

COUNSELLING FOR OUR COMFORT

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

The Matter of Counsel

Words have a way of meaning one thing in one age, and of changing that meaning in another. The noun for counsel in the O.T. (*etsah*) simply meant 'advice', but advice that came out of wisdom. In the N.T. 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—with a view to useful personal decisions and actions. For the purposes of our course 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 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 in that the counsellee can accept what will be helpful for him.

In all our studies we will assume the limited wisdom of us as persons, our inability to be 'Fixit persons', and yet 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 recognise 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 20th. century, and in order to put the record straight we make the following observations,

- (i) People have always been helped by other people. We have not had to wait until the 20th. 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.
- (ii) The Christian church has always had the work of 'the cure of souls'.
- (iii) The ministry of the healing of persons—i.e. not only of organic diseases—has always been part of its programme. It has always sought to bring comfort to people.
- (iv) The church has always recognised 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.
- (v) It 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.
- (vi) It 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 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!
- (vii) 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.
- (viii) 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.
- (ix) 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.

- (x) 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 privatise 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.
- (xi) 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.
- (xii) 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 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 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.

STUDY ONE

*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 (Psa 51:5) says she conceived him 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.’¹

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 seems 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 too it realistically to be part of human—albeit fallen human—being.

¹ 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 your 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 rule 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 4:6 ‘desire’ could mean ‘Desire to rule’, i.e. over her husband. Whatever the case the child would be 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 enter into an ideal world!

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 all 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 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; 15:14 and 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 forbears 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 fourth generation of them that hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousand that 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 9 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 Victimised

In laser 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 counsellee has been victimised 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 it. No matter how dreadful the elements which seem to come against it, the will can refuse to be victimised, 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

1. 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. When Esau was born first 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 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.²

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 your Creator in the days of your youth,’ probably meaning ‘from the womb’. David pleads, ‘Remember not the sins of my youth,’ (Psa 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.

2. 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.

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 bitter root’. 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; 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 mew 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.

² 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 even 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 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 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 nations . . .' 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 is 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 in him in Psalm 8:3—8 where the psalmist asks wonderingly—as he goes 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 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 (Eccles. 11:5) 'As you do not know how the spirit come 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 139:12—18, 'In the light of your omnipotence and omniscience that I have spoken of in previous verse, I now see omnificence*. You have made every part of me, especially as these parts make me powerful as a man. I did not form 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 whom, 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 also 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 (a) his being in God's image and (b) the entail of sin, then we will not realise 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' (Eccles. 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 ever human being. Nevertheless the entail of sin must be faced fully, and the nature of grace be examined.

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 the situation in the mother's womb, or the problems of a difficult birth 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.

STUDY TWO

*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 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 O.T. 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.'³ 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.⁴

³ For these references and others see my monograph 'The Conscience-Conquering or Conquered?' (NCPI. 1987).

⁴ *ibid*

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 acknowledged. 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 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 as 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 wrong being 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 realise his guilt sense come 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 to your consciences.' He also speaks of 'the testimony of our conscience,' claims 'I have lived before God in all good conscience to this day,' and says he has 'a clear conscience toward God and toward men'. He also claims 'I serve 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.

Two 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

- (i) **A good 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 Timothy 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 the 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).

- (2) **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.
- (3) **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.
- (4) **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 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 bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.' The conscience then is only trustworthy in the Holy Spirit. This is assuming it is a the 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 understand 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,

- (i) 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).
- (ii) 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).
- (iii) 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 (a) John 14:15; II Corinthians 5:14; I John 2:3—6, and (b) Romans 12:8—10; Galatians 5:13—14; James 1:22—25: 2:8:13; I Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2.
- (iv) 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 one'.
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 judgmental 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 and He is (Rev. 22:4) and he will be like Him.

(c) Geoffrey Bingham, 1988

- For these references and others, see my monograph *The Conscience-Conquering or Conquered?* (NCPI, 1987).

STUDY THREE

*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 recognise 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 recognise 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 is the fact 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 recognise 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'⁵, generally where injustice has been done. This seems to be covered by Paul's 'Be angry but do not sin. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' 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.

⁵ See my small book, 'The Justified Men and the Great Rage' (NCPI, 19)

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 6:21-22 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 everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire.'

This is a strong warning. Jesus may be saying that anger can-even will-lead to murder. The judgement of a court deals 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 demeanor worthy of being cast into hell! So much then for the dreadful nature of anger. (Note. Old manuscripts of Matthew 5:22 said, 'But I say to that every one who is angry with his brother without a cause shall, etc.' but the best MSS do not include this.

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 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 tradition enemies of Israel!

Dealing With Anger

It has been said that anger can be dealt with by expressing itself, or by suppressing 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 (a) the person comes to see God as love and is (b) motivated to love instead of have 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,

- (i) Man created in God's image of love, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth, has fallen into orbiting around himself-not around God and others.
- (ii) He is a guilty person, essentially idolatrous, seeking to work out his own plans.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) Because of guilt man-alienated from God-fear 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.
- (v) 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. Her 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 become 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 (*quinah*) catches up the ideas of zeal, jealousy, envy, passion, 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 *quinah*. The Gospel is 'good news' and it is new 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.

Note: We have mentioned that persons often see 4 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 4 things. This is not true: Their reactions to these 4 things have certainly conditioned them, but they did not need to react. They could have faced these 4 elements and triumphed. It is often helpful to show that man can triumph over adversities.

STUDY FOUR

*Wisdom For Life***WHAT IS WISDOM?**

This is not an easy question to answer. The Oxford Dictionary says, 'Being wise, (possession of) experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically; sagacity, prudence, commonsense.' This is a reasonable coverage. We recognise 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 deep understanding,' (Dan. 2:20-23; cf. II Sam. 14:20; Prov. 21:30) and this seen in his gift of wisdom to Solomon. His word and thoughts are above those of men (Isa 55:10-11). Who-amongs men can teach wisdom to God? None-see Romans 11:33.

God's Wisdom and Creation

O Lord how manifold are they works! In wisdom thou hast made them all (Psalm 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 and Jer. 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 understanding' 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) are 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 'trust 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 ask 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 our life in Christ Jesus whom God has made to be to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption'. Elsewhere Paul says 'all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell' in Christ. He said of Christ, 'In him are hidden 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 Christ. Planning Christ to be the means of man's salvation 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 20:26).⁶ 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 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, '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; Eccles. 7:25; 8:9, 16.

⁶ 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).

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 denouement 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.

Addendum to Study Four, 'Wisdom for Life'

TWO WORLD VIEWS AND TWO WISDOMS AND THEIR TENSION

Our Study Four is quite brief, too brief, in fact. 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 the 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 call '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 time 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 man 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 to 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' (Isaj1:2).

The Matter of Mysteries

Moses told his people, 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things revealed belong to us and to our children 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 30 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’, and ‘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 receives not the things of the Spirit’ (I Cor. 2:12; 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 an 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.

Note: 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 be helpful. The Living Faith Study No. 3fr-‘The Wisdom of God and of Man’ (NCPI, 1979, pp. 16 A4) covers the two wisdoms. A mini-theology is given in ‘The Practice of Christian Counselling’ (NCPL 1984) on pages 8-22, and in ‘God’s Glory: Man’s Sexuality’ (NCPI, 1988) on pages 17-29. My ‘The Things We Firmly Believe’ (NCPI, 1985, pp332) 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 fool-proof, 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.

STUDY FIVE

*The Cleansing of the Memories***RAPPED 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 had 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 neutralised 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 it 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 remember the dead unlooking nature of their eyes, the eyes being sunken in the head so that the very skulls 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.

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 past passing to the future. 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 may 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 is clear from the past and there is rich hope for the future.

From all of this, then, we can see the need to attend to 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 (Psa. 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 men'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).

What comes out of a man defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, pride, slander, foolishness. All these things come from within, and they defile a man.

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 5:26 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. (Psa. 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. Psa. (38:3-4).

For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to 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. (Psa. 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 Bath-Sheba, 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. Was me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!' (Psa. 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

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; Mic. 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 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 the renewing of 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, so freeing us from them,

This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and 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 unto 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 died for our 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, ‘Thou your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall become like wool,’ is a powerful-almost incredible promises. 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 no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.’

The counsellor must be sure he has nothing about which to counsel, except to counsel 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 the basis for Satan, others, and one's self to accuse! (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 their sin I will remember 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 at 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 7:11 is apt, 'Who is a God like unto 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, and 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 counsellee 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.' 'Lo, it was for me 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 powerful thing about it is that once experienced-i.e. the self-loathing and reception of purification-the one can go back into the past without any fear or apprehension. Its guilt dynamic has been neutralized. The past is no longer a reproach.

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 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 neutralised and purified lies in our preparedness to face up to what has been sin, error and failure in our lives and look it clearly in the eyes and acknowledge the whole of it. If we do this then 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 rationalise 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. 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!

NCTM Counselling for our Comfort; Sat. 1st Oct. 1988; Grant Thorpe

STUDY SIX

The Comfort of Continuing Covenant

COUNSELLING FOR OUR COMFORT

The matter of God's covenant with sinners properly includes all of God's saving revelation to us. Our Bible is broadly divided into an Old Testament (covenant) and a New Testament (covenant).

God made covenants with Israel, all of which have found their culmination in the New Covenant established by Jesus Christ and sealed with his blood (Luke 22:20). By this covenant, we are established in God's favour, assured of his care in the world, and have hope for the final revelation of his peace.

The covenant is made specifically with his own people, but it is the only means of blessing in a cursed earth, so all are subject to its dynamics—or the lack of them, and all must hear the terms of the covenant (Rom. 10:12—13).

It may not be appropriate for a counsellor to mention covenant, but he or she must know and proclaim the dynamics of covenant to settle otherwise necessarily anxious sinners.

The Initiative of God and His Christ

This revelation comes to us, not so much as a proposition, or an idea, but as the saving actions of our God, confronting us where we are, and declaring to us that, by his grace, he has established a covenant between himself as the holy God and ourselves as sinners.

God has taken the initiative to provide security for sinners. If we take the initiative, we will be forever vacillating as to what is the best way to proceed in life or religion.

God's covenant with us is a unilateral declaration, made by him as Lord, to make it clear to those conquered how things are now arranged.

As such, the covenant secures us in the favour of God—even though we are sinners, so that we can relate to God, and so that his purpose can be accomplished in us.

God had promised that all his purpose would be accomplished by David's great successor—the Christ (Ps. 2). By the Davidic covenant fulfilled in Christ, we have a Lord over all evil and its consequences (Acts 2:29—32; 3:11—21; 4:24—31; 5:30—32).

All our life tells us that we need to be managed/cared for: both creationally and redemptively, we need to be shepherded. There are loads that must be borne for us in order that we may bear the load that is ours to bear (cf. Gal. 6:1—2).

The God of peace has raised him from the dead, so assuring the reign of peace for all his people (Heb. 13:20—21).

The Blessing of God—for Creation

Great anguish is caused by people attempting to establish themselves in a cursed earth and as condemned people.

Our awareness of our problems in life arise from a perceived absence of the blessing of God on our persons, relationships and vocations. For lack of this we tear at others, strain ourselves, hate God and so, do much damage.

From the beginning, the blessing of God has been necessary to our life (Gen. 1:28; 5:2; barak = 'to endow with beneficial power'). We have no lasting alternative but to live by the favour of God. This is essential to human life and vocation—looking to God for 'all that is necessary to life and godliness' (II Pet. 1:3).

Given our sinfulness, we cannot expect the favour of God. Some promise was given to people up to the time of the flood, and some hopes entertained (see Gen. 3:15; 4:1; 5:29; with 9:20).

We may note that, without the assurances of covenant, people are more inclined to a 'curse' mentality than to a 'blessing' mentality—pessimists rather than optimists, and, that if they are optimists, they have the merest of bases on which to rest their hopes.

The covenant of preservation made with Noah (Gen. 8:20—27) assures the race (through Noah) of reliability in seasons and crops (Gen. 8; Acts 14, 17). But we remain unassured of this until our conscience is settled.

The Blessing of God—by Covenant

The blessing promised to Abraham relates to all peoples (Gen. 12:1—3). By it, the people of God have been established—the people through whom the promised seed has come, to undo the curse (Gal. 3:8, 13—14).

Given the blessing of God, our forefathers had adequate desire and power to live with purpose and principle (e.g. Abraham; or Joseph; cf. Jacob).

This covenant is now established by Christ (Acts 3:25—26). He has blessed us with nothing less than abolishing the curse that stood against us, and by turning us from our wickedness.

God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3), granting to us everything that is necessary to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3).

The Problem of Covenant Unfaithfulness

What basis for comfort is there in a covenant relation in which we know ourselves to be unworthy?

Abraham was called to obey God and was called the friend of God. As his covenant partner, God tutored him and disciplined him, so that in some way, he reflected the nature of God.

The Mosaic covenant set out the terms of continuing covenant relation with God and spelt out a list of the blessings and curses appropriate to faithfulness or unfaithfulness (Deut. chs. 27—28). Israel consistently proved themselves unworthy of their high calling.

A Covenant of Peace

Peace is the blessing of God on the keepers of his law, but given our unfaithfulness, what hope of continuing peace do we have?

Israel's prophets discovered that God would bring peace to his people, meaning the ending of hostilities against them (e.g. Isa. 54:9—10; cf. 57:15—21). God would remain true to his promise even though his people failed him.

The new covenant would not be like the old one—which led only to condemnation. The law would be written on the hearts of his people, their sins would be forgiven, and they would know God (Jer. 31:31-34).

It is this particular covenant promise which Jesus fulfilled in the breaking of his own body and the pouring out of his own blood—for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 22:20).

The new covenant is effectively Israel's covenants fulfilled by Christ (II Cor. 1:20). He is the faithful covenant partner, in whom the law is fulfilled, and fulfilled in us—is written on our hearts. In him, we remain as the faithful covenant people who attract the blessing of God, and who await the full outworking of God's purpose.

Paul taught Gentiles that until Christ secured them in covenant relation with God, they were alienated from God, were without hope, and hostile to the people of God (Eph. 2:11—18). In fact, they were dead, they were subject to evil powers, and to passions, and were children of wrath.

The great personal torment of being excluded, and all of the social dilemma of hostility between those included and those excluded was brought to an end in Christ.

Only such a God of peace can provide the context in which the matter of our living can be arranged, or re-arranged. As sinners we can provide no stability or order for ourselves or others, no assurance of a favourable outcome to our works.

A Covenant Bringing Us to Faithfulness

The covenant God has made with us does not rely on our faithfulness, but brings us to faithfulness. God has written his law on our hearts (Heb. 8:8—12).

The covenant under which our relation to God is secured calls us to faithfulness, but assures us at the same time that it is God who will establish us (Heb. 13:20—21).

By the Gospel—which is the fulfilled Abrahamic covenant, God has effectively turned us from our iniquities (Acts 3:25—26).

Both we and those with whom we deal must stay within the terms of the covenant, which means continued reliance on Christ, and eagerness to express that reliance in good works. This matter needs to be gone over again and again because of our propensity to revert to some system of self-justification and an ingrained unbelief that the Gospel can really help when it comes to practical matters.

We need to be assured (and to assure others) that we are able to do all that the covenant requires of us; that this is not the basis of the covenant, but its expected outcome. Those who are careless of these matters have forgotten that they have been purged from their old sins (II Pet. 1:8—11; cf. Matt. 5:18—20); they need to be assured of the serious intent Christ has in putting away, or making an end of, our sins.

We are in Covenant Relation to God as Father—not to the Idols

The essence of covenant is that God is our God and we are his people (Exod. 19:5—6; II Cor. 6:16—18). He has shown us that not even our sins have been able to annul his purpose for us (Isa. 63:7—8, 15—17).

Therefore we should turn from idols—from any part of the creation considered apart from its Creator, and from any thought that they—or it—could provide us with a frame of reference for our life (I John 2:15—17; 3:1—3).

God chastens those who are his children to ensure that they receive all the blessings granted to the righteous (Heb. 12:5—11).

Christ's Covenant Actions Have Given us an 'Anchor'

Hebrews which shows that Christ has fulfilled all of Israel's history and expectation, shows that Christ has entered God's very presence, on our behalf, giving us 'an anchor' for our soul (Heb. 6:19). He intercedes for us constantly (Heb. 7:24—25). We have a purified conscience (Heb. 9:14—15; 10:10).

The Covenant Is for Now—but Has Future Orientation

The covenant means we can be assured of God's favour in the present, and can expect that this may well be reflected in our health, the prospering of our vocation and promotion of family unity—but never these things apart from the larger purpose of God.

Futility and suffering are still to be our lot, but they are taken up in the greater purpose of God. The sufferings of this present time will never be worth comparing to the glory to be revealed to us.

The readers of Hebrews were inclined to trust in an externally oriented and socially safe frame of reference. The writer exhorted them to live in the covenant of grace secured by Christ; this was, and is, the only true context in which a person can have peace of conscience and can please God (Heb. 13:20—21).

STUDY SEVEN

*The Dynamics of Sexuality—For Sinners Only***INTRODUCTION: A TITLE IN HUMOUR****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 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 only!

[Insert For Study 7 'The Dynamics of Sexuality—For Sinners Only](#)

[\(Insert between paras. 1 and 2 on page 1\)](#)

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 21–23 he speaks of the shift to idolatry, and says 'Therefore God gave them up (*paredoken*: 'abandoned up') in the lusts of their hearts to the dishonouring of their bodies amongst themselves, because they exchanged the truth about (to theou; 'of God') God into 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, and 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 outside 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 there 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 or 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 place⁷ 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.

⁷ See my *Man, Woman and 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 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 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.

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 (a) 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 (b) 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.⁸ 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 of understanding because we are sinful persons. We all fell in Adam. The Adamic and Eve 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 child-birth. 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, 'Sin's desire is for you', i.e. 'to rule over you'.

⁸ 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.

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 fulness 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:

- (i) All creation was a perfect functional whole (Gen. 1:31; Eccles. 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 (a) to God, and (b) to one another.
- (ii) 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’.
- (iii) 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’.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) 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 deprived 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.
- (vi) 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’ (NEB), ‘his 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 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, homo sexuality, 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.

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STUDY EIGHT

*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 practice. We have said that whilst sexuality includes what some call 'biological sex' it is much wider than it. That is why we have said that it can reasonably be called 'relationality'. Human being 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 privatising 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 he 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 Christ speaks of the nature of 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 himself 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, then 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', depicted as 'the mother of us all', thus linking with Eve 'the mother of all living' (Gen. 3:20) and even Sarah 'the 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—7; 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 the water and 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 that love. 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 other 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, i.e. 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 their neither get it before marriage or 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 break the conventions and have pre-marital sex, often rationalizing 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 person. Anger begins to grow, and anger acts like a break 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 out 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.

Note: 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.

STUDY NINE

*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 O.T 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 O.T. troubles and evils are equated. So are trouble and anguish, There is 'the day of trouble', and it is a special things-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 realise 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 Man⁹-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, we groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, that is the redemption of the body'. Paul who was 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 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, paradisiacal 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.

⁹ By "biblical theology (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 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 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'!

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 to direct his own footsteps' (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. Ephes. 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 (ii) he is 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-rationalise God, humanity, and creation. His theology, anthropology and cosmology-as also his eschatology-have to be different. They cannot be ontological. This means that 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-everyman-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), Ephesians 2:17. He quoted Isaiah 61:1 when he announced his ministry, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and 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 those who were oppressed of the devil' (Acts 10:38).

Christ's Presence and Work Brought Relief to Man

Whilst it true that he did many healings of sicknesses, and exorcised evil spirits, and whilst he 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 (Mat. 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. 3:214; 5:1; Gal. 2:16—21), and this 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;ÊI Pet. 1:22).

The New Relational Situation

Man's original tranquility 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, bitterness's, 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 mindset (cf. Matt. 5:9; 43—48; Rom. 12:16—21). This means that troubles and discomforts that 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.

- (i) Man becomes a renewed creature before the Creator.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) The old guilts-existential and objective-are finished. The shame of past pollution has ceased. In according with Study 5, 'The Cleansing of the Memories', the person is free to enjoy the present, and the future.

Note: 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.

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 once sense it can be said that evil powers did not attack him poreviously in the same way. They had him in their grasp (Ephes. 1:1—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. 1:19—20). Now man in grace and evil powers fight an unceasing warfare (Eph. 6:10—18), hence the new set of troubles.

The Renewed Conscience

Again we might think 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 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.

Note: 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 17th. 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 Bridges '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 3 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, 'They have treated 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 victimised, 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'.

STUDY TEN

*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 3 times-Acts 7:34; 26:17; Gal. 1:4), *rhymai* 'to save or rescue' (used 11 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 Authorised 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; Ezekial 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 good news 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 . . .

.When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' (Matt. 4:23—24; 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 super-market. 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 analyse his many problems as being sin or arising from it. He does not see himself in bondage and his humanism assured 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 fulness. 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 'sense of person 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. Psalms 1:9—10; 32:3—4; 38:1—8 are some examples of the strain and pain of people under guilt.

Note: 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: John 8:34—36; Rom. 3:9; Gal.1:4; Rom. 8:5—8; Gal. 5:19—21; 5:24; Rom. 8:12; Gal. 2:16—21; 3:10; Rom. 7:1—6; I Cor. 15:55—56; Heb. 2:14—15; I John 4:17—18; Eph. 2:1—3; Heb. 2:14—15; Gal.1:4; Col. 2:14—15; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 6:12; I John 2:14—15; Gal. 6:14; I Thess. 1:9—10; Rom. 1:18ff.; Ezek. 7:8; Heb. 9:124; 10:22. 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 recognise 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/Isaiah 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 to 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 N.T. 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—31; 11:18; II Tim. 2:15; 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.

APPENDIX TO STUDY 10

*Deliverance From Demonic Powers***THE SYSTEM OF 'THE WORLD'**

The New Testament knows a system called 'this present evil age' (aeon; 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 the devil;' 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' (Ephes. 5:12; Col 2:14–15; Rom. 8:38). In the OT 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 (Psa. 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; 10:17 ff.; 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 'possess' human beings even from childhood (Mark 9:27). 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 sickness' (Luke 13:11)—Jesus released the sick person saying that she had been bound of Satan for 18 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; 14:11—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 they 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 (a) no one is ‘in the flesh’ who has the Spirit of God, (b) that 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 by command, but rather that ‘demons 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 in 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, then unless they are secure in Christ and their salvation, they will think first that 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 within 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 can be possessed, or are being possessed and live in the rich freedom of the Gospel (Gal. 5:1).

STUDY ELEVEN

*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', means it was active in itself. The terms 'living Word' or 'living God' tell us that God acts, and His word acts in themselves. So a living hope is a dynamic thing.

Hope in the N.T. 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 statement we will later 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 is 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 hopers 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 rationalisations 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 materialism, 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 5 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'¹⁰. By this he means he has been created for a purpose (Prov. 16:23), and this is his vocation. Genesis 1:28f. (cf. Psalm 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' whilst his 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 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,

¹⁰ 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 LFS 38, 'Vocation: Calling and Election' for an enlargement of this present study.

(i) the original creational mandate of Genesis 1:28, and (ii) the redemptional mandate given by Christ-that he has to proclaim to the world¹¹. 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. 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 own time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, so that man cannot find out what God has done from the end to the beginning.' 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-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 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. The true counsellor will seek to lead the counsellee to see this fact of human rebellion-whether active or passive-i.e. the refusal

¹¹ 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*.

to take up vocation.¹² 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. 4:23), 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 . . . 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 man will not work, neither let him 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, (a) the refusal to steal and an insistence on working to maintain oneself, (b) the seeking to help others who are in need. All this constitute 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—that gives great worth to every one of his labours. That God has chosen him for good works, and then chosen good works for him (Ephes. 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 man’s greatest motivating powers that humans know. Along with faith and love life can be lived to the full.

¹² 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 he 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. 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

STUDY ELEVEN: LIVING HOPE—LIFE FOR THE LISTLESS—II

*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 (page 2, para 3) that—'The Christian man has two strings to his bow, (a) the original creational mandate of Genesis 1:28, and (b) 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 5:19), 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 let 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 lost 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 the former part of our study 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 freedom of the children of God', and by bringing it to its ultimate wonderful climax of glorification. Hence the Psalmist said, 'All thy works 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 to its ultimate and eternal glorification. Man will only find fulness 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 show 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 NT 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 OT and the NT is also the primary word for serving. Thus a parent exercises authority in giving affection, direction, protection, 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 2 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. Note: 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 (Psa 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.

(i) We serve God, (ii) We serve our neighbour and our brother, (iii) Husbands serve wives, and wives husbands, (iv) Parents serve children, and children parents, (v) Members of families serve one another, (vi) Elders of the church serve the body and the members of the body serve the elders, (vii) Believers serve the community of man in both the creational and redemptional mandates, (viii) 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 1:12 and 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.

STUDY 12 (A)

THE 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. 1:1; Psa. 19:1). Man has to deliberately reject the knowledge of God in order not to know Him.

Note 1. 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.

Note 2. In this study we do not touch 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.

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 thwarted in his drive for fulness 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 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 Father¹³ 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 believing man is baptised into the Name ('The Lord your God is one Lord') of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Redeemed man has affinity. His 'life is hidden with Christ in God'!

¹³ For the whole theme of God's Fatherhood see my 'Oh, Father! Our Father!' (NCPI, 1985, pp. 93) 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, 1977)

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 on 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 something 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 all 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 has 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 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 emphasise 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; 5:9; 14:1-10; Matt. 11:27) and the Spirit (John 17:12—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.

STUDY 12 (B)

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 well 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. Eccles 3:11). The word good-tob-as used in Genesis 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 was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes' (Gen. 2:9). This accords with 'everything created by God is good', and, 'God 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 14:15).

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 three shows man rebelling against God, and this theme is repeated in Romans 1:18—32. God's 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 on 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. 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, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit'. Thus 'they returned to the city with much 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 the city'. Everywhere there has been 'much joy and peace in believing'. Believing we have 'joy that is 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.

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 set before him endured the cross, and despised 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 this series—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 pressures 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—11), and the disciples 'counted it all joy that they were permitted to suffer for his sake', whilst the Thessalonians received the Gospel, 'in much affliction but in joy of 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. Single counsellors in the matter of teaching pleasure-as in all the other themes we have suggested-need the healing context of the living church. The principle of joy is reinforced in the community of faith. Counsellors ought to recommend wisely in this regard.

APPENDIX TO STUDY 12(B)

The Profitable Pursuit of Pleasure

The following references are useful for seeing the theme of pleasure and pleasures throughout Scripture:

Psalm 4:7: Thou hast put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Psalm 36:7-9: How precious is thy steadfast love, O God! I The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings. They feast on the abundance of thy house, 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.

Psalm 43:4: Then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise thee with the lyre, O God, my God.

Psalm 16:11: Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 21:6: Yea, thou dost make him most blessed for ever, thou dost make him glad with the joy of thy presence.

Psalm 30:11: Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded my soul with gladness, that my soul may praise thee and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Psalm 63:5-7: 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 cling for joy.

Psalm 65:12-13: 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.

Isaiah 25:6: 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.

Ecclesiastes 2: 24-26: 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.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20: Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil; in 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.

I Tim:-6:17: God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy.

Psalm 103:1-5: 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.

STUDY 13

SINNERS AND SAINTS 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 Oxford Dictionary gives a long detailed note on this word, describing it as ‘the overpowering pressure of some force or influence’, and use such words as ‘hardships, straits, adversities, afflictions’, 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 ‘strictness or sternness in dealing with others; stern or rigorous disposition or behaviour; rigour in treatment, discipline, punishment, or the like’. Whilst we will recognise 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 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 stress in the sense we speak of it 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-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 to 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. Once 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 Bolton's 'The Lifting up of 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:

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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 victimisation¹⁴-

¹⁴ We should note the biblical teaching regarding so-called victimisation 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,

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.

- (iv) 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 face 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. chapters 5—7).
- (v) 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 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.
- (vi) We should be aware of God's forgiveness, and purification of our failures, Divine protection against devastating accusations, admission of our own failures, 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 see it as good for others, i.e. we should love and forgive others, recognising that our own attitudes to others may have increased self-stress.
- (vii) 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 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 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.
- (viii) We should recognise for ourselves and for others that certain states come upon, i.e. states of depression that seem to overwhelm us, states of accidie, i.e. of unaccountable torpor, listlessness (cf. Study 11), 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 victimised 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 recognise that Christ healed people, many of whom were responsible for their own states of suffering (John 5:14; cf. Matt. 9:5—7; Psa. 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 state of darkness, depression and accidie. This may relate to some organic or psycho-somatic situation, but we cannot be sure, either way.

- (ix) We need to keep in mind the ideas contained in I Corinthians 10:12-13, (a) that it is dangerous for a person to think he can stand-of himself, i.e. by himself and his own strength for Jeremiah 10:23 states this is not true, (b) 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 severity of God'. In the 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 them in a universe in which all things groan, waiting for the emancipation of the creation-us included.

Note: There is a growing industry today for coping with stress. Business firms, and government departments recognise 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 bring serenity, but state there is a biblical meditation which does relieve stress and bring peace. This is set out in my little book, *'The Christian Meditator'* (NCPI 19). I believe it could be real value to those who will read it. There are, of course other Christian writings on this theme. .

STUDY 13(B)

REVIEW OF 'COUNSELLING FOR OUR COMFORT' COURSE**THE METHOD USED**

The series we have just completed is really living theology applied. In it we have sought to understand Who God is and how He works; who man is and why and how he acts; and what the creation is and how it operates. What we have been doing is to develop our understanding of ontology by use of the Scriptures. Seeing God, man and creation prior to the fall of man and the curse upon creation we can then understand the true nature of man, i.e. as unfallen, then as fallen, then as being redeemed, being sanctified and even as being glorified. Knowing something of man in these stages we can then be helpful in counselling. The best practical approach may seem to be the use of case histories, models for diagnosis and principles of application. We saw this may well be beneficial if man were simply a behavioural creature whose organic and psychic life we could categorise, but man is more. He is basically a spirit-he has spiritual connotation-so that we need basic materials regarding his moral and spiritual elements and we saw that the Scriptures provide materials for comprehending God, man and creation, as well as understanding the moral-spiritual elements which obtain. Theology is human contemplation of biblical truth. It is a kind of map which we use as a guide to arrive at what God, man and creation are, and how they operate and interrelate. Whilst at first this all seems somewhat abstract, theoretical and cerebral, yet it helps us to develop understanding, and work out principles of helpful counselling. We have agreed that our method is virtually useless unless we ourselves-who counsel-have come to understand personally the truth of the Scriptures.

The Substance of Our Course: The Interrelatedness of Its Elements

We will review the subjects we have handled just to scan quickly the material we have handled and to see its unity,

The Dynamics of Human Birth: we saw that exercise of will, personal attitudes, and even, possibly, decision are made in the womb, and certainly in the earliest stages of life. Impressions gained, reactions and responses to life all help to determine the development-or retardation-of the child and then the grown person.

Conscience in Crisis and Comfort: we saw that the conscience is that faculty by which guilt and freedom operate; that man develops 'a can of worms' and comes under the grip of guilt. A guilty conscience can be a tyrant and hold man heavily under law. The cleansed conscience makes man wonderfully free. This comes only through the Cross and the Spirit.

Goodbye to Anger told us that almost all human beings are chronically angry. Anger is primarily against God although the subject may not be aware. It is against oneself and others. Only a revelation of God's love can clear anger. One can then love God, oneself and others

Wisdom For Life; we saw that whilst knowledge can be valuable it is not necessarily wisdom. Wisdom is functional knowledge gained through experience and understanding-especially of the truth of the Scriptures, and the ability to apply it. Such wisdom helps us to know where persons are at, and aids us to assist them.

The Cleansing of the Memories: memory is most dynamic. Past present and future are to some degree dependant on it. If memory is purified by the Cross-and it can be-then one is clear of all hurts, resentments, angers, deadening guilt, slavish fear of death, fear of man, oneself, and of God. One has a purified conscience-the most dynamic of all things!

The Comfort of Continuing Covenant: We saw that God makes covenant with man who is a sinner, who is out of comfort, who is alone and separated from God, man, and himself, and includes him within the security of a unilateral agreement. Man can be unfaithful to the covenant, and will suffer misery as a result, but God is faithful, merciful and full of steadfast love and will restore him, giving him both peace and comfort, being Father to him beyond the destruction which his own idols bring to him.

The Dynamics of Sexuality-For Sinners Only! We saw that man is a male-female entity, reflecting the nature of God whose gender cannot be known in terms of human masculinity and femininity. The complementarity of human male-femaleness is the only authentic sexuality. All other is monad sexuality-a contradiction of ontology, and devastating to the human spirit. In asymmetrical sexuality man is in misery.

The Dynamics of Sexuality-For Saints Only! We saw that authentic sexuality is known from the revelation of ontological masculinity and femininity in the Bridegroom and the Bride. This properly understood, true functional sexuality can obtain. Other elements such as human birth, anger, conscience, cleansing of the memories, wisdom and covenant are all involved in the whole spectrum of sexuality.

Helping the Troubled and the Discomforted was one of the basic studies which revealed man's existential situation as fallen man, without God, and without authentic comfort. His departure from the ontological has made him awry in the creation The reconciliation of the Cross brings man into true relationships with God, fellow-man, and the creation. Even so the new person's conscience being sensitized can veer on morbidity or be over troubled through the desire to be holy and even glorified. Each stage of spiritual development requires wisdom and appropriate maturation..

The Dynamic of Deliverance: this study discovers the bondage of man to many things, out of which he cannot extricate himself. His release comes through Christ's bearing of his human guilt, justifying him from all accusation, thus delivering him. We also saw the power of the devilish and demonic, and how man, too, is delivered by the power of the Cross which constitutes the Lordship of Christ. It is the work of the counsellor-via the Holy Spirit-to bring the revelation of God's love in deliverance.

Living Hope-Life For the Listless: we saw that hope is one of the primary dynamics for human living. Hope is always linked with vocation. Man is a vocational creature-he must have vocation! In vocation he has security and expression of purposeful life. His hope for the ultimate-beyond this life-irradiates this life with joy, peace and purpose. In this connection we saw that 'the sons of God are the servants of all'. The counsellor must know all this himself, and then communicate it.

The Richness of Relationships: this important study showed us that all relationships spring from God, especially as Father, and as Son. Lost in the fall these relationships are restored through the reconciliation of the Cross. True relationships are familial, and defects or losses of such have enormous emotional and psychical effects. Salvation brings man to God as his Father, and relationships can then be renewed, setting the person free.

The Profitable Pursuit of Pleasure: This study showed that pleasure is part of man's ontological fulness. The loss of authentic pleasure through separation from God has been restored by the reconciliation of God and man through the Atonement. True shalom, joy and love, now bring genuine pleasure, and there is great hope of eventual bliss and joy in eternity. This hope is itself dynamic for present pleasure. To communicate pleasure we must know it!

Sinners and Saints in Stress and Severity: we saw that what modern man calls 'stress' is pressure and testing that comes from living in a world which is ontologically awry where man has ontological expectation of peace, joy, love and serenity. He has anger against the dislocation, and if he does not take responsibility for his own actions and if he falls for the principle of victimization then he will continue to suffer shock, reaction, anger, distress and hurt. Having a revelation of God as Sovereign, and as Love will dissipate the anger and other elements and bring him to tranquillity and give him the ability to face living in a world awry in which-nevertheless-God is wonderfully Sovereign.

Wonderful Counselling For Comfort

Our studies have not been superficial, but they have only touched upon the things that make for wisdom. Christ is 'the Wonderful Counsellor' and he can bring mankind to rich comfort. In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Through him we can know these and obtain and use them, provided we are not apart from him. We should encourage ourselves to develop our theological resources, i.e. the living truth of the Scriptures. What insights we can gain from present scientific research we should welcome and use. We will find that often they are simply confirmatory of what we have learned-or will learn-from the Scriptures. What is not true to us we cannot make true to those we wish to help.