those ‘birds with broken wings’.

Even so, the vast and various ‘means of grace’ are available, and we should resort to them in a universe in which all things groan, waiting for the emancipation of the creation—us included.

There is a growing industry today for coping with stress. Business firms, and government departments recognize the fact of stress and its deleterious consequences, and so courses for dealing with contemporary stresses are taught. Eastern religions—especially Transcendental Meditation—seek to teach a way of serenity, and T.M. is widely used. We will not here enter into the validity or otherwise of these Eastern philosophies and techniques for bringing serenity, but state that there is a biblical meditation which does relieve stress and bring peace. This is set out in my little book *The Christian Meditator* (NCPI, 1986). I believe it could be of real value to those who will read it. There are of course other Christian writings on this theme.

18

Worship, and the Recovery of Wholeness

MAN THE WORSHIPPING CREATURE

It is part of man to worship, i.e. to give worth to everything he encounters. He must do this in one sense so that he can order his life. He evaluates all things, for he has to live with them, use them, and perhaps—in some cases—serve them. To worship God, a deity, an idol or a thing is first to evaluate it, and then to relate to it in accordance with that evaluation. Elements of fear, distrust and anger may be in that ‘worth-ship’, or strong adoration, devotion and love. The counsellor who does not understand the matter of worship does not really know where man is coming from or going to.

When man was created in the image of God he was made to have affinity with God—by nature of the case, since he was the reflection of all His glory, i.e. His true Being. Man’s initial knowledge of God was primarily relational. Relationship with God was essential to man’s authentic living. It was also essential to his relationship with the rest of creation, over which he was to be a benign but triumphant lord and steward. Paul says that man’s rejection of his knowledge of God—virtually a rejection of God Himself—meant a change in man’s entire system of evaluation.

MAN THE SELF- WORSHIPPER

Romans 1:20–25 puts us in the picture regarding man and his refusal to worship God and his acceptance of ‘nature’ as the object of his worship:

Ever since the creation of the world his [God’s] invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

The sum of what is quoted above is this: Man knew God clearly, especially in regard to His power and His deity—those really covering all elements of God—but in refusing (i) to give God His true worth and (ii) to give Him thanksgiving, man rejected his knowledge of God, and so lost the light of true knowledge, and thus the basis for true thinking. In its place came a new view of God, man, and creation. Man had become out of kilter with all things, so no matter how brilliant his reasoning, no matter how clever his research, man was doomed forever never to know the truth with clarity. Indeed the truth would always confront him, and he would always be bound to refuse it and try to suppress it (Rom. 1:18).

Because he needed a new object of worship and designated that object as himself—self-worship, egocentric orientation—he quickly became the victim of idolatry. He lived then by images which were for the most part false. Most importantly he worshipped and served the creature rather than the creation. Here the word ‘creature’ really means his own creaturely being, but then as it relates to, and is one with, the creation.

THE COUNSELLOR AND WORSHIP If the counsellor does not understand what is written above, he will always be helpless in the face of man's problems. Rejection of the knowledge—which as we have seen is virtually rejection of God—will bring essential (ontological) disorientation of man to God, the universe and himself. The emotional anguish of this, the pain of being functionally out of kilter, is the root of human suffering. Called 'the wrath of God' in Romans 1:18 (cf. 1:24, 26, 28, where it is called 'giving up to'), man knows this pain within the conscience as his guilt and sin compound themselves. When man senses—though he may never admit it—what Jeremiah describes as 'the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man to direct his own steps', then man feels alienated, lost, and confused. He needs a centre for orientation—a surrogate God, in fact—and so he moves into dynamic idolatry.

The Matter of Idolatry If the counsellor is himself caught in any form of idolatry then he will be unable to help others who are in it. What is more, he will not be able to see clearly what is the matter. When a human being orientates himself or herself to the creation, then incongruities and aberrations—in regard to what is ontological—must result. This is seen in Romans 1:24–32, in the three elements of descent into immorality, descent into homosexuality and related deviations, and finally into a 'base mind', i.e. a mind which is depraved and morally insensitive. Again, if the counsellor sees this kind of reasoning as exaggerated, then he has missed the point that pure worship is as essential to man's existence as pure air and pure water. If he does not understand the dynamics of idolatry which are linked with—and even one with—the dynamics of guilt, then he does not understand the ontological disturbance that has happened and is happening within the human person, within the elements called mind, psyche, body and spirit.

THE MATTER OF RATIONALIZATION All humans have to rationalize everything which comes to them. When in the creational state of innocence, man understood God, himself and creation, as far as he needed to do so. When he refused the knowledge of God his whole thinking had to change from what was rational to what wasn't. He now had to relate to God, man and creation in a different way. That is, he had to re-rationalize everything. This meant he had to have a new theology (God-view) and new cosmology (world-view) and a new anthropology (man-view). Since the new views were not basically ontological (you cannot create a new and different ontology, by nature of the case), man always suffers from uncertainty, insecurity, and because he does not relate to things as they really are, God as He really is, man as he really is, and self as it really is, therefore man lives in nameless anxiety. This is the basis, the source and the cause of things we call neuroses and psychoses. Thus, if a counsellor is not trained in understanding man's dilemma he will be ignorant of the aetiology of certain mental and personality states.

The Matter of Our Views of Creation It is no accident that there are many views of creation. Cultures have myths and dream-times of creation and explain it, often without the doctrine of God as Creator. The biblical view is that God created *ex nihilo creatio*, i.e. 'all things were created out of nothing'. If we idolatry creation, then we make many gods who have their parts in ruling creation. A favourite term is often used, like 'mother earth' or 'mother nature'. It gives creation a personality of its own, a power of its own, and cuts it off from being under the tutelage, dependency and rule of God. This kind of reasoning gives creation a being of its own. Some views of evolution seem to suggest that the creation arose from its own self, from microscopic beginnings, but have no deity bringing those first elements into being. They were just 'there'. This

reasoning relieves the mind of God having existence, but points to a power other than God which was (and is) indigenous.

A counsellor should observe people's attitudes to creation. Some are afraid of creation, uncertain as to what it might do. They fear certain elements within it, such as minerals, chemicals and the like. They romanticize trees and animals, giving them souls or spirits, and making them intelligent. Whilst many of them smile at the theology of primitive people when they think in terms of spirits and demons and deities controlling and using nature, bringing good or harm to human beings, but often we are not less superstitious, especially those who give themselves over to astrology and divination and luck. Such timidity or robust gambling may be caught by children from their parents. Home-made theology, cosmology and anthropology is often passed from generation to generation. Counsellors and pastors may not understand the fears of their folk if they do not understand the biblical explanation of the causes and the ways in which men and women behave.

THE NEW VIEWS AND THE NEW CREATION

The study of salvation is called 'soteriology', and no Christian counsellor should remain untutored in this area. Briefly, the ordinary human being who is a fallen person, a sinner through that fall, and opposed to God and arrogant in his independency, is a person who is filled with guilts for (i) the sin of rejecting God which was executed in the rebellion of Adam, and (ii) acts of sin which have happened throughout his lifetime and have accumulated mountains of guilt. In turn, this guilt stimulates to further sin, and sin and guilt keep compounding themselves. The Scriptures refer to man (corporately) as being 'in Adam' or as being 'the old man'.

When Christ came, he did so in order to destroy the guilt and pollution of man, and set him free to resume being a

true human being. So Paul says, 'He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again.' Dying to our selves we come alive to God. Paul calls this 'the new man' or 'the new creation'. When one becomes a new creation then one's theology, cosmology and anthropology changes back to what is true, i.e. what is ontological. Some folk achieve a complete change without pain and almost without thought. Others go through the painful and often drawn-out process of reorientation, and learn the true theology, cosmology and anthropology over a long period of time. They often feel the tug back to the old, especially when the new confronts them with what seem to be powerful demands. Even so, the change is beautiful. The hymn-writer has put it thus:

Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine.

The person who has become a new creation, who begins in the grace of God and continues in it, can recover what he or she has lost. Of course, there is the future and the hope of resurrection, eternal life, the glorified body and state of being, and the new vocation as king-priests to God and the creation—all of which lie ahead. Nothing is complete or perfect now, but hope is a powerful motivation to present living. In this new state the new person loses old attitudes, fears, inhibitions and even wrong behaviour patterns.

FAITH AND THE NEWNESS AND WHOLENESS

The term often used for bringing the change in men and women is 'the grace of God'. That is, God moves personally to do

man good and to restore him to the wholeness he lost in rebellion and to renew that which has become old and effete. Man's will is drawn by God to repentance by the revelations he has been given. We see in the Gospels and Epistles that men and women have to have faith in God, in His word and in His promises, especially as they relate to Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Many folk came to Christ for healing of their lives and healing of their diseases. To the 'woman who was a sinner' he said, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.' To the woman who had had a continuous flow of blood and had been healed he said, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.' To the Samaritan leper he said, 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.'

We must notice that although God—through Christ—healed these people, they had to rise up in faith to believe Him. Faith is the opposite to mistrust, and also the opposite of disobedience. There is a wholeness that can come through the Gospel, and it is this wholeness that the counsellor must know, must have experienced himself, and must be able to communicate to his counsellee.

THE KINDNESS OF COUNSELLING

Introduction to Essays on the 'Kindness of Counselling'

TRUE COUNSELLING IS ALWAYS A MATTER OF LOVE, AND LOVE ONLY

The essays which are included in this section do not really differ from those in other sections. It is just that we have placed emphasis on the element of kindness, perhaps one of the most beautiful of all the traits of man—to say nothing of God. Kindness is, of course, part of the action of love, hence Paul's simple statement, 'Love is kind.'

Any counsellor knows that the business of living in this world is a complex one. Any theologian worth his salt knows that sin complicates things. The writer of Ecclesiastes said (*Jerusalem Bible*), 'This, however, you must know: I find that God made man simple; man's complex problems are of his own devising.' Rigid legalism demands total perfection, but true understanding is kind and reaches out to man in his self-wrought dilemmas of life. That is the thrust of these essays.

THE MATTER OF KINDNESS IN A WORLD WHICH IS BROKEN AND CONFUSED

The Nature of Kindness

What is kindness? What do we mean by 'a world broken and confused'? These are matters we must pursue. Kindness is something we recognize. In English it conjures up the image of gentleness, geniality and even of affection, but it also suggests a spontaneous benevolence, a concern for the other person, a desire to help. On the divine level God is sweet, mild, full of graciousness, and one may live serenely in that knowledge. Yet mildness is sorely tested when its object is perverse, uncaring, obstinate and rebellious. In this case God is 'slow to anger', i.e. 'long-suffering'. In Romans 2:4–5 long-suffering and kindness are twin qualities. In Exodus 34:6–7 'loving kindness' (Heb. *chesed*) is linked with the mercy, grace and faithfulness of God, but also with 'not clearing the guilty', i.e. God is Holy and demands repentance. Kindness, then, is not mere amiability or mindless benevolence. Being in the context of mercy and grace, kindness is that act of God which assists man in his difficulties, and which operates unsolicited by the object of its goodness. Kindness is always a matter of surprise, especially on the human level—given man's slowness to think about other human beings. We are all delighted when people are kind to us, or we see kindness given to others.

The uses of *chesed*, i.e. 'loving kindness', in the Old Testament, are innumerable. We cannot here examine them all, but the fact that they are all translated 'steadfast love' means that no matter how much men and women of the covenant fail God, He will continue in His love for them. Paul said, 'love is kind.' This tells us so much about kindness.

In the New Testament the word for kindness is *chrestotes*, and Paul uses it in Titus 3:4, where he couples it with God's love to man, literally, 'but when the kindness and love to man of God our Saviour appeared . . .' Kindness,

then, has been exercised towards us by God, both in the Old and New Testaments. The famous statement of Romans 11:22—'Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off'—was spoken to Gentiles, and this is remarkable because God's loving kindness was shown primarily to the covenant people of Israel. That is why Paul rebukes the Jews in Romans 2:4, 'Do you presume upon the riches of his kindness . . .?' In Ephesians 2:7 he tells all—both Jewish and Gentile Christians—that in the coming ages God will show 'the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness' towards them. He later exhorts them to be kind one to another (4:32). Kindness is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). From these and other Scriptures we begin to see what a glorious thing is God's kindness. We have, then, a wonderful basis on which to approach people, especially people who find it hard to cope with life in a confused and broken world.

The Meaning of 'A Broken and Confused World'

When we use the words 'broken' and 'confused', we are assuming there is a world which is not broken and confused, i.e. a true world. This is correct. It should not be difficult for a normal human being to cope with a normal world—if such there were. What is normal we may call *ontological*. We will then be driven to ask ourselves what is a normal world, and why is our world not normal? The answer must lie in God the Creator. It is at this point the Christian counsellor must have a truly biblical theology of God, man, and the creation. Such can be followed in some good manual of theology, or in one of my own books, e.g. *The Things We Firmly Believe*.*

Biblically, we must understand that God created the world

* NCPI, 2nd edition, 1986.

in wisdom, and that when it was created it was 'very good', i.e. *functionally good* (cf. Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 3:11). For this reason the world must always be *essentially good*, although the rebellion against God by angelic and human creatures has brought elements of dissonance, dislocation and awryness to it. When creatures do not obey the functional principles of creation, and when they oppose the purposes God has for His creation, then this dislocation must result. Rebellion against God means a rejection of the wisdom, function and nature of creation by the rebellious creature, which in turn brings the creature into personal existential guilt for not being a true existent in a functional world. This guilt (cf. Rom. 3:23) is the basis of human confusion and the mainspring of human acts of sinning, and these sinful acts compound guilt and so lead to further acts of sin. Failure to conform with the ontological nature of God, creation and the creature itself brings a confusion of the deepest kind. Man is lost in his world, coming to an experience of alienation from God, creation and himself. He is forced to re-rationalize all things—God, creation and humanity—and to develop a so-called ontology of all things.

Unless we have a theology of God and Satan we cannot have a true theology of fallen humanity. Unless we realize the struggle which goes on between two systems—(i) the Kingdom of God under God and His loyal forces; and (ii) the kingdom of Satan under his conscripted forces—then we will not know the conflicts which obtain in the universe, in which all creatures are participants. What compounds confusion is the human inability to understand God's plans and purposes—which include redemption of fallen humanity, judgement of all evil creatures, and the ultimate reconciliation and glorification of all things. Fallen humanity tries to rationalize what it calls 'good and evil' in terms of dualism or monism. These rationalizations are often philosophical and/or religious, and they add to the confusion of human persons.

In these studies we cannot properly describe the confusion

men and women experience in a world which to them is broken and seemingly irrational. If we see that man is created by God for Himself, that man should relate to creation in the way of true functionality, and that the way of God's love, righteousness, holiness, goodness and truth constitutes the true way of man and all other creatures, then we can understand why there is so much confusion in life, and so much brokenness in the creation. Two important chapters regarding the matter are Genesis 3 and Romans 1. They give us the key to the human dilemma, i.e. man created in the image of God rebelling against God, and failing to have peace with himself, the creation and God. Here is the root cause of man's confusion and the explanation of why his world seems so broken.

In our future studies we will look at man's dilemma more closely and seek to see the divine solution for his ills. It is in this context that we will see the richness and power of God's kindness.

CONCLUSION

If the world is essentially good because it is God's creation, but if it has become the scene of evil powers and sinful human creatures, then we must lead bewildered human inhabitants of it to see that given in the evil of fallen angels and of men, given in the curse upon the earth, and given in the dynamics of guilt and conscience, yet there is a way to personal peace within it all, the peace which Christ calls 'my peace', and the peace which Paul says comes from being justified by faith—'Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God'—and which is 'the peace which passes all understanding'. This peace is the precious gift a biblical counsellor can bring to men and women in a confused and broken world. It is the peace which is 'by the blood of his [Christ's] cross', and which brings home the wandering prodigal to the heart of the kindly, loving Father. It is the *shalom* of eternity.

1

Kindness for Birds with Broken Wings

BIRDS WITH BROKEN WINGS

What do we mean by 'birds with broken wings'? We know that in nature birds sometimes suffer maiming, as indeed do animals. Such creatures suffer, for they are vulnerable. They need to hide themselves in order to survive. Creatures of the same species will often destroy them. Among human beings we can generally find three kinds of maimed people, the first being those who, through innate weakness and lack of astuteness, seem incapable of facing up to life. Sometimes they are born with certain handicaps of mind or body or both, but generally handicapped people are astute and learn to cope with life even though they have impediments. However, this first kind of 'birds with broken wings' never seem to know how to handle life. For the most part they are not evil in intent, bitter and cynical, but gentle and honest. However, they lack the power to be self-helpful and competent in life. Some of them simply seem to remain poor, are dominated by others, or are without guile and lack competitiveness.

The second kind are people who seem morally sick. They could—if they would—reason out their situations, for they have the ability to live and make their way in life. However, they have lost the zest to do so. They seem always to be doing

things which are wrong and awkward, and yet excuse themselves as though they are not to blame for what happens—as though they did not set out to do the acts which are wrong.

The third group of persons are those who seem to be apathetic, who feel inferior, who are easily depressed, and who seem to find life difficult to handle. They appear to be pessimistic, easily discouraged, difficult to encourage, and almost seem to resent being urged or encouraged out of their pathetic states of mind.

What is common to the three groups is their inability to emerge from their states. It is as though they fatalistically believe they are set in such states for ever, and even as though they do not wish to be made whole. For the most part they do not emerge, and the question is whether we should persist with them or give up on them after a reasonable period of time. Such a question is not easily answered. We need to have enough kindness to persist until we know the answer, and then we have to consider the relationship between 'the kindness and the severity of God'. Is severity as much required as kindness?

GETTING TO THE CAUSES OF SUCH MAIMED STATES OF BEING

It seems there are various causes for such states. Since we find these three states in the Scriptures, we can be helped by studying them. The three groups are not always distinct one from other. Sometimes elements of the three are found in one person, and this is understandable since the causes can be various.

The First Group of Persons Who Meet Troubles

There are some whom we cannot type. They just seem incapable of helping themselves, and we must persist with them. However, there are those who have been crushed by life, have been numbed

to the point where they are almost insensible. They are the mental parallel to those who are physically helpless. We must seek to help them, by just bearing with them, sympathizing, and doing what good we can for them. Then there are those who are always poor, never able to rise above their circumstances, but are not indolent, angry, depressed or cunning. Jesus said, 'The poor you always have with you.' Whilst it is sometimes true that in the Scriptures poverty is a judgement of God, it is not always so. In Israel the poor were catered for in *covenant* fashion, i.e. the community took it upon itself to care for the poor, the indigent, the weak, the stranger—and so on. See Leviticus 18 and 25, where gleaning and other provisions are made for the poor, and the jubilee—every 50 years—gave back land to the indebted.

There are warnings against oppressing the poor (cf. Prov. 14:31). Even so, one can be poor and wise (cf. Eccl. 9:13–16). One can be poor and be greatly blessed.

The group that concerns us most is those met in Romans 14:1 to 15:6, and I Corinthians 8—people who have weak faith and weak consciences. This appears to be because they do not see justification in its strong outlines. They still believe they can be caught in judgement if they do not desist from certain practices, such as eating meat offered to idols. The warnings given to the people of strong faith and conscience is that they should have their faith before God and not before man, i.e. that they constantly have in mind the weaker brother who may be stumbled by some 'strong' act. It is *love* which cares for the brother, i.e. the love that is kind. Helping the weak requires constant kindness.

The Second Group of Persons Who Meet Troubles

The second group is the most strongly defined. It is difficult to place them as birds with broken wings so much as those who have self-inflicted wounds! There are those in this group who do dreadful things, and so much so that some Christians say they are sick, i.e. morally sick, which means they cannot

help doing what they do. Unless this group is diagnosed we may give to them the same helpful consideration and treatment we give to the above group, and that would be fatal, for this is not the kind of treatment which is necessary.

In Isaiah 1:2–4 God tells Judah that she is evil and corrupt. In verses 5–6 God says the nation is utterly sick and that this is because of its evil and corruption. The same principle is stated in Isaiah 24. Verses 1–3 describe the state of the nation, and verses 4–6 show the sickness of the nation, and even of the land. People who are morally sick have first been morally sinful. To minister to them sympathetically will not be true kindness, but will prevent them seeing God's solution. In Deuteronomy Israel was warned that its sinfulness would cause God to visit it with physical illnesses (e.g. chs 27–28). The warnings are dire and strong. In respect to these things God says, 'I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.' In the New Testament we have the examples of Ananias and Sapph-ira, who die because they have lied, and those in I Corinthians 11, who become sick and/or die because they 'do not discern the Lord's body'. That is, they live in wrong relation-ship to Christ and his people.

These, then, are people who have crippled themselves. They are under the judgement of God. We would not do well to sympathize with them, but to sense the action of God's judgements and not interfere. We may be called upon to deliver words of exhortation, calls to repentance, and this kind of severity can lead them to healing, and so prove to be kindness. Generally people in this category lack repentance, and refuse to take responsibility for their actions, making God or others accountable.

The Third Group of Persons Who Meet Troubles

This is the group which most needs our help. Again, it has a variety of people in it. We dealt with it in Study 10 of the previous section, under the title of 'Helping the Troubled and Discomforted'. A rubric

from that study is here repeated to introduce the matter:

Down through Christian history the troubles of believers have been attended by others who seek to 'bear one another's burdens'. There has been sympathy and aid. Prominent have been the Puritans—mainly of the seventeenth century, but continuing even to today—who studied the Scriptures closely and deeply and came up with solutions to man's grief and sorrows. We should not ignore their great biblical insights. Of great help is William Bridge's *A Lifting Up for the Downcast*. Men like Sibbes, Adams, Charnock and Goodwin—amongst others—wrote essays on such subjects as 'The Soul's Sickness', 'Physic From Heaven', 'The Bruised and Smoking Flax', 'The Returning Backslider', 'A Discourse of Affliction', 'A Discourse Proving Weak Grace Victorious', 'The Art of Contentment', 'Spiritual Mourning'. One such discourse—'The Saint's Comfort' by Richard Sibbes—has such headings as, 'The children of God fall into extremity of misery and affliction', 'God upholdeth his [own] from sinking into trouble', 'Affliction stirs up devotion'. Of particular usefulness is Archibald Alexander's work, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*. Alexander was born in 1777 and died in 1851, after being President of Princeton Seminary for forty years. His book tackles the matter of the Christian's troubles.

In the last three decades we have had a spate of books, pouring out, on the troubles of man. The comparatively new disciplines of psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry have researched the troubled mind widely. Christian writings regarding the troubled person are quite profuse. How much of it is really useful time will eventually tell us. The fact is that probably very little that is new faces the person of today. It is to be hoped that the persons researching biblical anthropology will not spare themselves, but dig deeply into the mines of information which are at their disposal, and not opt for quickfire methods which, as Jeremiah said so long ago, 'have healed the wound of my people *lightly* [i.e. as though it were a scratch]' 6:14).

The thinking of folk in these states can be diagnosed:

- (a) The thinking and attitude is generally morbid, i.e. unrelieved by joy, humour and laughter because the person is preoccupied with himself/herself. There is a sense of foreboding as though the worst is about to happen, although there is no outward indication of coming trouble.
- (b) There is little self-esteem, or good self-image, yet the person demands

attention at every point as though this were a right. At the same time the person withdraws, hiding himself, seeking to be self-effacing. There is little social interchange.

- (c) There is gloom, depression, and a deep sense of anxiety, along with apprehension of what might happen. With some this brings fear of overt action, nervousness, and even trembling and shaking.
- (d) Often such persons feel they have failed God, others, and themselves, and worry as to whether they have committed 'the unpardonable sin'. They feel themselves to be apostate.

These kinds of feeling would today be called 'neurotic'. We would expect Christian people to be free of such mind-states, especially as they are living under the grace of the New Covenant, but obviously there are causes we cannot reach. Some of these may be physical and organic, affecting the mental state, or they may be moral, the mind being affected by what Paul calls 'rejecting conscience', which makes 'shipwreck of their faith' (I Tim. 1:19). Doubtless this is the case of many who are in the second grouping of troubled persons.

When we read the Psalms closely we find persons in different emotional states of mind, sometimes fluctuating from joy to fear, from delight to gloomy apprehensiveness. Most of these Psalms point to actual happenings, such as persecution by enemies, numerous difficulties and local circumstances, and events that bring stress. Job's case is one in point. He was healthy enough in his mind, but was puzzled as to why trouble had come upon him. Other Psalms recognize God's judgements and accept them, but the person suffers meanwhile. Even so, the states of mind are not morbid. They are part of what happens to people under pressure. We would not call such people 'birds with broken wings'.

William Bridges' *A Lifting Up For The Downcast*, and Archibald Alexander's work, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, are both most helpful books because they face the fact that Christians can—and do—get into states of dryness, puzzlement, doubt and even morbidity. Alexander observes

that it is often many years before certain persons emerge from these states, never to be caught in them again. It may well be that some sin is the cause of dryness and barrenness in the spirit of a person, but we cannot be sure. The Puritan's warning, 'Never meddle with a man's heart', tells us a lot. We observe afresh that no human heart can—of itself—minister to another human heart—not, anyway, by way of correcting it. One heart is too complicated a thing to deal with. Macbeth asked the court doctor,

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

To which the physician replied,

Therein the patient must minister to himself.

Psalm 88 is an example of a man going down into deep sorrow, and there seems to be no light whatever for him. Yet the beautiful fact of the Psalm lies in the first verse, 'O Lord, my God!', i.e. the psalmist addresses God. The vocative voice shows that he relates directly to God. The Psalm itself seems to show no anger or venom, only puzzlement and pain. The good thing about it is that the man is talking with God. God has His own time for bringing joy and peace to His servant.

**SOME ELEMENTS TO TAKE
INTO CONSIDERATION
WHEN USING KINDNESS
TOWARDS 'BIRDS WITH
BROKEN WINGS'**

Whilst God is always the Healer (Exod. 15:26), and we can heal no one *of ourselves*, yet the kindness of God can flow through us to others. If we are aware of

elements which affect persons in troubled states then we can better understand them, and may even be able to help them.

Things we should keep in mind are:

- (a) Perfectionism is a demoralizing element. It is linked with guilt, the dread of failure, the desire to achieve perfection, and the image of God as a demander of perfection. Guilt follows guilt—at failure—and compounds the problem. Some people will never attempt to do things lest they fail in them. This produces a deadly passivity. The answer is to know grace in healing of the past, and grace in restoring from failure in the present. A love-view of God will dispel perfectionism, even though that may have to be a gradual liberation.
- (b) Anger is often—if not mostly—the problem in troubled states of mind. Anger at persons is generally anger at God, though concealed. We have dealt with this in other studies, but state here that anger generally rises from feeling God has been unfair. A sense of injustice makes us feel we are right and God is wrong. This attitude cuts us off from rich fellowship and communion with God, and with others. Some will never give up their anger. When anger is recognized as being sin, and is confessed as such, then it loses its power and the subject can be free to live afresh.
- (c) We have seen that stress often affects people. So-called stress has always existed. It brings the thought that more than one can cope with has been demanded of us. The very thought that we are asked to do more than we can—or are not allowed to do what we wish to do—creates the idea of stress. It brings anger, and passivity—the opposition to action.
- (d) Some people become parasitic on those who exercise kindness towards them. They refuse to bear their own burdens which life demands of them. Galatians 6:2 asks that in love (kindness) we bear burdens of others that are too heavy for them, but then says that every man shall bear his own burden, i.e. that which is *his own* burden. It is not kindness to bear that special burden.
- (e) Some people do not wish to be healed. Jesus once asked a man if he wished to be healed (John 5:6) and the man did not give him a direct answer. Even when healed by Jesus he seemed to have something unattractive about him. Some people desire to be ill or weak, and indeed use their illnesses to dominate others or have their constant help.

Finally we can say that God knows the hearts of men and women. He knows where their lives are at any point in time.

He is the Healer and can heal the heart. He calls upon us to share with our fellow creatures, and to suffer where suffering is required, and to rejoice where that is required. Human beings with troubled minds are often that way because of their views of God and their resistance to His loving aid. Of course—as in the case of the second grouping—where repentance, conversion, faith and obedience are required, it will not be kindness to sustain persons in their obstinate states of mind. In the case of the first and third groupings we will need to show kindness as we are led by the Spirit of God. Loving patience and patient loving can certainly help to effect healing. As we have said in previous studies, it is the revelation of God as love that brings conclusive healing to the human spirit.

We should recognize that there are no special techniques in helping 'birds with broken wings', i.e. those who are seemingly incurable. There must be a desire on the part of each person to wish to be healed (see John 5:6). Yet it may be any kind of teaching or special action which will meet a need. God's word reaches the heart when the thing spoken may seem quite irrelevant. Thus, one will respond to the word of the Cross, others to the word of love, or of Fatherhood—indeed of anything! We must be aware of this, and not confine ourselves to some stereotype we have developed.

2

The Kindness that Heals Us All—All-in-All

HUMAN STATES OF ILLNESS

There are many forms of illness in the human race. Some are organic, including those which come from disease, or are diseases. Then there are those classified as psychosomatic, that is, manifestations of illness from a conflict or interaction of mind and body. Finally there are illnesses of mind or soul (*psyche*) or spirit (*pneuma*), often known as mental breakdown, neuroses and psychoses. There are mysterious maladies which cannot be categorized, as they evade the classifications given in this paragraph. In our present study we are concerned to discover how we can help people in trouble of any kind, such as we have discussed in previous studies. First we must discover the biblical aetiology of sickness and states of malady, and proceed from there. However, we should recognize that there are limitations to our understanding in this area, and certainly limits upon our ability to heal. Behind it all stands Exodus 15:26, 'I am the Lord, your healer'. That is, we are not healers, although we are privileged to take part in the healing God gives.

SOME CAUSES OF SICKNESS

Sin is not, itself, sickness, but a sickness in man results from sin and its guilt, as we shall see. To call certain states of human experience 'sickness' is to give the idea that man becomes infected, or certain afflictions come upon him, when, in fact, he is responsible for them. In such cases healing cannot take place because man sees these things as visitations and not as arising from his own wrongdoing. A fair example is seen in Isaiah 1:4–6. In verse 4 God says,

'Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.'

Note that Israel is simply evil, doing wickedness. In verses 5–6 we see the outcome of this attitude and action, i.e. sickness:

Why will you still be smitten,
that you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and bleeding wounds;
they are not pressed out, or bound up,
or softened with oil.

The same principle is found many times in the Psalms. The classic example is in Psalm 32. In verses 1–5 David says, in essence,

Look! The most blessed state of a man is forgiveness and justification—from God. I had terrible guilt, but would not acknowledge (i.e. confess) the fact, and so illness gripped me. It was terrible. When I confessed—following repentance—then I was forgiven, and so my illness departed.

Look, in verses 3–4, at the nature of the sickness

which resulted from encapsulating sin within himself:

When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of
summer.

Now look at the healing. Verse 5 says,

I acknowledged my sin to thee,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord';
then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.

Note that *sin* is not forgiven, as such, but 'the *guilt* of my sin'. Guilt is a dynamic factor in human experience. Psalm 103:3 supports this fact that sickness comes from sin, and healing from forgiveness (i.e. the removal of guilt), when it says, in verse 3, 'who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases'. First there is forgiveness and then healing.

This principle is seen in the New Testament when Christ heals the man who was a paralytic (Matt. 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26). When he says, 'Son, take heart, your sins are forgiven,' the listeners (mostly Pharisees and teachers of the law) take umbrage. They say, 'This is blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins.' Jesus then tests them, saying in effect,

'You believe with me that this sickness comes from sin. The test that this man is effectively forgiven his sins is that the sickness will now disappear, and he will become whole. Very good, watch me, for I say to the man, "Rise up, take up your bed and go home."' '

This group of critics was powerfully convinced that the man was healed because forgiven, for they 'glorified God, who had given such authority to men', i.e. 'to forgive their sins and to heal their diseases' (see Matt. 9:8; Mark 2:12; Luke 5:26).

We need now to verify the claim that sicknesses *can* come from sin, and that forgiveness *can* heal. Before we do this we must note that we are *not* saying, 'All sicknesses come from

sin, and so all sicknesses can be healed by forgiveness.’ All sicknesses are not from sin, as is seen in John 9:3.

God is the God Who Wounds and Heals

Some Christians believe all sicknesses come from Satan, and that God never visits human beings with sickness. It is clear that *in some cases* Satan is permitted to visit people with sicknesses, and with spirits, but then only under the sovereign control of God. It is God’s world, not Satan’s. In Deuteronomy 32:39 God says, ‘I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.’ Hannah says, ‘The Lord kills and brings to life’ (I Sam. 2:6), and the king of Syria asks, ‘Am I God to kill and make alive?’ (II Kings 5:7). In regard to infirmities, God asks Moses, ‘Who makes him [a man] dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?’ (Exod. 4:11). Amos asks the people, ‘Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?’ (Amos 3:6). God claims, ‘I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe’ (Isa. 45:7). Isaiah 31:2 records, ‘He is wise and brings disaster’.

These examples could be greatly multiplied. God seeks to kill Moses over the matter of circumcision (Exod. 4:24–26), He permanently damages Jacob’s thigh, destroys Uzzah when he seeks to steady the Ark, afflicts Pharaoh’s house with plagues because he takes Sarai, Abram’s wife. In the Exodus era God brings plagues upon Egypt, even to killing first-born sons. Miriam is made leprous as a judgement, and King Uzziah also, for sacrificing at the altar. Many of Israel are destroyed at Baal-Peor because of their terrible sin. In I Kings 13:4ff. the prophet of God is destroyed because he will not obey the Lord implicitly. These are just a few of the afflictions God brings because of human evil.

In Deuteronomy 4:15ff. Moses warns Israel against idolatry, lest God destroy the people. In 7:15 he says God will not lay upon them the diseases they had known in Egypt if they will obey Him. In 28:20ff. there are some fearsome warnings. If disobedient, Israel will receive ‘curses, confusion,

and frustration’; ‘The Lord will smite you with consumption, and with fever, inflammation, and fiery heat, and with drought, and with blasting, and with mildew’; ‘The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers, and the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed, . . . madness, blindness, and confusion of mind.’

We may think the situation is different in the New Testament, but in it Ananias and Sapphira perish at God’s hand. Elymas is blinded. Herod is smitten with mortal sickness. Those who do not ‘discern the body’ are judged, so that ‘some of you are weak and ill, and some have died’ (I Cor. 11:29–30). The Book of the Revelation is filled with accounts of horrific plagues, famines, earthquakes and the like which have come to man from God’s hand.

God, the One Who Heals

God is the true Healer, yet His healing and His smiting are together. In Exodus 15:26 God says,

‘If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord your healer.’

Many take this statement, ‘I am the Lord your healer’, out of its context. He is not only Healer, but also ‘Giver of sickness’. We now quote some Scriptures which relate to healing, namely: Exodus 23:25; II Kings 20:3ff.; Psalms 6:2, 9; 30:2; 41:4; 103:3; 107:17–20; 147:3; Isaiah 57:18–19; 58:6–9; Jeremiah 33:6–9 (cf. 8:22; 30:12–17; 46:11); Ezekiel 37:1–14; 47:12; Revelation 22:1–3. The healings by prophets (such as Elijah and Elisha), and by Christ, his disciples, and the early church, are all included in God’s work as Healer.

We conclude this section, then, by summing up the principle of sickness and healing as generally found in Scripture. Much—though not all—illness is the result of sin and its guilt. Guilt lays the foundation for sickness. Repentance and confession can bring healing, but it is God who

personally heals, and healing is not simply a process which takes place, of itself. Every sin is against God, and He must forgive before healing can take place. The paradigm for this principle is found in Psalm 32:1–7 and Jeremiah 30:12–17. These two passages demand much thoughtful study.

WHAT AND HOW CHRIST HEALED

The stories of the paralytic in Matthew 9:1–8 and the sick man in John 5:1–12 make it clear that some who were sick were ill because of sin. Others were not (cf. John 9:13). Jesus healed all who came to him, no matter what the cause of their sickness. He called his healing the power of the Kingdom coming upon them (Matt. 4:23f.; 12:28). He just healed them, and gave no special command to prepare them for the healing that they might ‘merit’ it. In Matthew 8:16–17 we read:

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.’

The context shows he had authority and power to do this, but in no sense then did he bear the *guilt* that was the cause of those sins. That came later, on the Cross, for in Isaiah 53:4 we read, ‘Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows’, which can also be translated ‘He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains’. However, the context shows that ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed,’ i.e. *the guilt* which he took upon the Cross is what heals us now.

THE KINDNESS OF HEALING

We have spent a lot of words showing that ultimately God is the Wounder and the Healer—a fact for which we ought

to be grateful. Now we need to come to the areas where we may be able to minister—more what we might call ‘inner illnesses’. We ought to leave medical illnesses to the medicos, and mental illnesses to the doctors of the mind, but we know illnesses are never only of the body or the mind. The aetiology of illness we have used above ought to tell us that. Jeremiah the prophet saw the terrible illnesses and wounds of his people linked with their rebellion against God, and it may well be that different forms of illness, today, arise from similar causes. Passages to look at in Jeremiah are 6:13–15; 8:9–12; 8:18–9:1, and if these are linked with passages in the Psalms, such as 31:10; 32:1–5; 38:1–8; Proverbs 14:30–31 (and related passages on anger), the passages in Isaiah 1 and 24, as also Deuteronomy 4, 7, 28 in the Old Testament and Acts 5:1–11; I Corinthians 11:27–32 in the New Testament, then we will know states of mind, soul and body can be healed when human guilt and rebellion are dealt with by God.

I am sure that if we go back to the problems dealt with in earlier studies—people in confusion, brokenness, in aberrated sexual and familial relationships, who are bitter, angry and confused, let alone caught up in horrible and heinous sin and crime—we will find the cause is much the same in most cases, i.e. separation from God, ego-living, and deep-seated guilt.

The Healing of the Cross

The deep healing that man needs lies in the Cross. The key lies in Isaiah 53:3–12.

In verse 4 some translations have ‘He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains’. Matthew 8:17 translates, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases’. Those who go to this passage directly for physical (organic) healing forget that it deals with the basis of sickness—guilt—for it goes on to say,

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.

The cause, then, of our many states of illness or disintegration is moral-spiritual. All problems arising from guilt have been dealt with in the Cross. All wounds caused by our sins have been healed in his wounds. All angers, hurts, resentments, reactions caused by others—and not primarily by ourselves—have had their pain taken away in the suffering of Christ, so that we are freed from all things—*if we will have it that way!* Whilst—by nature of the case—the effects of belief in the Atonement may take some time to surface, the action will be immediate on belief and acceptance. How wonderful!

Impediments to Healing

There can be impediments. If we refuse to believe some of our illnesses come from our own sins, and if we do not apply to the Cross, then healing will not come. If we wish to retain our sense of injustice and the anger that goes with it—often against both God and man—then we will not be healed. ‘Go in peace, your faith has made you whole [has healed you]’, tells us there will be no peace or healing apart from faith in Christ’s Cross-work. We sometimes think the indignity done by others, such as putting down our humanity, despising our persons, our social status, or racial origins, our gifts and our abilities, are beyond (our) forgiving. We believe we are victimized, and so we burn for justice (vengeance) and this against the advice of Romans 12:18–21 and other passages. Thus we refuse the way of peace—the way of love and forgiveness. God’s forgiveness dies on us because we refuse to forgive.

Some seek supernatural healing of bodily and mental sicknesses, and refuse the means God has put into the world through medicine and the Gospel. Some refuse to see that the ultimate age has not yet come—as in Revelation 21:1–3 where sickness, suffering and death are no more. They are

even angry that this age has not become as the age-to-come. They will not accept infirmity in this age, of any kind. They forget ‘the body is doomed to death because of sin’ and refuse the oncoming of frailty and death—probably because they are afraid of death (I John 4:18; Heb. 2:14–15).

THE ULTIMATE WHOLENESS

We know that we can have the life of the new creation now, in this life (II Cor. 5:17), but we are also told suffering is part of the plan (Rom. 8:18–25; II Cor. 4:16–18). Whilst we cannot be sickness-proof, trouble-proof and death-proof, we can say that we can now experience ‘the peace of God which passes all understanding’. In the new age all will be whole and complete, but the new age has not yet come in time, for it is coming at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Meanwhile we can share the kindness of the Lord with those whom we love and who love us, as also with ‘the ungrateful and selfish’ (Luke 6:35–36), for ‘Judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgement’, i.e. those who are merciful need never fear judgement.

**THE
WONDERFUL
COUNSELLOR**

**AND HIS
UNDER-SHEPHERDS**

The Wonderful Counsellor and His Under-Shepherds

'WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR'

'Wonderful Counsellor' was the title given to Christ by God through the prophet Isaiah, who said (9:6-7),

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The passage, of course, is greatly significant. The term 'Wonderful Counsellor' must not be taken out of its context. *NEB* translates 'in purpose wonderful'; *JB* 'wonder-Counsellor'; and Otto Kaiser 'He who plans wonders'.* 'Counsel' of course,

* *Isaiah*, SCM, 1983.

is linked with will and wisdom in both Old and New Testaments. J. D. W. Watts translates 'wonder counsellor'.* Others translate 'Wonderful, Counsellor'. The whole passage speaks of a special person who has extraordinary qualities, authority, and success. Kings—such as Solomon—needed wisdom not only to defeat their enemies and maintain their position, but also to dispense justice, and doubtless this is linked with the person here mentioned. We must not, of course, try to equate the biblical idea of 'counsellor' with our present idea of a counsellor—a quite modern and somewhat different concept. To read back contemporary ideas of our decade into an Old Testament prophecy would be misleading.

When Christ came, he was certainly 'Wonderful Counsellor', and still remains so, to the church. The New Testament has much to say of him along two lines which qualify him for our present idea of a counsellor, the first being that whilst he emptied himself of his prerogatives of glory on becoming man (Phil. 2:7), he did not empty himself of his deity, nor of his essential being. Becoming man, it could be said of him, 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. Paul also spoke of 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'. These riches were and are moral and relational as well as of the mind and intelligence. So then, he is 'Wonderful Counsellor'.

The second qualification for 'wonderful counselling' was—and is—that he became truly man, and lived the life we live, 'made like his brethren in every respect', so that he might become 'a merciful and faithful high priest', so that he is one who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, and he is 'one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin'. The New Testament tells us that this Son of Man—also known as the Son of God—was fully a man. Indeed, he was truly man as had (and has) been none other, except perhaps Adam, prior to the fall of man. So

much man was Jesus that he was tempted in all points as we all are, so that he knew and experienced our emotions, and understood us personally as the human race in a way no other creature has.

On this basis we also understand that he lived his life as a human and died as a human. Whatever was his Godhead which lay behind his manhood, it certainly never impinged upon that manhood or gave it a supernatural boost. He truly lived as man. We are told that he was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief', i.e. he was a man who understood both sorrow and grief. The rich fact is that he was not a sorrowful or a grieving man in the way that we understand these to be chronic states of human suffering. He was attractive to people as a person, and although his strong words often seemed hard to humans and even repelled them, there was nothing about him which was inhuman or repugnant.

Nor was he sentimental, romantic and idealistic. He was very much down-to-earth, and was never swayed—as we are swayed—by the human predicament. He obviously enjoyed eating and drinking, and did not seem to have the morbid guilt that we sometimes have about the poor and others who suffer. Where he could he helped, though not effortlessly. He spent nights with God in prayer, yet in the daytime he never seemed self-righteous, priggish or religious.

All the time he seemed to be so wise, yet his wisdom was in simplicity. Later biblical writers have told us that he was 'the wisdom of God', that in him dwelt (dwell) 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. So fully was he man that the fullness of the Godhead could dwell in him, bodily. His way of life, his understanding of God, man and creation was such that the title 'the wisdom of God' was not astray. Paul told us that God had made him to be to us 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption', or 'wisdom *in* righteousness, sanctification and redemption'.

He was then—and is now—the one human being ever equipped to be able to help human beings in their predicament

* *Isaiah 1–33*, Word Books, 1985.

of living. We call it a 'predicament of living' because every man is seeking to understand the nature of his own being, asking why—if that be a proper question—he is here on earth, at this time of history, and where he is heading. Since the world is filled with sin, human greed and selfishness—along with brilliant flashes of human glory and kindness—man is puzzled by all things. Some succumb to the human predicament in despair, cynicism and even angry bitterness. Others opt out by sedative pleasures on the one hand and mindless existence on the other. Others seek to make something out of the sorry mess, whilst others clamber over everything that is an obstacle before them, in order to grab and grasp a place at the top. Some just end their own life, trusting—in an irrational way—that they will meet oblivion or a better existence beyond death.

If, then, we can rightly speak of 'the resources of Christ', then those resources are enormous. 'Who', we rightly ask, 'has the answer to the human predicament, and the human dilemma?' and the man of faith in Christ says, 'Jesus Christ the Wonderful Counsellor.' A true counsellor is a wise person who can understand the situation, discern the problems, and lead the enquiring person to the best possible solution. So vast is the human problem, so various its elements, and so unresponsive the human spirit to true wisdom, that understanding and solutions are beyond the best of us—for others.

The special thing about Jesus Christ—the one who is both man and God—is that he has entered our human stream of life and history to *do* something. His contribution was not to *think out* some philosophy, religion or ideology which would help us, but to act out those events which would save us from the tragedy of our human fallenness. He entered the stream of our guilt, our sins, our human atrocities, our angers, bitternesses, sorrows and griefs, and actually worked upon them by letting them work upon him. This was the one incredible act of grace in history that spreads its effects over all history. It transcends mere human sympathy and empathy.

It aligns itself totally with the panorama of human evil and human suffering, as well as coming against the evil that besets man on every side.

We sum this up by saying, 'Jesus Christ was the man sent by God to humanity to be His—God's—wisdom in transforming man from his lost condition to obtain the true goal of human glory.' His wisdom is infinite, his compassion is towards all the human race. His justice is impeccable, his compassion intimate and personal, and his ability to liberate and heal reaches even beyond human obstinacy. By the humility of his incarnation, the obedience of his ministry, the blood, sweat, and tears of his crucifixion and the deliberate triumph of his resurrection and ascension, he has proved to be the one true 'Wonderful Counsellor' for the entire human race.

THE WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR AND HIS UNDER-SHEPHERDS

We have indicated elsewhere that the provision of counsellors—especially professional and semi-professional counsellors—is a modern provision. If the church were operating according to its true nature then counselling would not stand out as a special function and operation. Within the work and worship of the church, i.e. within the ministry or servanthip of all members, the needy person would be supplied with the wisdom and support he—or she—would need. Properly speaking the primary ministry was exercised by the elders who were the pastors of the flock, the under-shepherds of Christ. The subject of eldership is a vast one, and we cannot develop it here.* It is sufficient to say that the pastors were part of the flock, even if they were over it. They had responsibility for each person, were those who taught, and it was their life to minister to them—not merely a profession out of which they could arrange time for counselling

* See my *The Shepherds of the Flock*, NCPI, 1985.

and that would be that! Because they saw their ministry as under-shepherds of 'the chief Shepherd', i.e. 'that great Shepherd of the flock', they would minister only as Christ directed them.

The facts are that today the eldership—for the most part—does not hold the same place or function in the same way as in the early church. Ministerial structures have changed vastly. If we can speak of the church having been 'ontological' in its initial stages, then we have to speak of it being mostly 'provisional' today. Hence the need and place of counsellors. Some would argue that we need to restructure the churches into the apostolic pattern. This is as maybe, but we must face the demands today for Christian counsellors. For that reason we need to have some kind of a paradigm or pattern for such.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELLORS FOR TODAY

There is, of course, no ideal Christian counsellor, but the following points may prove helpful in shaping up a helpful image or pattern of a counsellor.

By 'Christian counsellor' we simply mean a Christian who counsels, i.e. one who gives helpful advice and direction to another who needs and desires it.

Relationalized Counsellors

The following shows that a true counsellor is a person who has been 'relationalized'.

What then do we mean by 'relationalized'? The answer calls for some explanation, namely that in the Christian faith men and women are first wrought upon by God who brings them into salvation, and into reconciliation with Himself. This results—properly speaking—in them becoming reconciled with all other humans, and of course, with themselves, personally. In past years—especially in Hollywood—a psycho-analytical profile was prepared for each employee or actor, so that it could be known whether

they would be basically reliable or not. The story is told that the famous millionaire Howard Hughes refused to be psycho-analysed, and bought the entire film company so that he could act in it! Since Christian counselling is a matter of relationships, then in some way each counsellor ought to be examined for the part he can play—or not play—in relational counselling. So then, one who is 'relationalized' is a person who has come to know God as Father, Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Elder Brother, and who is aided in love and relationships by the Holy Spirit. Only in first relating to God can one then relate to others. Even so, a person, having been forgiven and loved by God, must deliberately love all, forgive all and desire forgiveness from all. Thus we can say a useful counsellor is one who:

- (a) is a wise person, i.e. has that wisdom gained from Scripture, life, and experience which fits the situation of the counsellee. Wise is the person who knows when he does not have the required wisdom and does not go beyond what he has;
- (b) is a person who has repented, come to faith, been forgiven, justified, sanctified and has received the gifts of love and the Holy Spirit. This means he is a person of holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth and love. None of these things exists without the other. This means he is a man or woman transformed, filled and led by the Spirit, even to discovering at his point of need that wisdom which he lacks;
- (c) is a witness to the truth, i.e. a person of the truth, because he has come to the truth. Witness in the early church was telling what one had seen and heard. No one can witness beyond what he or she has experienced. The witness is to the truth of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. It is 'telling the word of grace';
- (d) is a person of love, compassion and tenderness. This is part of 'doing the truth', i.e. 'truthing it in love'. All must be done in love (I Cor. 16:14), or it is worth nothing (I Cor. 13:1-3). Love is not emotional softness, nor mere sentimentality. No one should relate to another 'horizontally' who does not first relate 'vertically' to God (see I Thess. 1:5-6; 2:7-8, 11);
- (e) is a person who has suffered and suffers. II Corinthians 1:3-7 teaches that we can genuinely comfort others in their suffering when we ourselves have suffered;

- (f) is a person who ministers not from 'strength', but from 'weakness' (see II Cor. 3:5–6; II Cor. 12:1–10; I Cor. 1:25–31; cf. II Cor. 13:4). In this case his 'weakness' is his 'strength'. Needy persons are threatened by 'strength' (cf. Rom. chs 14–15; I Cor. ch. 8);
- (g) is a person of authority, i.e. is himself submitted to God 'from the heart' and is obedient to God's law. This one speaks from submission and does not 'lord it' over others (I Pet. 5:2–3; II Cor. 1:24). This means he lives in truth and love and can thus direct others. There may be occasions when the counsellor has to discipline another, in love, but this is different from 'lording it';
- (h) is a person who points to God—the Father and the Son—and not to himself. He is not 'father' and 'teacher' and 'master' (cf. Matt. 23:1–12). On the one hand he can say, 'Be imitators of me as I am of Christ', and yet not claim their personal following for himself, nor stand in the way of their *direct* relationship with Christ. In no way must he ever be 'mediatorial'. This does not mean he is severely detached from the counsellee, but also it means he is not sentimentally and emotionally 'attached';
- (i) is a person who believes in the sovereignty of God, i.e. who sees God working in all, and so does not see himself as a 'Mr Fix-it'. True wisdom helps us to see our own limitations but God's 'non-limitations'. Thus the counsellor is not hasty, fearful and despairing but believing, knowing that God is working even though in the end the outcome of another person's actions may prove to be judgement at the hand of God (see Prov. 16:4; with 1:7, 25, 29–30; 12:1; 15:10). The true counsellor will come to recognize he can accomplish nothing where the counsellee will not truly listen, particularly because his will is set against true counsel.

Let me stress that anyone can share the wisdom he or she has with anyone who needs it. In the early church all members shared their gifts with one another. They worked for, and with, all others and they served one another. Whilst some may have a special gift and skill for counselling, all can counsel, i.e. give helpful advice, assist in direction, and comfort and encourage one another.

Appendixes

Postscript

Bibliography

Appendix One

The Psychology of Conversion

INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY In our counselling it is essential to know the nature of conversion as it is set out in the Scriptures. This essay, which has been abstracted in total from my *For Pastors and the People**, is a sufficient treatment of the theme. Because there are many kinds of conversions in human experience, conversion can rightly be called a psychological phenomenon. Here we have treated it rather differently than we have other themes, but feel the material may be of value to counsellors.

NOTES ON THE THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION In the Old Testament the verb *shub* has the idea of 'to turn' or 'to return'. See Psalms 19:7, 51:13 and Isaiah 6:10. It is used generally for turning or being turned, without necessarily meaning 'conversion', but see the principle of turning from evil to good, in many cases. (See Concordance references in Ezekiel for the use of the term [*shub*], especially 18:30–32; see also Lam. 5:21, '

* NCPI, 1989, pp. 280–288.

Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned', *AV*; 'Restore us to thyself, O Lord, that we may be restored!', *RSV*.) We need to see the mutuality of returning and (being) restored.

In the New Testament the verb *epistrepho* (translated for *shub* in the LXX) is generally used for 'to turn' (see Matt. 13:15; 18:3; Mark 4:12; Luke 22:32; John 12:40; Acts 3:19; 28:27). This verb is really not used in the New Testament in a passive voice. It can be transitive and intransitive, but one must convert (especially Matt. 18:3; Acts 3:19; 26:18), i.e. one comes to conversion by deliberately turning around. This pertains to the psychology of conversion. So do *faith* and *repentance*—always associated with the total act of conversion.

The term *conversion* has come to be used of the total complex of the salvific act and experience which embraces conviction of sin, repentance, faith, forgiveness and cleansing of sins, justification, regeneration (the new birth), adoption, the reception of love, accorded holiness, and the Holy Spirit.

Summary of the Term 'Conversion' in the Old and New Testaments

It is helpful to see that the verb can be used transitively, intransitively, and reflexively, i.e. one can convert another, be converted, and convert oneself. This gives room for the work of God, the response of the will of man, and for one to turn oneself when commanded or motivated.

NOTES ON THE PSYCHO-THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION

Conversion, in society, is used for many things, such as conversion from one ideology, philosophy, diet, life-style (etc.) to another. It is obvious that a conversion experience can be partly influenced by elements brought to bear on the person who is converted. Technically speaking, conversion is a matter of the will. The will is influenced by a number of things, such

as necessity, pleasure, attraction, persuasion, threat, fear, and desperation. Whilst the will may be influenced, it is *relatively* free to make its own choice. Inner elements as well as overt influences help to make the choice. Even so, the choice is always that of the person. Conversion under stress or duress—e.g. 'brainwashing'—does not mean the will is irrevocably captured. We might note here that there is one dynamic which changes man directly and permanently, namely love. The direction of any conversion is determined by the type of love. Only God's love can bring about an authentic conversion.

A Biblical Ontology of Man in Relation to Conversion

Our thesis is this: Man and creation, having been brought into being as perfect (i.e. wholly functional), initially knew the system of innocence, i.e. guiltlessness. Through the Fall man experienced existential guilt, and has thus come into guilt for his committed sins. Guilt leaves him a prey to many elements, such as conscience, law, and accusation. Guilt (i.e. the guilt of sin) is itself dynamic, and man-in-sin (in guilt) seeks always to justify (vindicate, prove) himself, to escape the anguish of both guilt and shame.

Self-justification occupies the major part of man's operations in life. Because he has no basis of innocence on which to build self-proving (self-vindication, self-justification), he intensifies his guilt and shame by constant failure to be just (justified) before man and God. He is thus constantly open to accusation from himself, others (who are also in the competition for self-proving), and the powers of evil.

From the psychological insights into *brainwashing* we recognize that guilt (either true or false) builds up to a point where abreaction is precipitated. The main factors in the build-up of guilt to the point where it is beyond toleration are *conscience* and *the memory*. (Note that these two factors—conscience and memory—need to be explored.) Abreaction brings immediate—though not lasting—release from

guilt because the sins (faults, weaknesses) of the past are rejected, remorse for them is experienced, and some sort of personal expiation by contrition and turning from them brings a catharsis of the old, and so the mind is prepared for a new system. Obviously the new system is adjudged genuine truth (*sic*). W. Sargent, in his book *The Battle for the Mind*, gives detailed accounts of inducing this happening.* Since human beings can be wrought upon for brainwashing, we must recognize it as a phenomenological principle which can be utilized for good or evil.

Cultural and Christian Conversion Systems

Functional but Non-Christian Conversion Systems

The operation of brainwashing can be classed as a conversion system. The examples which Sargent gives of the tribal and cultural ways of dealing with accumulated guilt (my interpretation), such as the use of drugs,

alcohol, dancing, religious sacrifices, mystery teaching and rites, demagogic preaching and mob hysteria—amongst others—all show there is some kind of experience induced which leads—whether satisfactorily or otherwise—to some conversion experience or state. These may be temporary or otherwise. Both Sargent† and Kilpatrick‡ speak of *new birth* experiences open to devotees. Those desiring them seem dissatisfied with natural birth, and require some ritual which will rebirth them. Today there are psychological rebirthing therapies. Being cleansed and new appears to rehabilitate the devotee from the old, so that life begins anew.

The Christian Conversion System

My understanding is that the non-Christian systems of conversion and the Christian system are one

functionally, i.e. the psychological processes of both are identical. This would have to be so when considered ontologically, since man is essentially immutable, though provisionally mutable. As I would see it, the forces using or manipulating the conversion processes are either that of man and evil, or of the Holy Spirit.

If this is true then it would explain why certain functional (phenomenological) elements are common to non-Christian and Christian conversion. When one operates *apart* from the Spirit of God then its outcome will differ from the outcome of that which is operated *by* the Holy Spirit.

Note that the elements of conviction (of sin, crime, errancy, etc.), repentance, confession and faith are at work in both cases. New birth is part of the whole conversion complex, along with forgiveness, purification, justification and liberation.

Two Basic Thrusts in Conversion

The first thrust is the *ontological*, and the second the *soteriological*.

By *ontological* thrust we mean that man has a sense of things as they are essentially, i.e. ontologically. He can never be fully at peace when he is unontological or anti-ontological, which is why the person or system seeking to bring about conversion always has a leverage. In other words, he—the man being brainwashed—has always sensed that he is malfunctioning regarding certain actions, and so cannot be at ease in this life. Another way of saying this is that there is always the kick-back of guilt when one is not ontological. This at the same time relates to *existential* guilt, i.e. being an existent in a functional world but not measuring up—as a person—to what one ought to be. Objective guilt or guilt *de jure* (guilt-at-law) rarely tallies with guilt *de facto*, i.e. one's own subjective guilt feelings. Even so, the existent can be manipulated both by existential guilt and guilt feelings, and so can be brainwashed and converted.

The *soteriological* thrust is a matter for debate. God being God,

* Pan Books, 1957.

† op. cit., pp. 156–264.

‡ *Psychological Seduction*, Nelson, 1983, pp. 90–101.

has He always intended salvation for man, and has He put the salvific process into the world *by creation* (ontologically), or is the salvific process *provisional*? The Scriptures make it clear that God planned salvation prior to time and creation. Does God being Creator, Father and King imply He is innately Saviour and so has built the salvific process into creation and man, so that salvation is congruous with the nature of man and God, or is *grace* something quite different from the creational ontology? *Grace always appears to be linked with the restoration of that which has fallen from the ontological.* It appears to be outside that which is immediately ontological, but in that which is eschatological.

Given in that grace is not directly part of the ontological order, the *need* of grace will always be present, either as a felt need or as an element to be rejected by angry man because of his guilt and pride. In his pride he will always seek to register himself as just, i.e. justified by his deeds. His guilt will be rejected in the face of this pride since it implies imperfection and need. The only way out of guilt for this person is to intensify his self-justifying activities, and, by nature of the case—since guilt is ineradicable and innately dynamic—he will be a candidate for self-working abreaction, or an alien brainwashing system which is really a system promising ultimate and authentic salvation.

Conclusion Regarding a Biblical Ontology Relating to Conversion

We can conclude reasonably that man who is awry and displaced ontologically has a hefty matter with which to deal. Conversion systems which seek to lever those with existential and objective guilts must always succeed, even if only temporarily, because the manipulators seem to work towards the equivalent of the ontological, and thus have existential authority as their support system. The main weakness will be that such systems are not based on love, and do not work towards love. The persuaders and manipulators themselves are persons of guilt, and thus not in a position to achieve

authentic conversion. Only the Holy Spirit can achieve authentic conversion, even though the functional principles by which the Spirit does so are psychologically at one with what might be called religious and secular brainwashing. The goal of spiritual conversion is authentic, but the goal of the manipulators is not, even if it appears to have some justification in the immediate situation.

Christian conversion is a living system, since conversion is the constrained response to the love of God. By this love—explicated and outworked in and by the Atonement—man can receive authentic forgiveness, genuine purification, justification *de jure*, the grace of adoption, and respond to this offer by repentance and faith, thus ‘converting’, i.e. turn-ing himself from what was to what is now his, and which will one day be his, both *de jure* and *de facto*.

The area, then, in which to seek to understand conversion, is the theological one. The inner work of the Spirit will effect the steps, but to know the theology of sin, guilt, atonement and its ethico-moral fruits, the nature of faith, repentance, confession, and conversion is to be well equipped both in the evangelistic and pastoral elements of conversion ministry.

All of this (above) presupposes a biblical theology, anthropology, and cosmology.

SOME RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR THE THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION

Bible Dictionaries, manuals and Dictionaries of Theology. Articles on Conversion, Confession, Repentance, Faith, and the New Birth (Regeneration).

Bingham, G. *The Concentration Camp and Other Stories*. NCPI, 1983, pp. 55–95.

———. *Faith, Justification, Conversion, and the New Birth*. NCPI, n.d.

———. *The Justice-Men and the Great Rage*. NCPI, 1985.

Collins, Gary. *The Rebuilding of Psychology*. Tyndale Press, 1977.

Kilpatrick, W. K. *Psychological Seduction*. Nelson, 1983.

McKenzie, John G. *Guilt: Its Meaning and Significance*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1962.*

Routley, Erik. *Conversion*. Muhlenburg Press, 1960.

Sargent, W. *The Battle For the Mind*. Pan Books, 1957.

Appendix Two

The Principle of Accountability

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN GENERAL

The subject of accountability is a vexed one. It is the principle of being called to account for what one does. Most of us recognize accountability on the basis of the principle of responsibility, and responsibility has to do with authority, law and order. Paul recognized this when he said, 'Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God' (Rom. 3:19). Romans 7:1 says that 'the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth' (AV). On this basis we take it (i) that every human being lives under the principle of law, and (ii) that being under the law he is accountable for his actions. That is, an account is made out to him for his actions—whether good or bad. Hence Jesus said, 'I tell you, on the day of judgement men will render account for every careless word they utter.' This points us to the principle that we will be held accountable for everything we do.

There have been those who do not believe this fact. In Psalm 10:13 the wicked renounces God and says in his heart, 'Thou wilt not call to account.' Against this Paul says

* Compare this book with *The Concentration Camp and Other Stories* and *The Justice-Men and the Great Rage*.

(Rom. 14:12), 'Each of us shall give account of himself to God,' and adds in Colossians 3:6 that 'on account of these [evil things] the wrath of God is coming'. The writer of Hebrews urges his readers to obey those who have the rule over them, 'as men who will have to give account'.

It seems reasonable, then, to say that universally man has a sense of accountability, and accepts the fact of it, though he may fear what is coming to him. In Romans 1:24–31 Paul gives a long list of the sins that men do, and adds, 'Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practise them.' They may not care about accountability, but they do not deny its fact and reality.

WHO ARE ACCOUNTABLE?

We have claimed that all persons are accountable for their acts, but there is a universal protest which says

that only when a person comes to the age of accountability can he be held accountable for what he—or she—does. What, then, is that age of accountability? It is difficult to give an answer to this question.

In Genesis 25:22 it is said that Esau and Jacob 'struggled together' within their mother's womb. It appears that the two were struggling for supremacy the one over the other. In other words, they were aware of life, and each sought to establish his supremacy. There is much spoken in Isaiah about Jacob and his mother's womb, but in 48:8 it is said, 'from birth you were called a rebel'. This recalls Psalm 58:3, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies'.

On the positive side Jeremiah is told by God, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' Paul claims that he was separated by God from his mother's womb to preach the Gospel to the nations. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit 'even from his

mother's womb' (Luke 1:15, 41). On account of both good and evil it appears that the child is conscious in the womb and makes decisions which affect its life. Recent research into the pre-natal activity of the foetus in the womb seems to be supportive of these Scriptural accounts.

The answer to the question heading this section seems to be, 'All of us are accountable, and from the womb if not within it.' Whilst many will debate such a statement, the truth is that we are often deceived by the smallness of a child, thinking its will is not developed, when in fact will is something which is asserted at all ages without variation in insistence. The further elements of man being born in sin (Ps. 51:5), and being in Adam (Rom. 5:12ff.), have to be taken into consideration. Whilst we may argue for varying degrees of culpability, we must recognize the accountability we demand of children, as well as of adults.

THE DOCTRINE OF VICTIMIZATION

All humans beings are prone to self-justification. When we fail, we seek to rationalize away our failure. We are prone to blame four things (amongst many others) for what is our seeming failure, namely: parental up-bringing, heredity, environment and circumstances. 'These', we say, 'have conditioned me to be what I am.' In fact these four things, of themselves, have not conditioned us at all. It is our reactions and/or our responses to these four things which have brought us to our present frame of mind. We make our own decisions and choices, and must stand by them.

It is often common practice these days to pity folk whose parental upbringing, heredity, environment, and circumstances of life have seemed heavily adverse to them. We tend to treat them as victims of life, and this is not, in the long run, truly helpful. It more or less indicates that we think them to be flotsam and jetsam tossed to and fro on adverse tides. James Denney, in speaking of heredity, said, 'What we inherit . . . may be said to fix our trial, but not our fate.'

This would also apply to the other three elements we have mentioned. If we face the four things positively they may assist us in developing rich and strong characters. Joseph commented to his (formerly) persecuting brothers, 'As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.'

If we persist in simply pitying people instead of encouraging them to face adverse elements and win through them, then we will be doing a great disservice to them. Probably it is because we would pity ourselves in similar situations that causes us to be this way. The example of the mute, blind and deaf Helen Keller should help us to see that a human being—if she wills—can be incredibly resilient, and can win through under even enormous odds. We should drop the 'pity syndrome' for one of tenacity and encouragement. 'Hurt', it has been said, 'is a mixture of self-pity and anger.'

The Sins of the Fathers In Jeremiah 31:29–30 and Ezekiel 18:1–32 we hear God telling Israel that the children cannot blame the parents for their present condition. Because God had said that He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation '*of those who hate me*, but [show] steadfast love to *thousands* [of generations] *of those who love me and keep my commandments*', His word has been misread. As is universal, children blame their parents for their problems and states of life. In both prophetic sections God stated the principle of accountability: 'Only the person who sins will die. The child will not suffer because of the parents, nor the parents because of the children. The person who sins *he* shall die.'

It is to be noted that when a generation turns from hating God and loves Him, then the entail of sin ceases. Likewise when a generation turns from loving God to hating Him and worshipping idols, then 'unto the third and fourth generation' commences. In Deuteronomy 24:16 God stated, 'The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor

shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.' The practice of this can be seen in II Kings 14:6 and II Chronicles 25:4, where the children of murderers were not killed for their fathers' sins.

THE PRACTICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN HUMAN LIVING

John the apostle once said:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That is, if we will accept our accountability for all that we have done, then life will be richer for it. When we try to rationalize away authority and law, it is so that we will not be convicted as sinners, i.e. of having sinned. If we take responsibility for all we have ever done, then—in the light of God's forgiveness—we can be free of it.

Again, if we abolish law, and refuse authority, then we are seeking to escape the need to fulfil the law of God. Micah said, 'He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' Moses (Deut. 10:12–13) had talked with Israel:

'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good?'

This statement presents no 'needs' therapy but a 'deeds doing' way of life.

Much of our modern way of life relates to needs which are many in kind, such as emotional, relational, and material. We feel we should have our needs fulfilled, and that we should help to fulfil the needs of others. Whilst there must be some truth in this approach, yet it is God who requires us

to be faithful, obedient, and those who fulfil His requirements. We are to 'fulfil the just requirements of the law' (Rom. 8:3-4), which approximates to what Micah told his people.

We must be requirement-fulfilling people, for as such we have moral being, true dignity, and can see ourselves as participating with God in His work and plan. We are not weak, lazy, lethargic and purposeless beings. Fulfilling 'just requirements' we are living properly the lives God has ordained for us, and doing the works He prepared for us to walk in and to do (Eph. 2:8-10). In fact we are growing into true human maturity. We are not victims of various adverse elements; we are not those caught in self-pity; nor are we those who stretch out our hands for spiritual welfare 'hand-outs'. We are those who seek to fulfil God's requirements of us.

The Value of Accountability The matters of authority, law and accountability are all inseparably linked. If we are not morally accountable for every deed and action of our lives, then we are not truly in the image of God. We therefore lack dignity, and as a result cannot dignify God, man, and the creation. If we face our failure as moral creatures who have not fulfilled the law of God, then we are admitting our accountability, and for this confession and repentance there is the gift of grace. Being liberated from past failures means being free to live in integrity.

It is this integrity which assists us to be true men and women, and to enjoy the vast network of relationships which is ours in this world, not only amongst Christ and his people, but in the whole race of humanity.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY

We have pointed out in our closing essay 'The Wonderful Counsellor and His Under-Shepherds' that the early church knew of no counsellor

which fits our present image of a counsellor. What the church did was to share its difficulties and its joys together as a community. In our heading immediately above we have hesitated to speak of the principle of the counsellor's responsibility, and undoubtedly there is one, and it is of a high order. Nevertheless, whilst some pastors are counsellors, not all counsellors are pastors. Even so, the material set out below should be valuable to counsellors. Also it will help them to understand the role and ministry of pastors, especially in regard to accountability. One of the modern therapies is 'Reality Therapy', and it is based on the total accountability of man for his own decisions, even from the cradle to the grave.

Pastors are appointed primarily by God and are answerable to Him. Paul's Pastoral Epistles are filled with injunctions, admonitions and warnings, and are a great resource for checking out our pastoral accountability. Another special passage is Acts 20:17-35, where Paul addressed the elders of the church of Ephesus at Miletus. In fact this passage in Acts speaks of Paul fulfilling his accountability. Peter also gives us an outline of our responsibility as pastors, in I Peter 5:1-4. I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7, 17; along with I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 2:7-9, cover much of the qualification for pastors, as well as pastoral care. Each element of qualification, as well as each element of responsibility, should be examined in great detail and scrupulously observed. There is always high accountability with high calling, 'Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required' (Luke 12:48; cf. I Sam. 15:13-29).

If we are interested in developing the archetype or paradigm of the true pastor, then we should study the elders in the Book of the Revelation. If we see the elders as the pastor-teachers of Ephesians 4:11, then we will gather the nature of true elders from the Book of Revelation. There the elders are given authority, are linked many times with the worship of God and the Lamb, are concerned with the prayers of the saints, are linked with the 144,000, are concerned for

John and the prophecy God has given him, and describe themselves as servants.

The pastor is the shepherd of the flock (Acts 20:28–33; I Pet. 5:2–3; cf. John 10:1–18; cf. Ezek. 34). Note Ezekiel 3:16–21 (esp. v. 18) and Acts 2:36, where the matter of accountability is of a most serious nature. A similar warning is in James 3:1. In the light of the sevenfold ‘I know your works’ of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 (cf. 2:23), and II Corinthians 5:10, we ought to take the matter of pastoral leadership most seriously (cf. Heb. 13:17).

Appendix Three

The Loss and Recovery of Truth

TRUTH ESSENTIAL TO TRUE HUMAN LIVING

THE NATURE THE TRUTH

Whilst science must deal with what **OF** it sees to be the facts—it is really the phenomenology of things as they can be examined—yet truth is more, and other than, the facts. The only truth we can know comes to us as biblical revelation. Science comes to us as the known facts, including the working and, where possible, the application of them to the human situation.

Romans 1:25 says that man ‘exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature [creation] rather than the Creator’. Romans 1:18 records that God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress (hold down) the truth. Man, in rejecting the truth, invented the lie and called it the truth. Since what is true is ontological, therefore man, in following the lie, must of necessity be in great distortion of understanding, dislocation of personhood, in great pain from being unnatural, and hopeless in untruthful existence.

The truth is really God Himself, i.e. who He is, what He has done, is doing, and will be doing. Man who has lost or abandoned the truth deliberately does not wish to retain God in his thinking, and compulsively serves the lie (untruth).

THE RECOVERY OF TRUTH

Through the message of creation, God's revelations through angels and theophanies, through His word with man, through prophecy and law, through covenants and other acts such as the creation of Israel, God has continually communicated the truth, though mainly to deliberately deaf ears!

In the incarnation, life, ministry, words, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, God has, in a special revelation, declared the truth. Truth is not only something we know, but something we do. Christ came to witness to the truth by being the truth and living the truth (John 1:17; 14:6; 18:37), and hence is called 'the faithful and true witness', but even so, the full communication of truth had to be by the Holy Spirit, whom Christ sent at Pentecost (John 15:25–26; 16:7–11; I John 5:7). The Spirit of truth brought the truth inwardly to man.

For us today the entire revelation as given by God is found in His Word, the Scriptures. These Scriptures are closed to the natural man (I Cor. 2:14), i.e. the one as yet not born again of the Word of God and His Spirit (John 3:3–6; 1:12–13; I Pet. 1:3, 22–23; James 1:18; I John 4:7–10).

Coming to the Truth of God, Man, and Creation

In earlier studies we covered some of this ground. Man regenerated comes to the truth of God and lives in it. Simply speaking, God is revealed as Creator, Father, King, Redeemer, and as the One who renews the heavens and the earth. In His work He creates, sustains, redeems and restores man, ultimately glorifying him.

All of these things are in the mind of man as he lives before God in the truth. He also recognizes that the creation, when fully restored, will be a further revelation of the full truth of God.

Man comes to belief in God by repentance and faith, which are occasioned by the revelation of God's love in Christ. Now his eyes are opened. He knows the truth.

Seeming Impediments to Knowing the Truth

Whilst the 'natural man' cannot know the truth, yet the 'spiritual man' can know it. I John 2:20–27 speaks of an anointing by which the believer knows all the truth, i.e. is able to recognize what is true and what is not true, though he may be short on knowing all the *details* of the truth.

Whilst the regenerate man knows this truth, he is not yet in 'the age to come', and can still be influenced in his thinking by deceitful sins, lusts, sinful humanity, Satan and evil powers, especially if he—even temporarily—reverts to his own (former) ways of thinking. He is always in danger of that (I Cor. 10:13; cf. Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:17–24). Only when man walks in the Spirit of God can he fully know the truth. Even the regenerate man is tempted to evade the direct truth, watering it down so that there is not strong confrontation. Truth makes tremendous demands, especially in the area of relationships.

MAN IS A RELATIONAL CREATURE AND PERSON, SEEKING PERFECTION

Man's Being Essentially Relational

Man is a child, subject, and creature of God. He correlates with God as Father, King, and Creator. To *know* the true God and His Son relationally is eternal life (John 17:3; I John 5:20). Ephesians 4:15 and context shows that man lives in the truth in a *relational* context (see also I Pet. 1:21;

I John 1:1–7; 2:7ff.; 3:10ff.; 4:7—5:3). This relational living is God with man, man with God, man with others, and man with himself. If man were confronted with what man truly was (as created), is now (as redeemed), and will be (as glorified), then he would be strongly confronted regarding his present way of living in love, faith, and hope.

Whilst this confrontation might prove to be painful, it would also prove to be gloriously liberating.

**Relational Inadequacy
Is Intensified by
Existential Guilt**

Because of what man (man and woman) is ontologically and through redemption, he carries with him existentially a guilt which he cannot eliminate. He thinks, ‘This is what I ought to be as a person, and I am not.’ This guilt drives him in one or more directions. It drives him to despair of himself, and to a sense of inferiority. It drives him to hate the God who created him, and to hate himself. Such hatred necessarily interferes with his relationships with others. He spends much time trying to justify and prove himself, endeavouring to be as he ought to be, or at least to take up the pose that he is perfect. Hence everything about him seems threatening, for he fails in his perfectionist endeavour but dare not admit it to himself.

**Guilt Leads to Compensatory
Endeavours and Living**

Existential guilt drives man to compensatory actions such as finding security in things other than God, who Himself is always seen as threatening, moralistic, demanding impossible things, and judgemental where we do not comply. The *love, joy, and peace* which are part of true human living are sought in the idols, in drug dependencies, in sexual pleasure, and in pleasures of other kinds. Objective guilts for obvious—and even hidden—sins breed guilt-feelings of pain, defilement, shame, loneliness, confusion, heaviness, rebellion, anger, fear of judgement, and other suffering. Such feelings compound

the acts of further sins so that the person is unable to halt the avalanche that is happening. Romans 1:18 describes this process as God’s wrath, going on to say, in verses 24, 26 and 28, that *wrath* is God *giving us up to our sins* and their consequent guilt experiences.

Something must happen to man to relieve him of, or liberate him from, his predicament. The matter is not merely psychological. It is spiritual and moral, and reaches into the most sensitive depths of our—now fallen—humanity.

**THE TRUTH DYNAMICALLY
LIBERATES AND RENEWS**

Jesus said that if we continued in his Word, the truth which he had heard from God (John 8:40), then man would become free (John 8:31–32). Speaking of the power of sin—which we have just described above—he announced, ‘If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.’ This truth is (i) the liberating power of the Gospel and Christ himself who works in it, and (ii) life as it is lived in the truth, i.e. godly living is the *way* of liberty, and the very *form* of freedom itself. This is because we come back to what is ontological through what is redemptional, and so we are ‘new creations’, and live in that way, i.e. the way of existential truthfulness.

Appendix Four

The Person and Purposelessness

THE GOD OF PURPOSE The will of God always presupposes purpose, as in Revelation 4:11, ‘thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created’. This links with Romans 11:36, ‘For from him and through him and to him are all things’, i.e. their nature and purpose are known only to Him. I Corinthians 8:6 says, ‘yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist’, whilst in Colossians 1:15–16 all things are created *through* Christ and exist *for* him. The ‘for’ in these cases must represent some purpose.

That God is a God of purpose is clear from various references in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 14:24–27; 19:12; 23:9; Jer. 4:28), but such purposes are *within* history, in certain localities and not *for* history as a whole. Beyond the localized purpose are the general purposes as they are in the primary purpose of God. These are linked with God’s counsel, i.e. His will devised in wisdom (see Isa. 25:1; 46:5, 8–11; cf. 48:12–16). Thus Psalm 33:11 says, ‘The *counsel* of the Lord stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations’.

It is in the New Testament that this principle is found so strongly in passages such as Ephesians 1:11, ‘who accomplishes

all things according to *the counsel* of his will’, and this relates to ‘the mystery of his will, according to *his purpose* which he set forth in Christ’ (1:9), which further relates to what He planned before time, i.e. that we should be holy and blameless before Him, and be His sons to the glory of His grace (1:4–7). It is further shown in Ephesians 3:1–12, where ‘the plan of the mystery’ of the universal Gospel is ‘according to *the eternal purpose* which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord’. So in II Timothy 1:8–9 Paul spoke of ‘the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own *purpose* and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago [from times eternal]’.

The Greek word for purpose is *prothesis*, i.e. a thesis set out beforehand. When we add I Corinthians 2:7—‘we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification’—then we conclude that there is a principle such as Proverbs 16:4 sets out: ‘The Lord has made everything for its purpose . . .’ In other words, *there is nothing purposeless in God’s plan, and it is ontological for man to desire to know the purpose of his life and to set about to do it.*

‘EVERYTHING FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE’

In line with Proverbs 16:4 is God’s observation of His creation when He had completed it, namely, ‘It is very good’, the ‘good’ meaning ‘pleasant’, ‘appropriate’, ‘functional’. This is the thrust of ‘God made man upright’ (Eccl. 7:29), and ‘He has made everything beautiful [appropriate, functional] in its time’ (Eccl. 3:11). Add to this the famous section of Ecclesiastes 3:1–9 beginning with ‘For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die’—etcetera—and we can see that all things are purposeful and functional.

‘Purposeful’ generally presupposes a goal, an end, a fulfilment. In Genesis 1:28–31, where man was given the

mandate to 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it', the idea of filling the earth presupposed an end or '*telos*'. The Scriptures in our first section of this study (above) show that God had His purposes for His creation from before time ('from times eternal'). Romans 8:18-25 shows that creation—which was subjected to futility in the bondage of corruption—will one day be released to its full functional operations. Likewise man will be glorified—which is God's ultimate intention for him. That goal will not be reached simply by creation, but also by redemption.

So then, it is built into God's creational plan that this salvific goal will be reached. Man—we believe—has intuitive understanding of this final *telos*, because he correlates to God the Father, Creator, and King as a child, a creature, and a subject. Furthermore, he has the necessity of God being Redeemer so that he can be redeemed. In other words, man is aware—even though he strives to suppress this awareness

—of the fact that no human being should be purposeless, i.e. goalless.

MAN MUST HAVE PURPOSE

It is built into man that he have purpose. The goal presupposes the fact of the way to that goal. Man must walk in some way. His true way must be God's way. In Psalm 119 this is the way of obedience to God's law. The law (*torah*) is itself 'instruction in the way'. If the primal couple had gone God's prescribed way, they would not have encountered death. Jeremiah 10:23 says, 'I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps'.

The Book of Proverbs refers constantly to 'the way', and in 14:12 says, 'There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death', whilst 20:24 says 'A man's steps are ordered by the Lord; how then can man understand his way?' The law is the way of life (Ps. 1; 19; 119), but then law also includes 'covenant'—covenant always being 'of grace'.

We conclude that *it is ontological for man to seek God's goal and walk God's way to it*, especially as he has promises from God that he will reach it, and is supplied with the grace he needs to reach it. In the New Testament Christ is called 'the Way', and his people are 'the people of the Way' (John 14:6; Acts 9:2; 24:14, 22).

MAN WITHOUT PURPOSE

Man without purpose is generally man without hope. Today, vocational guidance is a discipline which aims to help people who need guidance and direction. Viktor Frankl has strongly revealed how man needs a goal, even if it be a short-term one. Hope and a goal come together as part of the dynamics of human living. Whilst some people are anarchists and nihilists—and this probably because of anger, disillusionment and disbelief in a God who properly orders the world—yet many others are just bewildered, uncertain, and confused. It is these we seek to help with the doctrine of God's purposes, His promises and His goals for mankind. How can we give purpose—and so hope—to a person?

THE GIVING OF PURPOSE AND HOPE

As in all counselling, one can only be helpful when the person desires help, having come to the end of his or her tether. If we recognize that people are always rushing to the future to get away from the past and so have no real present experience in love, joy and peace, then the doctrines of salvation from the past aid in the present, and substantial hope for the future will be greatly helpful. In the light of this, the following should be pursued:

- (a) The teaching of God's purposes must be given, and the place of humanity in those purposes. We need a theology of purpose, promise and hope.
- (b) We need to see the causes of the person's hopelessness and purposelessness.

- (c) We need to recognize that having a hopeless past means no hope for the future. The doctrine of the cleansing of the past, God's total forgiveness (for sins past, present, and future) and His justification is greatly liberating, and must be taught by the counsellor, received by the person, and applied to himself.
- (d) A renewal in (i) the creational mandate, (ii) the redemptional mandate, and (iii) the personal plan that God has for His child, is required. This plan relates to God's goal in resurrection, eternal life, and glorification, but also relates to the immediate pattern of life of the person—God being with him. The person needs to recognize that each personal plan is within the corporate plan for God's people and His creation. Thus the context of the church for the healing from purposelessness—as in all other healing—is essential and most powerful.
- (e) We need to recognize that some people appear not to be caught in purposelessness and hopelessness because they constantly manufacture short-term goals which give them a temporary sense of purpose and goal, e.g. the farmer who was building larger barns, or similar persons who have immediate materialistic goals.

The same problems as are found in relation to other conditions, such as the disturbed conscience, chronic anger, and guilt of sexuality, will be found in purposelessness. What must be kept in mind all the time is the moral responsibility of every person for his or her life and decisions. The idea of being victimized—i.e. we are not responsible for what has happened to us as the result of action against us—must be strongly opposed. To sympathize with the person and lay the blame of their condition on these 'victimizing things' is unhelpful.

Appendix Five

The Dynamics of Justification for True Counselling

THE PLACE OF JUSTIFICATION IN SCRIPTURE

The doctrine of justification is about God justifying man by grace, apart from any works of man, and amounts to God's accounting a man to be righteous before the law *as though* he had not sinned, so that his sins are not counted against him, i.e. imputed to him. The justified man stands as guiltless before God. The term 'innocent of sin' does not quite apply, but 'as though guiltless of sin' and 'acquitted of guilt' are apt, and convey the idea of justification well.

The idea of justification is not a new one found only in the New Testament. The idea of being accounted righteous is met in Genesis 15:6: 'Abraham believed the Lord; he reckoned it to him as righteousness'. This act of justifying faith is taken as a paradigm by some writers of the New Testament, and Jesus used it (Luke 18:9–14). We say that the faith that Abraham had was not merely historical—i.e. he did not believe God as an intellectual assent of the mind—but his faith was dynamic. He believed God would do what He promised: he believed God was the God of action.

Later in the Old Testament the matter of justification

takes on various ideas, such as ‘deliverance’ and ‘salvation’, so that its action is dynamic, and is not merely forensic, i.e. the language of the law courts. Of course, anything in a law court can be dynamic. The justification of the accused is one of the most dynamic events a defendant can experience!

In the New Testament justification is a most significant teaching. Many scholars believe that it is Paul’s primary teaching, and it may well be. Paul presents many doctrines, but somewhere—sooner or later—we see them link up with justification. The study entitled ‘The Liberation of Grace’ (pp. 195–200) deals with the subject, even if not at great depth.

THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION

In Romans 1:18 to 3:31 Paul opens up the subject by showing:

- (a) That all men are under the wrath of God, and this wrath is known as guilt and felt in the conscience of human beings;
- (b) that the self-confident Jew—like the Gentile—is a sinner before God, and he, too, is under wrath;
- (c) that justification is that righteousness of God by which He accounts a sinner as righteous before the law and Himself, because of the propitiatory work of Christ on the Cross;
- (d) that this work does not bypass, ignore or nullify the law; rather it confirms the law;
- (e) that the reception of God’s justifying righteousness is by faith, but the act of justifying through the Cross is of grace, and the offer of it is of grace. Such grace draws the response of the believer. The work of the Cross is the sufficient basis for justification, since Christ bore the penalty of the law where it was transgressed, the wrath of God where it was upon the sinners. And all sins were included in this event, even sin which God had seemed to pass over in history.

We cannot understand these points of Paul unless we realize the law of God is eternal, and the infraction of it carries

judgement which reaches beyond the temporal existence of man upon the earth. The law is not simply ‘the law’. It is ‘the law of God’, i.e. sin against the law is sin against God, and in fact each sin is a terrible violation of His holiness. All sin is a sin against God, in which case, as Paul says to God, quoting David in Psalm 51:4,

*That thou mayest be justified in thy words,
and prevail when thou art judged.*

God has the right and the responsibility to judge and punish man for his sins. He does not forego this right but exercises it in the Cross—as He wills to so do because of His love—and thus Christ bears the weight and suffering of God’s wrath on sin, so that man might now be rightly and properly justified.

Along with the fact of man under wrath is the reality of the human conscience (cf. ‘Conscience in Crisis and Comfort’, pp. 104–115). Conscience relates to law. When man is guilty his conscience works in one way, and it is a way which brings much suffering to a person. When a man is justified, the conscience—far from accusing man—greatly aids him in living. Law ceases to be an entity on its own, and an accusing enemy. Because of the grace of justification it is seen as the very law of the living God Himself, and so is warm and personal, and provides much comfort to the believer, as well as instruction and light for the path in which he walks.

THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND OUTWORKINGS OF JUSTIFICATION

These are things the counsellor must know. He must first know them in his own life so that he can share them with his counsellee. We all know that every human being automatically justifies himself when accused of anything. He has an inbuilt self-justifying mechanism. He is versed in its technique. In order to save himself from the pain of accusation—which is an accusation of inferiority and

inability to achieve—man excuses, i.e. justifies, himself. He probably spends more man-hours on this operation than on any other activity. *When man is justified, he is justified once-for-all, so that he now never needs—not ever again—to justify himself.* This is an incredible but true fact. Being justified, he need never again come to his own defence. If he is wrong or has done wrong *he is now free to admit it.* If he has not done wrong he does not have to waste time defending himself. This fact can bring enormous relief to a person. It can save him endless time.

The justified man can now face life without having to win an argument or prove himself by what he does; he does not have to beat another or reach any goal or attain to any height. The self-justifying drive has dissipated, and he must look to better and purer motivation to pursue any given course of action. Because he is not in competition with others he can view them calmly and objectively, and he can love anyone that he wills so to love. Ideally speaking, he is free from all ‘hidden agenda’.

Most of all, this justified person is not the victim of his (or her) past, is not morbid about the present, and can look forward to a free and worthwhile future. Since all his sins have been drained of their guilt and moral pollution, and since he is accounted guiltless, the past does not dismay him. Indeed, he can walk back through it without fear or dread. Sins and Satan may accuse him, but he is free to face what was once wrong, knowing that his Lord has borne the wrath of that evil, and it is now sanitized, so to speak (cf. Isa. 1:18).*

For the counsellor who uses psycho-analytical techniques or ‘inner-healing’ therapy, an understanding of justification and its therapeutic power is essential. Since the conscience is the most sensitive and morally functional element of a person, knowledge of it is indispensable to every counsellor.

* At this point I would like to recommend two booklets of mine, *The Cleansing of the Memories* and *If We Say We Have No Sin*, NCPI, 1987.

LIVING FREELY IN AND BY JUSTIFICATION

Probably no one can assess the enormous value of justification in the life of a person. Immediately above we have explored it only minimally. A person who is renewed through justification (cf. Titus 3:4–7) is a different person. He (or she) is—so to speak—returned to being normal. All that belongs to normal man—i.e. guiltless man—is now present. Freed from the burden of guilt, persons can become freshened, hopeful, loving, enlightened, and they can also begin to be creative in areas of work and art in all its forms. It is no wonder that Satan and his evil powers are basically accusers, creatures which threaten, and if those methods fail, try to deceive and seduce. However, the fact is that justification is not so much a doctrine as it is *a Person!* It is Jesus Christ himself, for he was made ‘the righteousness of God’ and ‘we are made the righteousness of God in him’. That is, justification lives in us dynamically in the Person of Christ.

It is no wonder, then, that justification is a primary teaching in the New Testament. So valuable is it that if the counsellor proclaims it effectively he will not have much trouble with his counsellees. If they will hear him, then they can be freed from their troubles.

No wonder Paul cried, ‘For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of bondage.’

Postscript

The Healing of Indwelling

In other sections and essays of this book we speak of the personal indwelling of God as knowledge that will be helpful for counsellors. On this theme I would like to recommend my own work *The Everlasting Presence*.^{*} Some years ago I conducted a special denominational series with large groups of clergy, with the pretentious title ‘Trinitarian Counselling’. I had worked out a system in which I saw the personal need of human beings for a relationship with the Father (as sons and daughters), with Christ as the Son and Elder Brother, and with the Holy Spirit as Revealer of Father and Son, Communicator of love and power, and Leader in the daily actions of life. I remember one psychiatrist getting most excited. He said it made great sense for his own clinical therapies.

I believe this essay relates well to another, ‘The Source and Sense of All Relationships’ (pp. 84–91), and whilst it may repeat some of the material of that work, it has other aspects which could prove useful.

I start off, then, by giving an outline in regard to Divine and human relationships. The thesis is that all Divine relationships

within the Trinity can have—should have—their counterparts in human relationships. Since human relationships are the meat and matter of all counselling, theological sense can bring practical reality and healing.

A MATTER OF DIVINE AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

(a) Because man is made in the image of God, and is so the image and glory of God (Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1–2; I Cor. 11:3), he

reflects wholly the nature of God, whilst himself not being God. It is the image which gives him affinity with God. He is made in the image of the *Triune* God, and not just of one of the Persons of the Godhead.

(b) God is not a Divine Monad but has plurality. There are Three Persons of the Godhead. The fullness of Deity is in each of the Three, but not as to make them three Gods. The Athanasian Creed sets out Their fullness of deity by insisting on the co-equality of the Three without denying the diversity of Their Personalities.

(c) It is the Unity of the Godhead which is basic to all relationships. Called by some ‘the Triune Family’, ‘the Triune Community’, they have one central and integrating unity, they being Love and Love positing unity.

(d) Their Unity is known—as revealed in Scripture—because each Person is ‘other-Person centred’ or ‘other-Person *con*centred’. Thus the Son can talk of being ‘in the Father’ and claim that the Father is in him. John 17:20ff. is the *locus classicus* of this matter of One being in the Other, the result being total Oneness. The Three have total interpersonal relationships. Thus They are One. This can be seen by the fact that the Father is Son-concentred, and the Son, Father-concentred, and so on. In one sense each has His Being by reason of the object of His affections and yet are One Being together.

(e) This unity-in-love is demonstrated by the Father honouring the Son, the Son honouring the Father, the Spirit

^{*} NCPI, 1990.

honouring Father and the Son, and They (implicitly) honouring the Spirit. The Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, the Spirit glorifies Them both, and They glorify Him.

(f) Man made in the image of God must reflect this inner unity of the inner plurality of the Godhead. He too will be 'an other-person centred' creature. Whilst, by the Fall, man moved away from total mutual relationships with God and his fellow creatures (cf. Rom. 1:21–32), confusing and distorting those relationships, yet he has an essential thrust to true relationships, because he cannot *deny* the (ontological) truth of his humanity. Of course, he can *defy* it—which he does—but this is to his own hurt, hence the enormous internal and relational conflicts he has, which for some therapists are interpreted as demonic, so 'devilish' are they in their resultant hatred, anger and violence. The therapist must understand that these states arise from a denial of creational, relational structures of the person.

(g) When regeneration (forgiveness, purification, justification, adoption and the inflooding of the love of God) comes to a repentant person having faith in Christ, then there is a relational renewal. There is first reconciliation with God and, simultaneously, reconciliation with others, with the creation and with oneself. It is at this point that the relationships in the Triune Godhead are evidenced in the life of the believer, and this within the Community of Christ, the Church, which is really the Triune Community worked out in the fellowship of God's elect—His redeemed children. This should teach us that if the reconciling dynamic of the work of the Atonement, and openness to the work of the Spirit of God are not taught, known and experienced, then the radical renewal of the person will be impeded. If supportive and substitutionary attempts are made to assist the person which divert faith in the completed work of Christ and the applicatory work of the Spirit, then the healing and renewal of the person will be hindered and perhaps even staved off.

(h) When it is asked, 'How can the Relationships within the Divine Family—the Triune Godhead—be known and replicated in the human person?', then the answer must first be that the Son who came as Jesus of Nazareth lived a wholly human life, lived it without sin, lived it in the hurly-burly of man's depravity, the curse, the dynamics of guilt which manipulate human behaviour, and did it all without failing. He becomes the paradigm of true humanity, he explicates and reveals the inner relationships of the Trinity, and he works those out in terms of our humanity so that we can understand the *praxis* of them.

The second part of the answer to our question immediately above is that the person—by regeneration—is made into a new person. The new person naturally loves—'We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren' (I John 3:14)—i.e. loves God, loves others, loves himself (I John 4:19). The reconciliation has taken place. Even so, this does not take place without the coming of the Three Persons of the Trinity *to dwell in the new believer* (John 14:15–23). One way of saying this is that love comes to dwell in the new child of God, he abides in God and God abides in him, he dwells in God and God dwells in him. The following condensed excerpt from another essay treats the whole matter of indwelling—God's and Man's.

We come now in this part to the reality of relationships within the Divine Family, and thus with the relations we may have in this world—even in the face of contrary hatreds and divisions. It is the unity of which Christ speaks in John 17 and which can be effected only by the Triune Family indwelling Man, and Man indwelling Them. As we have said before, on numerous occasions, the unity of the Godhead was love, and this love manifested itself in the 'other-centredness' or '*con-centredness*' of the Persons in Their mutual relationships. Now Jesus is asking for them to be admitted into the relationships and actions of the Divine Family, being—so to speak—immersed in the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and so being 'one being with the Godhead', for nothing could be more intimate, domestic, unified and integrated than that. It is not simply that they will be located within the Divine Nature, or kept protected within it against hostile and contrary powers, but it is that they will participate in it, and

so will learn on the one hand the matter of relationships—always acted out in the on-going, forwards-moving purpose and plan of God. They will be living the family life, which, on the human level, is so well stated in the Lord's Prayer. All this is in accordance with the Lord's prayer in John 17:20–26:

'I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world.'

The whole matter of the mutual indwelling of the Members of the Divine Family, the indwelling of Them with Their elect people and persons, as also the people with Them, is a strong teaching of the New Testament, let alone of the Old Testament. In John 14:14–23 we have news that the Spirit, the Father and the Son will indwell God's believing people. Romans 8:9–11 insists that Christ and the Spirit of Christ must indwell the heart. II Corinthians 13:5 speaks of Christ's indwelling as the true test of faith. Galatians 2:20 says this is the case. Ephesians 3:16–19 speaks of Christ's indwelling by the power of the Spirit, and of the believer being filled unto all the fullness of God. Matthew 10:20 speaks of the Spirit of the Father in the heart; Galatians 4:6, of the Spirit of His Son in the heart; II Corinthians 1:22, of the Spirit being placed in our heart; likewise Romans 5:5 and II Timothy 1:14 speak of the Spirit's indwelling. On the matter of the people of God personally indwelling God, there is the matter of our passage above:

'I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be in us*, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'

The classic passage on abiding in Christ is, of course, John 15:1–17, but the key to this beautiful passage lies in some words Jesus had previously said to his disciples (John 6:56), 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.' This speaks of intimate but powerful involvement. The Pauline view of this relationship is 'through, by, in and with' Christ. There are some forty of these prepositions in the Letter to the Ephesians, either for being in Christ or Christ in his people. Of course, the figure—or reality—of the church being members one of another but together being in Christ—especially because they have been baptized by

one Spirit into one body—speaks of the same intimate relationship.

John, in his First Letter, says (2:6), 'he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.' He adds (3:24), 'All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.' He then goes on to make the rich statement (4:12), 'No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.' No less powerful are the verses 15 and 16 which follow:

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Perhaps the very plentiful nature of these Scriptures may dull our minds to the great subject we are discussing—'God with us. God in us. Us in God!' What a theme! How rich and wonderful it is. Having this intimacy we know God as Father, Christ as our Lord and Elder Brother—and he not ashamed to call us brethren. We also know the Spirit who indwells us and who is the Spirit of love, of unity, and of fellowship. How could we have other than good relationships?

(i) When we look at the effects of the Divine indwelling in us and our Indwelling God, we see the *first effect* is that *the image of God is restored*. Matthew 28:19 speaks of us being baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Whilst in some measure this restoration is a *process*—following its initial *crisis*—yet it is also a *status*. This is another way of saying—the *second effect*—that we can now have good relationships with God, man, creation and one's self. This—properly speaking—should mean the healing of all relationships. It certainly sets the basis for bringing the counsellee to such healing. There can, then, be nothing as dynamic as the Indwelling—as I have pointed out in *The Everlasting Presence*. The *third effect* is that the elements and attributes of the Three Persons—the true Godhead—work out in the lives of those indwelling and indwelt. By 'elements and attributes' we mean Divine truth, holiness, righteousness, goodness and love, with all those associated with them, such as experienced love, joy, peace, freedom, assurance and boldness—elements which

make for good relational living and for good experiences of the creation and people among whom we live.

**ELEMENTS OF
APPLICATION IN THE
MINISTRY OF INDWELLING
OF GOD AND MAN**

Much of the application of the matter of the Triune Family and human family relationships is explicit in the above material, and much of it, anyway, is implicit. Even so, a few elements can be noted, the first being that all Members of the Godhead are servants. They serve in creating and sustaining the universe and its creatures—celestial and terrestrial. Father, Son and Spirit serve in executing redemption and bring it to man. They serve as they press forward to ‘head up’, ‘fill up’, ‘reconcile’ and ‘harmonize’ all things. Thus, as God is the True Servant—or archetypal as some would say—so we need to be servants. Personalities are always disturbed when they do not follow a full functional life. If they refuse servanthood, fellowship, ‘other-person centredness’, honouring and glorifying others—all of which happens in the Godhead—then they cannot know the functional freedom of working out in the human scene the sorts of things that God does of Himself, and the sort of relationships God has with Members of the Trinity, and with creatures He has made. The counsellor who has some biblical knowledge and substantial theology can lead the counsellee to a place of full relational living.

What we have said also means that the counsellee must cease to think in anti-authority terms. Since the Father is in the Son, the Son in the Father and Both are in the Spirit and the Spirit in them, so what are called ‘authority hierarchies’ (cf. I Cor. 11:3) should not trouble the person. Since the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, and since the man is in the Father and the Son, and since the Son is in him, then an hierarchy ceases to be an arrangement which troubles us, and becomes a means whereby we understand

the functional outworking of life—in love.

This can be illustrated by Paul’s statement—or principle—in I Corinthians 11:3:

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and head of Christ is God.

Many an exegete has turned away from this verse muttering, ‘Hierarchy! Sheer hierarchy!’ Apart from the fact that hierarchy is presumed to be a bad thing when it may not be that way at all, turning away from hierarchy would be foolish if this was the way God thought things best to be. Now, with our knowledge of the internal relations of the Godhead—the inner sociality of the Triune Family—we can see that if Christ is in God, and God in Christ, and if the man is in Christ and Christ is in the man, and if the man is in the woman and the woman in the man, then what could be wrong about hierarchy? Nothing necessarily, for it is an hierarchy of relationships and not a mere ‘pecking order’. It is the contributory way of love.

It is possible, then, to see the reconciling, unifying, integrating elements that come from the living, creating and redeeming God. How the counsellor must know them in practice in order to share them in wise counselling!

Bibliography

- Achtemieir, Elezabeth. 'Female Language for God: Should the Church adopt it?' in *The Hermeneutical Quest*. ed. Donald A. Miller. Pickwick Publications, 1986.
- Adams, Jay. E. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973.
- . *Competent to Counsel*. Baker Book House, 1970.
- Alexander, Archibald. *Thoughts on Religious Experience*. Banner of Truth Trust, 1967.
- Anderson, Ray S. *Christians Who Counsel*. Zondervan, Oct. 1990.
- . *On Being Human*. Eerdmans, 1982.
- Barth, Karl. *The Christian Life*. Eerdmans, 1981.
- Berkouwer, G. C. *Man: The Image of God*. Eerdmans, 1962.
- Bingham, G. C. *Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?* NCPI, 1984.
- . *The Christian Meditator*. NCPI, 1986.
- . *Cleansing of the Memories*. NCPI, 1987.
- . *The Concentration Camp and Other Stories*. NCPI, 1983.
- . *The Conscience—Conquering or Conquered?* NCPI, 1987.

- . *Creation and Reconciliation*. NCPI, 1987.
- . *Discovering Your Identity*. NCPI, 1982.
- . *The Everlasting Presence*. NCPI, 1990.
- . *Faith, Justification, Conversion and the New Birth*. NCPI, n.d.
- . 'Fatherhood, Sonship and Family: Heavenly and Human', *Living Faith Study* No. 11. NCPI, 1975.
- . *For Pastors and the People*. NCPI, 1989.
- . *The God and Father of Us All*. NCPI, 1982.
- . *God, Man and Woman in Today's World*. NCPI, 1986.
- . *God's Glory, Man's Sexuality*. NCPI, 1988.
- . 'Grace and Life in the Scriptures', *Living Faith Study* No. 18. NCPI, 1979.
- . *Great and Glorious Grace*. NCPI, 1988.
- . *Hope Without Shame*. NCPI, 1987.
- . *I Love the Father*. 2nd edn, NCPI, 1990.
- . *I, The Man!* NCPI, 1983.
- . *If We Say We Have No Sin*. NCPI, 1987.
- . *The Justice-Men and the Great Rage*. NCPI, 1985.
- . *Living in Faith, Hope and Love*. NCPI, 1983.
- . *Man is—What?* NCPI, 1982.
- . *Man of Dust! Man of Glory!* NCPI, 1986.
- . *Man, Woman and Sexuality*. NCPI, 1986.
- . *The Matter of the Call or Calling of God*. NCPI, 1989.
- . *Oh, Father! Our Father!* NCPI, 1985.
- . *Practical Christian Counselling*. 2nd edn, NCPI, 1984.

- . *Shepherds of the Flock*. NCPI, 1985.
- . *The Splendour of Holiness*. NCPI, 1985.
- . *The Things We Firmly Believe*. NCPI, 1986.
- . *Truth—The Golden Girdle*. NCPI, 1983.
- . *Where I Love I Live*. NCPI, 1986.
- . 'The Wisdom of God and of Man', *Living Faith Study* No. 35. NCPI, 1981.
- . *The Wounding and the Healing*. 3rd edn, NCPI, 1990.
- Bobgan, Martin & Deidre. *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Bethany Fellowship, 1979.
- Boer, Harry. *An Ember Still Glowing*. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Brandon, Owen. *The Battle for the Soul: Aspects of Religious Conversion*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1960.
- Bridge, William. *A Lifting Up for the Downcast*. Banner of Truth Trust, 1961.
- Byrne, Brendan. 'Sons of God'—'Seed of Abraham' (Analectica Biblica 83), Rome Bible Institute Press, 1979.
- Cairns, David. *The Image of God in Man*. Collins (Fontana Library), 1973.
- Candlish, R. S. *The Fatherhood of God*. T. & T. Clark, 1866.
- Carey, George. *I Believe in Man*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1977.
- Carter, J. D. & Narramore, Bruce. *The Integration of Psychology and Theology*. Zondervan, 1979.
- Clark, Stephen. *Man and Woman in Christ*. Servants Books, 1980.
- Cole, Alan. 'The Gospel and the Kingdom: What are They?' in *Agenda for a Biblical Church*. vol. 1. AIO, 1981.

- Cole, Graham. 'Ordination of Women in Evangelical Perspective'. in B. G. Webb (ed.) *Exploration 1: Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*. Lancer, 1978.
- Collins, Gary. *The Rebuilding of Psychology*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1977.
- Conway, Ronald. *The End of Stupor?* Sun Books, 1984.
- . *The Great Australian Stupor*. Sun Books, 1971.
- . *Land of the Long Week-end*. Sun Books, 1978.
- Crabb, Lawrence. *Effective Biblical Counselling*. Zondervan, 1977.
- Darling, Harold. *Man in His Right Mind*. Paternoster, 1977.
- Davis, Charles. *Body as Spirit*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1976.
- Doyle, Robert. 'Created Male and Female: Sexuality, Personhood and the Image of God', in B. G. Webb (ed.). *Exploration 1: Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*. Lancer, 1978, pp. 43–58.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament* (2 vols). SCM, 1967.
- Evans, Mary J. *Woman in the Bible*. Paternoster Press, 1983.
- Foh, Susan T. *Women and the Word of God*. Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979.
- Forsyth, P. T. *Cruciality of the Cross*. NCPI, 1984.
- . *God the Holy Father*. NCPI, 1987.
- . *Marriage—Its Ethic and Religion*. Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.
- Fraine, Jean de. *Adam and the Family of Man*. Alba House, 1965.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. *Created in God's Image*. Eerdmans, 1986.

- Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. *The True Image*. Eerdmans & IVP, 1989.
- Jacob, Edmund. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1958.
- Jewett, Paul. *Man as Male and Female*. Eerdmans, 1984.
- Jungel, Eberhard. *The Doctrine of the Trinity*. Eerdmans, 1976.
- Kilpatrick, William Kirk. *Psychological Seduction*. Thomas Nelson, 1983.
- Kirwan, William T. *Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling*. Baker Book House, 1984.
- Kittel, G. (ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Eerdmans, 1967.
- Kline, M. G. Genesis in *The New Bible Commentary Revised*. IVP, 1970.
- Knox, D. Broughton. *The Everlasting God*. Evangelical Press, 1982.
- Koeteskey, R. L. *Psychology from a Christian Perspective*. Abingdon, 1980.
- Lake, Frank. *Clinical Theology*. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966.
- Leslie, Robert C. *Jesus and Logotherapy*. Abingdon, 1965.
- Lidgett, Scott. *The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life*. T. & T. Clark, 1902.
- . *Sonship and Salvation*. Epworth, 1921.
- Lloyd-Jones, Martyn L. *Healing and Medicine*. Kingsway, 1987.
- London, Perry. *The Modes and Morals of Psychotherapy*. 2nd edn, Hemisphere Press, 1986.

- Loymeyer, Ernst. *Our Father*. tr. J. Bowden. Harper and Row, 1965.
- Lyon, David. *Sociology and the Human Image*, IVP, 1983.
- McKenzie, John G. *Guilt: Its Meaning and Significance*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1962.
- Menninger, Karl. *Whatever Became of Sin?* Bantam, 1978.
- Morris, Paul. *Love Therapy*. Tyndale, 1974.
- Onions, C. T. (ed.) *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Pannenburg, Wolfhart. *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. Westminster Press, 1985.
- . *Jesus—God and Man*. SCM, 1968.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Genesis*. SCM, 1972.
- . *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols). SCM, vol. 1. 1975; vol. 2, 1965.
- Ringgren, Helmer. *Israelite Religion*. SPCK, 1966.
- Robinson, Wheeler H. *The Christian Doctrine of Man*. T. & T. Clark, 1952.
- Routley, Erik. *Conversion*. Muhlenburg Press, 1960.
- Ruether, Elizabeth. *Womanguides: Readings towards a Feminist Theology*. Beacon Press, 1985.
- Rushdoony, R. J. *Politics of Guilt and Pity*. Thoburn Press, 1978.
- Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *The Role of Women in the Church*. Moody Press, 1978.
- Sargent, W. *The Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brainwashing*. Pan Books, 1957.
- Shedd, Russell Philip. *Man in Community*. Epworth, 1958.

- Smail, Thomas. *The Forgotten Father*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1980.
- Solomon, Charles R. *Counseling with the Mind of Christ*. Fleming H. Revell Company, 1977.
- Southard, Samuel. *Theology and Therapy: The Wisdom of God in the Context of Friendship*. Word Books, 1989.
- Sparks, H. F. D. 'The Doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood in the Gospels' in *Studies in the Gospels*. Oxford, 1955.
- Stafford Wright, J. *Mind, Man and the Spirit*. Paternoster Press, 1972.
- Sykes, J. B. (ed.). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Szasz, Thomas. *The Myth of Psychotherapy*. Doubleday, 1978.
- Van Til, Cornelius. *The Psychology of Religion (Defense of the Faith, vol. 4)*, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1971.
- Vellanickal, Matthew. *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings* (Analecta Biblica 72). Rome Biblical Institute Press, 1977.
- Verny, Dr Thomas & Kelly, John. *The Secret of the Unborn Child*. Sphere Books, 1982.
- Vitz, Paul. *The Cult of Self-worship*. Eerdmans, 1979.
- Williams, Stephanie. *Doorways of the Mind*. Lorien, 1986.
- . *Beyond Evil*. Lorien, 1989.
- Wilson-Kastner, Patricia. *Faith, Feminism, and the Christ*. Fortress Press, 1983.
- Wright, Stafford. *Mind, Man and the Spirit*. Paternoster, 1972.
- Zizioulas, John D. *Being as Communion*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.