

A Biblical Way of
COUNSELLING

GEOFFREY BINGHAM

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FOREWORD

The title of this book, 'Counselling in a Biblical Way'. may seem, at first sight, almost arrogant, as though the writer has the only true way of counselling, and as though he were *prescribing* it for all others. This is neither thought nor intended. What I hope as a writer and theologian of some sort, is that our minds be directed to the Scriptures as the basic true source for materials for Christian counselling, and indeed that only the Scriptures provide materials for such counselling. My plea is that all that we 'need - as Christians - to counsel people, can be found in the Scriptures. In Saying this I do not mean the Bible is a text-book for counsellors, even those who are Christian counsellors. I mean that our counsel for people must come from the wisdom of God, and that this wisdom is given to us in the Scriptures.

This is in no way intended to derogate the specialist work of doctors, psychologists, psychotherapists and psychiatrists. In the realm of scientific research certain useful information and valuable principles are discovered, and applied with great benefit. Each person must stand or fall on the integrity (or otherwise) of his or her wisdom, expertise, and practice, whether he discover that through (so-called) secular or Biblical study and research, or both. These 'secular' and Biblical materials are not necessarily mutually exclusive. No one is bound to use the Scriptures as the only basis *for practice* or methodology: that is a matter of personal choice.

As I see it healing is a legitimate practice, for it deals with the fact of physical sickness and - assuming there is such a thing - mental illness. I have never met a person who does not agree it is a reasonable thing to attempt healing for needy people. If my thesis holds correctly, then sicknesses can be healed quite apart *from* the Gospel. Some illnesses, as we have seen, spring

from natural causes', some from human sin, and some from Satanic affliction. The main point I wish to make is that the healing of a sickness, whether physical or mental, does not necessarily mean the deeper healing of its *causes*, particularly in the case of guilt-caused illnesses.

What we need to face is the fact that human beings are sinners, and as such have deep seated problems. Man is a *spiritual creature*, unlike all other creatures. I do not equate 'spiritual' with 'religious'. Man, it seems, is also incurably religious, i.e. he seeks worship of something - and service to it - in order to fulfil some insistent and undeniable functional inner drive. In this book I am not much concerned with man as a religious creature, but as a spiritual being.

Over many years I have studied God, man, and creation, sometimes theologically, sometimes experimentally. I have suffered - I suppose - as much as many, more than some, and much much less than the really great sufferers, but in the process I have learned some useful wisdom. Sadly enough it is all too little!

In this process I have written a number of books, the titles of which may be read on the flyleaf, and in a directive note located before the Bibliography. These books are concerned with the problems we have in our life and relationships because of our sinfulness. I have tried to understand these themes in the light of the Scriptures, for there I discover revealed elements concerning God, man, and creation which I cannot discover elsewhere.

These have helped me to counsel persons in distress, and so I am grateful for the insights the Scriptures reveal. They are linked with man as a spiritual creature, and in that sense take us into areas with which 'secular' anthropology - by nature of the case - does not deal.

Having a strong desire to present the essence of these books a day was arranged to deliver some lectures on 'Practical

Biblical Counselling'. There were to be eight studies, and these were to cover the themes now included in this book. I set out to have a few notes for those attending the seminars. The notes took off! They made themselves into this small book, and I seemed helpless to do anything about them! Of course I excuse myself with my tongue in my cheek. I needed something to support the insights I wanted to communicate. It was an exercise in condensing the substance of the books into 8 studies!

The result, then, is this little book. Of course it is patently inadequate: there is need of more supportive substance, but as a taster it may prove a little useful. It may even stimulate some to pursue what I have called 'A Biblical Way of Counselling'. I cheerfully admit its weaknesses, but I stand firm to its principles. Not every system corralled under the title 'Christian Counselling' is necessarily Christian. It may in fact be quite unbiblical. I am not, however, the Judge of such. Not everyone will agree that my way is, in fact, Biblical.

What I do trust is that It will stimulate us to seek out the great 'eternities' of the Scriptures, rediscover the grand powers of the word of God. and be drawn into that humility of mind and spirit which enables us to be useful servants of the Father, and of Christ our Lord. Those who are professional specialist counsellors may be inspired to rework their own systems and thinking in the light of the Scriptures. We all need such revision from time to time, and if this little book provides some inspiration along those lines, then it may not, after all, prove valueless!

Geoffrey Bingham, Coromandel, November 1985.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING

STUDY ONE

WHAT, THEN, IS BIBLICAL COUNSELLING?**1. Introduction: The Meaning of Counselling.**

Most people have a reasonable idea of what the word 'counselling' means. Generally speaking it means to so assist a person who has problems, or who is in need so that the person is better able to cope with the difficulty and even able to find a solution to it. The Oxford Shorter Dictionary has a number of definitions of 'counsel' two of which relate to our subject, 'Advice, direction, as the result of deliberation. The faculty of counselling; Judgement; prudence; sagacity.'

The word 'counsel' is used a lot in the Scriptures. The word used quite prolifically in the O.T. is *etsah*, i.e. counsel or advice. A study of this word in a concordance will repay the time spent. There are other words also but they appear to carry the same meaning. There is the counsel of the godly and the wise, sometimes by one person, sometimes by a group or council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Counselling in the Now Testament,

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

(i) The Nature of Counselling In The Early Church.

We need to be honest and say that counselling as we know it was not extant in the early church. In some sense it could not have been, i.e. a professional group of people using scientific disciplines to assist people in their mental illnesses, and aberrations, seeking to bring them to human wholeness.

Counselling - the giving of advice, direction and prescriptive living - came through generally in the life of the church. for, (a) the fellowship of the Christian community (cf. Acts

2:42-47, 4:32-35, 8:4-8, 11:19-30) was a warm and healthy one, filled with care and companion, (b) the word of the Gospel not only saved people, but liberated them in a radical way (Acts 13:38-39, I Cor. 6:8-11, Tit. 2:11-14, 3:5-7, II Cor 5:16-17, etc.). This state of the church was aided and enhanced by what are called 'the variety of gifts', 'the varieties of service', 'the variety of workings' (I Cor 12:4-7). These are called 'the manifestations of the Spirit' and are 'for the common good'.

We need also to see that the Christian community was a proclaiming community. I Thess. 1:5:10 exemplifies the pattern and life of an early church, which was healthy in every way because it related outwardly to the world whilst inwardly it had a 'work of faith, labour of love, and steadfastness of hope'. The Epistles of the N.T. along with Rev. chapters 2 and 3 make it clear that the early church had many troubles as time passed, as teaching became confused, and as human egos sought to satisfy their ambitions. The problems we face now they also faced then. Even so the nature of the true church has always remained the same, albeit greatly beleaguered and deficient from time to time.

What is often missed by us moderns is the life and place of worship in the N.T. church. Paul's remedial teaching in I Cor. chs. 10-14 is helpful to study in detail. See also Phil. 3:3, John 4:20-24, Ephes. 2:11-12, 1 Pet. 2:4-10, I Cor., 3:16, 6:19, Eph. 5:18-20, Col. 3:16, Heb. 13:15-16, and Rom. 12:1-2 for positive teaching on the nature of the worshipping community. In the context of worship communities kept themselves healthy. Note in I Tim. 5:1-16 (cf. Ephes. 5:21-6:9) that relationships were maintained on a healthy familial basis, and social concern was evident.

(ii) Counsellors In The N.T. Church.

If we trace the use of words such as 'counsel', 'exhort', 'comfort', 'beseech', 'admonish', 'rebuke', 'edify' - in both their nounal and verbal forms - then we will see that (a) the congregation was well-taught in the nature of the Gospel and Christian community living (cf. Acts 2:42) so that they understood

themselves to live under 'great grace', and 'the word of His grace', and 'the Gospel of grace', and to be led personally and corporately by the Holy Spirit in all that they did, and (b) that there was mutuality of teaching, exhortation, encouragement, and the like (cf. Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, Heb. 3:13:10:24, I Cor. 14:26f.).

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Matter of Wisdom in the Practice of Counselling.

If my description of Christian counselling is correct then wisdom is essential to its practice. I said, 'Counselling is that helpful advice and direction given to a person at a certain point of need which comports with, and issues from the wisdom of God.' For this reason we need to look at the nature of wisdom in the Scriptures. (For further reading see my PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING. 2nd. Edition, 1984, New Creation Publications, pp.8-16. and LFS. 35 THE WISDOM OF GOD AND MAN, reprinted 1981 N.C.P.I.).

The Nature of Wisdom in the Scriptures.

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

We must first recognise that knowledge *per se* is not necessarily wisdom, although knowledge is always essential to true wisdom. Rom. 1:18-32 (cf. Gen. 3:1-6) shows that man in rejecting God rejected what wisdom he (man) already had, and closed the door to true wisdom. Paul says, 'For although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.'

Claiming to be wise they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.' He is saying not only that true wisdom departed, but that the bias of the mind prevented the acquiring of true wisdom.

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

(i) The Wisdom of God.

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

God Is Known as Wise Because He Is Creator, 'O Lord, how manifest are they works! In wisdom thou hast made them all' (Psalm 104:24). This wisdom is independent of others, ' Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge and taught him the way of understanding?' (Isaiah 40:12-14).

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

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

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

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

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

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

(ii) Obtaining the Wisdom of God.

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

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

(a) Wisdom is a gift, a charisma.

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

(b) Wisdom is a gift which can be acquired by asking.

In James 3:13-18 the writer describes the lofty nature of God's wisdom. In 1:5 he says, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously, and without reproaching, and it will be given him.' Whilst such wisdom may be given at a point of urgent need the emphasis seems to be that God's wisdom will be given generally to the one who seeks it. The classic example of this is Solomon's request to God for wisdom, which is granted to him (see I King chapter 3). He asks, 'That I may

discern between good and evil,' to which God replies, 'I will give you a wise and discerning mind.'

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

(c) Wisdom is Gained by Learning and Application.

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

In the ultimate wisdom is not acquired brilliance, but simply obedience, the doing the will of God, which is, after all God's *counsel*. Paul once said, 'Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is.' (Ephes. 5:15-17). We obtain wisdom in the midst of doing the will of God.

STUDY TWO**COMING TO KNOW MAN,
THROUGH GOD.****1. Needing to Know The Nature of Man.**

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

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

The second problem is linked with the first: how can fallen humanity help fallen humanity? At first sight this may seem the best thing, the fallen helping the fallen, but it was the unfallen Christ alone who could truly help man. Only he could be God's wisdom, and bring about our righteousness (justification), sanctification, and redemption. Fallen man is a complicated creature. Indeed his problems are so complex that it may be said of him that he is a 'blind leader of the blind'.

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

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

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

2. The Doctrine of Man as Found in the Scriptures.

There are three inseparable doctrines in Scripture, namely

- (i) the doctrine of God,
- (ii) the doctrine of man, and
- (iii) the doctrine of creation.

In fact they are the one; for creation is man's context of living and he also is part of it, but creation cannot be understood apart from the Creator, and man being [in] the image of God.

At the end of our first study we saw that whilst knowledge is not itself wisdom yet wisdom and knowledge are

closely linked. The more knowledge the more the possibility of increased wisdom. We will need to know in his various states, i.e. as created, as fallen, as redeemed, as pursuing holiness of life, and living in hope for eternity. The final understanding of man must come in respect to his glorification. Failure to understand any one of these categories of man will mean failure to understand man, and certainly hinder giving him true counsel. We shall seek to see man in these categories.

The Doctrine of Created Man.

We have two sources for understanding man as created, (a) from the Biblical description of man's creation, and (b) from observing Jesus the true man. Whilst we cannot enter into a full Biblical anthropology we must at least sketch man as created. (For further reading see my MAN IS -WHAT?, N.C.P.I. 19, and I, THE MAN N.C.P.I. 19).

What we know is that

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

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

Man not only had (has) vertical relationship with God but horizontal relationship with his fellow-humanity. The male and female constitute one humanity, i.e. human unity. There are not two races-one male, one female. The two constitute 'one flesh' i.e.

'one humanity'. Humanity is this a male-female entity, and not a male-and-female thing. Man as created must be understood in the husband-wife, father-mother, parents-children, brother-brother, sister complex. Any break in any of this will constitute a fractured situation. Man is a moral-spiritual social creature, finding his fulness in family.

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

The Doctrine of Fallen Man and Creation.

The temptation set before the woman was, 'You shall be as God, knowing good and evil'. This meant

- (i) that man would (could) become autonomous, having high authority, and
- (ii) that he would know - of himself - the difference between good and evil, i.e. that his evaluations would be authentic.

Fallen humanity is sure it is able to discern good and evil correctly. This is the source of much strife. Gen. 3:1-6 and Rom. 1:18-32 show the results of man's bid for independence. Man lost his integrity and has attacked God's. His chief evil lies in his idolatry.

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

By the fall man became awry, disoriented, dislocated, dysfunctional, at odds with God, creation and himself. He suffered not only depravity but 'deprivity', i.e. he has deprived himself of joy and peace, because he, via his will, is at variance with the true order of things. He is thus the victim of his own conscience. Hence his emotional starvation, his vocational awryness, and his inability to enjoy sonship, creaturehood and servanthood in relation to God the Father, Creator and King.

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

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

The Doctrine of Redeemed Man.

Fallen man is saved and Justified by grace, and not, primarily, by faith (Rom. 3:24, 5:17, Eph. 2:8-10). He is given the gifts of

- repentance (Acts 5:32; 11:18),
- faith (Eph. 2:8, Phil 1:29),
- forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 13:38-39),
- Justification (Rom. 3:24; 5:17),
- cleansing (Heb. 9:14),
- sonship (Gal.4:4-6, Rom.8:15),
- love (Rom.5:5),
- eternal life (John 3:14, 16.36, II Tim. 1:10),
- holiness (I Cor. 6:11) and the
- Holy Spirit (Rom.5:5, Acts 2:28).

This redemption is based on the complete work of Christ in his earthly obedience, death, resurrection and ascension. It is communicated and applied by the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15, Rom. 8:2, II Cor. 3:17) in what is called 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:5). This makes fallen man a 'new creation', so that 'old things have passed away, behold *they* have become new' (II Cor. 5:17). Man is 'washed, sanctified and justified' and this 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God' (I Cor. 6:11).

All man's sins are forgiven; he is wholly justified: he is placed amongst God's true people (sanctified); his sins or 'dead works' are completely cleansed (Heb. 9:14, cf. 1 :3, 1):22). God in

forgiving him remembers his sins no more (Jer.31:31-34, cf. Heb. 10:11-22, especially verses 17 and 18).

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

The Doctrine of Sanctified Man.

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

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

The Doctrine of Man Glorified.

I Cor. 2:6-10 tells of God's wisdom which was ordained for our glorification. Man is a creature destined by God to reach full sonship, and that glorification of his being which he does not have in this world and creation. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God'. must mean that this physical being must be

transformed. In Phil. 3:21 Paul tells us that 'He shall change this body of our humiliation that it may be made like his body of glory'.

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

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

3. Conclusion to 'Finding Man Through God'.

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

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

Often in Christian history we have failed to see this or we have made his humanity a super-humanity. We have tacked his deity (which certainly co-existed and co-exists with his humanity) on to his humanity and have called him a 'God-man' when, in fact, being truly God and truly man, his deity is itself and his humanity itself, and the two never merge. His humanity was true humanity. and we only view it as beyond ours because ours is a fallen humanity. Even when redeemed, we are still in the

process of becoming, and we struggle with flesh to the end of our days - a fact which ought to be noted by teachers and counsellors.

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

STUDY THREE**HOW, THEN, SHALL WE RELATE?****1. The Matter of Human Relationships.**

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

2. The Fall of Man and the Loss of True Relationships.

The serpent's temptation was designed to lure man away from total trust in God. His question, 'Has God said...?' implied doubt. The idea of being a person apart from God fascinated man. In breaking away from God he broke away from his true self. He became a creature of pride, but a creature alienated from the true source of his relational and emotional life, so that his pride had no real basis for stability.

Jesus made it clear that knowing God was in itself eternal life. This is life eternal, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent-' (John 17:3). To know God is *not merely to know about* Him but *to know Him* directly, by interrelationship. True knowledge of God or persons is relational. To interrelate fully with another is to come to know them. To refuse to relate is to refuse to know. John supports this by saying, 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who

is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' We conclude then that in this sense eternal life is to know the Father and the Son.

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

Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob.

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

The key to this disaffection lies in Gen. 3:1-24, and Rom. 1:18-32. When the woman placed her trust in the word of the serpent rather than the word of God her relationships with God were broken. Likewise when the man 'listened to the voice of his wife' rather than the voice of God true relationship with God was dissolved. When division came between man and woman, it also came between parents and children. The older brother killed the younger.

Rom. 1: 21-32 shows the break up of all relationships, for the rejection of God by man led to his involvement in idolatry. John speaks in I John 5:20 of eternal life being in the knowing of God, and adds immediately, 'Little children, keep yourselves from

idols,' meaning that if one has relationships with idols one does not have a true relationship with God. It would follow, then, that one would not have true relationships with others.

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

3. Man's Fear of God and Fear of Man.

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

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

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

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

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

We have to be realistic and see that man hates God, and is his deadly enemy, even though his religious expressions to say he is seeking God. He is not. None seeks after God (Rom. 3:11, Psalm 14:1-2). Instead, man is God's implacable enemy (Rom. 1:30, 5:10, Col. 1:21). He violates God's holiness and knows as he does it 'that those who do such things deserve to die' (Rom. 1:32). How then could he ever come to God, and be reconciled? However could he - let alone would he - reconcile God to himself?

4. How Then, Shall We Relate?

Love (see our next study, 'Authority and the Life of Love') is a deep passion of human beings, fixing itself on something

which is worthy or unworthy. We must love and we must be loved, but *what* we love, and *who* loves us is what determines much of our lives. Loving God and man determines it one way, and loving idols and our selves determines it in another way. But love we will even if hurt and jealous love is often the cause of deep hatred.

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

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

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

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

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

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

STUDY FOUR**AUTHORITY, AND THE LIFE OF LOVE.****1. The Principle of Authority in Scripture.**

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

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

In approaching the matter of authority we need to define our terms. 'Authoritative' is a good term, denoting authentic commission to an office and proper exercise of authority. 'Authoritarian' indicates the use of authority for one's own

purposes, ego, and advantage, and not as service to others. The Scriptures place God as the Authority over all, and in fact the word 'author' (originator) signifies the right or 'copyright' of the author. God has authored the creation and so has natural right over it.

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

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

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

We can say, then that authority is there to direct, to correct, to protect, and to bring to maturation. Only that authority which serves—and loves—is true authority. If one who has delegated authority misuses and abuses that authority that does not cancel out the delegated authority. The one who has been given authority stands or falls to God, not to man. His or her failure calls for judgement, discipline and correction. Those under

any 'office' must respect the office even if the person filling it is not respect-worthy. The judgement of the offending authority must be left to God, who often uses certain circumstances and situations to effect that judgement.

2. Man's Loss of Obedience to True Authority.

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

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

We have to say that all authority is part of the *functional nature* of creation. Each day, as God created, He saw that it was 'good', i.e. functionally good. When all the creation was completed God saw it was 'very good', i.e. fully functional. This though is repeated in Eccles. 3:11, 'You have made everything appropriate in its own time.' Hence in Gen 1:18-19 we have an example of this principle, 'And God made the two great lights, the greater light *to rule* the day, and the lesser light *to rule* the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens *to give light* upon the earth, *to rule over* the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*.

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

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

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

It may well be that no marital union - post fall - has ever fully attained this ideal functional state, but that does not destroy the mystery of the love union which obviates arguments regarding super-inferior statuses and roles. The two are one in their pursuit of God's will for them and the human race.

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

2. Authority and Human Relationships.

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

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

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

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

3. The Nature and Dynamic of Love to Destroy Rebellion.

Paul said, 'The love of Christ controls (constrains) me' (II Cor.5:14). Jesus said, 'If you love me you will keep my commandments' (John 14:15). John added in the same vein, 'And his commandments are not burdensome' (I John 5:3). God said to Israel, 'I will circumcise your heart and the heart' of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. And you shall again obey the voice of the Lord, and keep all his commandments which I command you this day' (Deut. 30:6,8).

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

4. Authority and the Life of Love.

We now move to the matter of living in love. When the slavish fear of God is removed, and fear of judgement is abolished, then 'perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love' (I John 4:10). With this fear goes anger against God and His authorities

and against authority in general. By this we do not mean that we are never tempted to revert to old images of God and authorities, and that we are never tempted to our old 'flesh-rebellion'. This battle goes on continuously. We are never wholly free of 'the flesh' whilst we live, and it is in league with the powers of darkness, seeking to bring us back into enmity and hatreds.

The Life of Love.

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

- (i) We are saved by God's love, and as a consequence we love Him and others. I John 4:19, I Pet. 1:22, I John 4:7-10, cf. I Pet. 1:8, I Cor. 2:10, Rom. 8:28.
- (ii) Because we have been made the children of God we naturally love the brethren. I John 3:10, I John 2:7ff., I Thess. 4:9, cf. Rev. 2:4, I John 4:20. God's Fatherhood teaches us brotherly love.
- (iii) Love is known and expressed in forgiveness. He who has been forgiven now forgives - no matter what the extent of the sin. Matt. 18:21ff., Ephes. 4:32, Col. 3:13.
- (iv) The new love - in practice, 'Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things, never failing' (I Cor 13:7-8). It is all that Paul describes it in I Cor. 13:4-8, and Peter in I Pet. 4:8, and as John says it lays down its life for the brethren (I John 3:16, cf. John 15:13).
- (v) The new love inspires obedience in everything. II Cor. 5:14, I John 5:3, cf. I Cor. 16:14.
- (vi) The new love has an eye to the needs of others, caring for them, and honouring them. Phil. 2:1-8, Gal.5:13, Rom. chs 14-15, I Cor. 8, Rom. 12:9-10, 13:8-1-0.
- (vii) Love is maturative (I Cor 13:9-13), leading to sensitivity for others (Phil. 1:9-11), and love for all men (I Thess. 3:12-13, Gal. 6:10).

The *application* of this love is worked out in exhortation to forgiveness, acceptance of others, renewal (and healing) of *all* relationships, the honouring of all human beings including the superordination-subordination relationships, the true deference to God's delegated authorities, and the keeping of the law of Christ from the heart.

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

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

STUDY FIVE

RELEASE AND FULFILMENT IN HIS
FATHERHOOD

1. Man And The Fatherhood Of God.

'God is Father!' is certainly the grand teaching of the N.T. He is first of all 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Eph 1:3) and also 'God our Father' (Eph. 1 :2, cf 4:6). It is clear from the N.T. that man becomes a son (child) of God through redemption (John 1:12-13, Gal.3:26, 4:4-6). It is also clear that God planned this action 'before the foundation of the world', i.e. before creation, so that it is 'in Christ Jesus' that we become His children (Eph. 1:5).

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

Someone has said, 'God is the Father of all men, but not all men are the children of God,' meaning that man abdicated and so lost his relationship with God as Father, through his fall. This does not mean that he is not a son *de jure*, but is not one *de facto*. The point of this discussion is to show that although man denies sonship of God as Father, the essential functional structure of sonship is there, so that when he is redeemed a new act beyond

that of initial creation does not happen for him in order for him to be able to relate to God as Father. He is restored to what he was, and is not created into what he never was essentially.

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

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

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

2. The Revelation to Mankind of God as Father.

In the O.T God is referred to a number of times as Father, but always directly in connection with Israel: He is Father to Israel. We might say, 'Covenant Father'. Sometimes this is linked with creation, but it may mean 'the creation of Israel the nation', so we do not find His Fatherhood as it is seen in the N.T.

The simple explanation of the richer revelation of His Father in the N.T is that His Son came into view. A father is always known by his children, and so *the Father* by *the Son*. God always had the Son, and the Son the Father. When the Son became visible

and in human form, he showed the Father, spelling out his Sonship in *human* ways, the only ways known to humans!

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

Jesus showed the Father by a number of means,

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

3. Coming to the Father through the Son

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

In Gal. 4:4-6 Paul gives the full range of salvation, ' But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, he has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son.' As we said, It is a simple matter to believe on Christ and to receive salvation. Whether we are conscious of it or not that is the time when we become sons of God. It is a fact that many have never come consciously to 'the Father - as sons - although they have trusted Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

4. The Impact of Becoming Sons of the Father.

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

The impact of being His sons and children is incalculable. God is now our Father. We saw the dynamic of the 'reconciliation'. We are now reconciled as 'prodigals' to the Father. He has brought 'many sons into glory' (Heb. 2:10), and we have in His Fatherhood all that Jesus promised in 'the Sermon on the Mount - quite considerable promises! Yet the greatest impact is that of us being 'family', His family. In Ephes. 3:14 Paul speaks of 'the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.' This can be translated, 'From whom all fatherhood is derived', or 'all familyhood proceeds'. The family exists because He is Father. It has to do with His creatorial, as also His paternal being.

This has great implications. It means that when we cry 'Abba!' we simultaneously cry 'Brother!' and 'Sister!' That is, we are all brethren. When this is wed to the N.T teaching about brotherly love the story is complete. The church is the true family

of God (cf. Ephes 2:18-22, I Tim. 3:15, Heb. 3:1-6, 1 John 3:10f.). All our relationships, therefore, are familial, orchestrated (so to speak) by the Father, and the Elder Brother (Heb. 2:11f., John 20:17, Matt. 28:10, cf. Rom. 8:29).

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

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

The counsellor has immensely valuable materials on hand to counsel into true security, and the fulness of filial and familial relationships which are with both God and man. This material can at once be remedial, prophylactic, and transforming. It goes without saying that the counsellor must first have penetrated the mystery of adoption.

STUDY SIX

LOSING ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY - I

THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF ANGER

1. The Fact of Human Anger.

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

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

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

anger, becoming condemnatory of others when we ourselves do similar things. Anger is very much a part of the human scene.

2. The Danger and Evil of Anger.

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

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

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

Christ then warned us against something fearful in nature and character. Anger is not to be treated lightly. He who is

angry with man - the image of God - is angry with God, and generally angry with God prior to being angry with man. Listen to some of the statements of Scripture:-

‘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. 18:11.

‘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 from wrath.’ Prov.29:8.

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

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

We have many persons in Scripture. who are angry; Cain, Lamech, Ishmael, Esau, Joseph’s brethren especially Simeon and Levi, Naaman, Balaam, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar, and Jonah. Jonah is an example of righteous anger lot he wishes to see Israel’s tradition enemies destroyed and not spared by God even if they repented. He said ‘ I do well to be angry - *even unto death!*’ Well at least it would have been his own death but Cain killed Abel out of rage.

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

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

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

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

Summing up this section we can say that there is nothing which makes so irrational in our thoughts and acts as intemperate anger. No matter how 'righteous' we may be in it, we will commit injustices far greater than those done, in order to get the justice we demand. Every cops-and-robber story, every 'goodies and baddies' plot, every 'cowboys and Indians' play, story, novel and film grips us all as we wait breathlessly - and often endlessly - to see justice done. Perhaps most angry of all in our

day are the utopian reformers, the ruthless terrorists, the hijackers and the political messiahs.

All of this tells us that anger is not light matter. We are probably most conscious of this fact, but prefer to ignore it, is possible. Suddenly - with a murder or a rape, it obtrudes itself and will not go away. How then shall we rid ourselves of anger?

3. Ridding Ourselves of Anger.

There are three basic ways of getting rid of personal anger,

- (i) suppressing it,
- (ii) ventilating or expressing it, and
- (iii) having it dissolved in love.

So far as '(i)' is concerned we know that suppressing anger can bring us into terrible states of mind and body. Anger cannot be dissolved by repressing it. In saying this we do not mean that 'a temperate person cannot moderate anger, and in some sense contain it: he may achieve this in measure, but merely putting the lid on it can bring us to frightful extremes.

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

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

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

The Basis of Anger.

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

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

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

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

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

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

STUDY SEVEN**LOSING ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY
- II**

THE WAY OF TRANQUILLITY

1. Liberated From Anger.

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

We saw that the causes of anger are all rooted in man's alienation from God and his determination to act according to his own plan. In seeking to do so he comes in conflict with the plans of others who are thus in competition with him. In the processes of conflict man receives hurts, wounds, and builds up resentments at injustices (imagined or real), so that he is never really free from anger until somehow his 'can of worms' is destroyed, love liberates him from his guilts, and a new dynamic charges his motivation, i.e. he is 'constrained by love'.

How then, does this happen?

Prov. 14:29-30 runs, 'He who is slow to anger has great understanding. but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.'

A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.' The word 'passion'. here, is in Hebrew *qinah*, and carries the idea of 'envy' and 'jealousy', and in this immediate context of an intensity which is the opposite to tranquillity. This means it is a passionate state of mind which cannot come to peace. The context shows it is linked with anger, and indeed is anger itself. To be in a true state of mind man must pass from anger to serenity.

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

Man, then, is liberated from anger through the atonement, and, in practical experience, when the work and fruits of that atonement are applied to his whole person. When he is justified by grace he knows the penalty of sin is remitted. When he is forgiven he knows God has obliterated the heinousness of his sins. When he is totally cleansed of his moral pollution he knows he is pure. When he is given the gift of sanctification he knows he is securely planted in the true people of God. When he is given the gift of the Spirit he is also given the gift of love, and knows he can now love. His liberation from anger is a simple thing, but then a very profound happening.

2. God's People the Unangry Ones.

Because redeemed man has been reconciled with God - and thus with others - he is now at peace. This is the peace Jesus promised his disciples when he said. 'Peace I leave with you; my

peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid' (John 14:27). Notice that he does not give peace *from* himself but his own peace.

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

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

Does this mean, then, that a redeemed person does not get angry? No! We know we all get angry from time to time. We battle against the temptation to be angry. The *nexus* with the past has been broken. Anger is not part of the new life, and is not the true expression of the new pure heart.

The redeemed person does not have to get angry because he knows that God is working all things for his good, and that He will never let anything separate His children from His love. The anger that fallen man has against God because of injustice the child of God does not have to have because he knows that 'the judge of all the earth does right', and that 'God speedily avenges his elect' and that 'His judgements are righteous and true

altogether. Knowing these things he does not get angry with God for being uncaring, tardy in judging, slow in executing righteous judgements.

The Continuing Destruction of Anger.

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

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

3. Tranquillity: The New Life of Peace.

'A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh.' We have seen how God gives peace to the redeemed person. Far from being a severe God who 'reaps where He did not sow', and uses man to grind away at living for Him, God takes the initiative and 'gives us all things richly to enjoy' (I Tim.6:17) because 'everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving' (I Tim.4:,1). 'Every tree of the garden was good for food and pleasant to the eyes.' Indeed 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof' (Psalm 24:1, I Cor: 10:26), so that nothing is denied us.

Again, Rom. 8:32 tells us, 'He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up (abandoned him up) for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?' In I Cor. 4:7 Paul asks, 'What do you

have that you have not received, and if you have received it why do you boast as though it were not a gift?' God then is prodigal with His gifts, and He knows our needs even before we ask him, and will supply all our needs 'according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus'. There are then, 'treasures of pleasure' in God. He withholds nothing that is needed, even *the, gift* of suffering! (Phil. **1:29**, cf. Rom. 17ff., and II Cor. 4:16). Most of all He supplies us with relational and emotional fulfilment. The Psalmist (36:37) writes,

'How precious is they steadfast love, O God!

The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.

They feast on the abundance of thy house,

and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights.

For with thee is the fountain of' life;

in thy light do we see light.'

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

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

STUDY EIGHT

HOW, THEN. SHALL WE HEAL?

1. Human Sickness Needs Healing.

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

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

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

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

'Why will you still be smitten,

that you continue to rebel?

The whole head is sick.

and the whole heart faint.

From the sole of the foot even to the head,

there is no soundness in it,

but bruises and sores,

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

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

Look in verses 3-4 at the nature of the sickness which resulted from encapsulating sin within himself.

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

Now look at the healing: Verse 5 says,

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

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

This principle is seen in the N.T. when Christ heals the man who was a paralytic (Matt.9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26). When he says, 'Son, take heart, your sins are forgiven,' the listeners (mostly Pharisees and teachers of the law) take umbrage.

They say, "This is blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins.' Jesus then tests them, saying in effect, ' You believe with me that this sickness comes from sin. The test that this man is effectively forgiven his sins is that the sickness will now disappear, and he will become whole. Very good, watch me, for I say to the man, "Rise up, take up your bed and go home".'

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

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

2. God Is The One Who Wounds and Who Heals.

The One Who Wounds.

A statement such as our heading is anathema to many who have simplistically said that all sicknesses come from Satan, and that God never visits human beings with sickness. That is not the tenor of Scripture. It is clear that Satan is permitted to visit people with sicknesses, and with spirits, but only under the sovereign control of God. It is God's world, not Satan's.

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

dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?' (Exod. 4:11). Amos asks the *people*, 'Does evil befall a city unless the Lord has done it?' (3:6). God claims, 'I form light and create darkness, I make weal and I create woe' (Isaiah 45:7). Isaiah 31:2 records, 'He is wise and brings disaster.'

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

In Deut. 4:15ff. Moses warns Israel against idolatry, lest God destroy the people. In 7:15 he says God will not lay upon them the diseases they had known in Egypt if they will obey Him. In 28:25ff. there are some fearsome warnings. If disobedient Israel will receive, 'curses, confusion, and frustration'. 'The Lord will smite you with fever, and with consumption, inflammation, fiery heat., and with drought and blasting and mildew.' 'The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers, and the scurvy and the Itch, of which you cannot be healed, madness, . . . blindness, and confusion of mind.'

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

The book of the Revelation is filled with accounts of horrific plagues, famines, earthquakes and the like which have come to man from God's hand. One needs to read this book without

being squeamish, knowing the fact that God's increments are 'true and righteous altogether'. Only then will he see that God is the Smiter as well as the Healer.

The One Who Heals.

God is the true Healer, yet His healing and His smiting are together. In Exod. 15:26 God says, 'If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord your Healer.' Many take this statement. 'I am the Lord your Healer' out of its context. He is not only Healer, but also 'Giver of sickness'.

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

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

3 - How, Then, Shall We Heal?

We come now to see how we can bring the healing of God to people. In this we must firstly understand that there is no true healing apart from the Atonement. In Matt.8:16-17 we read, 'That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases".'

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

Notice that Christ 'took' i.e. '*took away* from the sick what they had', i.e. their sicknesses. He also defeated the evil spirits with a word. This means that these things - sicknesses, infirmities and demons - were therefore no longer with them. He also 'bore', i.e. in some way took from them and bore himself. The context shows he had authority and power to do this, but in no sense did he bear the guilt that was the cause of those sins. In Isaiah 53:4 we read, 'Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows', which can also be translated 'He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains'. However the context shows that 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.'

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

This is a tremendous message for the ill. On the one hand it gives them hope for healing: on the other it warns them against expecting to be healed apart from healing of the guilt. Christ has borne the guilt, so he can now heal them. The need for repentance and faith (both of which are gifts of God) must be stressed, but always it must be taught that grace precedes faith, and indeed faith springs from the word of grace (Rom. 10:17).

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

Elements To Be Considered For Healing

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

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

Now the counsellor needs to understand the counsellee in all these states, and particularly at the point of his need. Indeed he must perceive what this person has heard of the word of God, what understanding he has achieved and where he 'stands' in regard to those words i.e. the word of God. By this we mean that the wisdom concerning created man, fallen man, man redeemed, man seeking holiness, man serving God, man anticipating glorification and ultimate identity - this is the wisdom the counsellor must draw upon, and bring into play.

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

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

Accountability a Key to True Healing.

In the Scriptures man is responsible for all his own actions, and choices. Ezekiel 18 should be studied closely for here the principle of personal accountability is set out clearly. Some in Israel had said, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' They meant, ' We are like we are, and do what we do as the result (only) of what our parents were

and did.' In other words there is no taking of responsibility for the sins one has committed. This is suicidal, for if God is to forgive sins He can do this only where those sins are acknowledged as having been committed. i.e. where the sinner takes responsibility for them.

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

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

Problems We Meet In Seeking to Heal.

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

North Americans have devised a verb 'to hurt', i.e. 'to feel hurt', so that it then appears to be a normal part of life 'to hurt'. In fact no Christian should be 'hurting'. Hit on one cheek we should immediately turn the other. We cannot afford to cultivate 'hurt', which, anyway is generally compounded of righteous indignation, a sense of injustice, more than a dash of anger, and a large portion of self-pity. 'When he was reviled he reviled not again, but committed himself to Him who judges righteously'. That was the way of the Master, and it should also be the way of the servant.

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

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

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

have been dealt with, but faithlessness retains them as real. Thus we make play with ghost-guilts, ghost-hurts, ghost-shame and so on. The Psalmist said, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord!'

He meant, 'I have cried out of the depths of myself, all that is there in the hidden depths of me.' Christ, in his terrible cry of dereliction expressed forever all the sorrows, griefs, shames, pains, anguish, shock and horrors of the human spirit, and in so doing obliterated them. They are no more! He cried 'out of the depths' but then those were the depths of all of us, and without that crying of his we could never be healed. This is what is meant by 'He was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sins of many'.

Conclusion to Healing.

The First Thing We Need To See Is That Christ Came To Heal, and this is what he does. He announced what this would be,

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

When John the Baptist was tempted to doubt his Messianic being and mission, then, 'In that hour he [Christ] cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight, and he answered them, 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, to poor have good news preached to them.'" 'Peter later spoke of his healing ministry, 'He went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil'.

The Second Thing We Need To See Is That Healing Lies In Forgiveness. When we are forgiven the cause of much illness is destroyed. Being forgiven demands that we forgive. Sin against us is primarily sin against God (Psalm 51:4), so we dare not withhold God's forgiveness from anyone, 'Freely you have received: freely give'. Forgiving others is healing to us.

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

The Third Thing For Healing Is That Having Been Loved We Love. 'Where I love I live,' the poet said correctly. This means that parents must love children, husbands wives and wives husbands, members of the family must love all others, and all believers must love all mankind - no matter how unlovable others may appear. Love forgives: love 'covers the multitude of sins'. Love builds others up, it does not break them down. Love in fact is the only true constraint, the only true control over human actions.

The Fourth Thing Is That Healing Must Be Deep And Total. Unfortunately some people like to exercise priestly power and seek to hand out healing and wholeness. Only God can heal: only Christ can bring to wholeness. Paul said, 'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation' (Tit. 2:11). The word 'salvation' has the ideas of saving, delivering and healing. The word 'salve' (salvation) is embedded in these ideas. True healing must be deep, because human illness from sin is very deep.

On this score Jeremiah's prophecy is most vocal. Jeremiah, as we see in a detailed study of 30:12-17, sees sickness

coming to Israel as the result of its sins. It is both a consequence of guilt, the punishment too, for sinning. God promises, nevertheless, 'I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal'.

Unfortunately there were amateur healers in Israel, people who had medicine which was 'alternate' to God's healing balm. Of these God exclaims, 'They have healed the wound of my people lightly (i.e. 'slightly', as though it were not serious, i.e. 'a light scratch') saying 'Peace! Peace!' when there is no peace' (6:14, 8:11).

Jeremiah sees Israel's sickness and wounds as deep; "The virgin daughter of my people is smitten with a great wound, with a very grievous blow.' He says, 'For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded,' and he asks, 'Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?'. To him this illness and wounding is very deep. In 30:13 he addresses Israel, 'There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you.' If we apply this material to human illness resulting from sin and guilt, we then cry with Jeremiah, 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' The answer is, of course, that the balm of God - the 'salve' of salvation - is the Atonement. True healing never takes place apart from grace. The taking away of a sickness does not necessarily mean the healing of a person.

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

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

CONCLUSION TO 'A BIBLICAL WAY OF COUNSELLING'.

The Use of the Wisdom We Have

Some readers may have a large measure of disappointment in this book. They may have obtained it with the idea of discovering how to counsel. 'How to' is always a notoriously difficult thing to capture. Think of the 'How To' books you have read and calculate, if you can, what methodological benefit they have been to you.

It is a fact of human life that we are all different, and that we use what knowledge and wisdom we have in the ways we operate. Nothing is ever quite how it was taught us. We all use the same principles differently. I am *certain* that there *are* principles of wisdom in the Scriptures which we can discover, evaluate, and use in the cause of counselling. At the same time I trust we use *none of* these principles apart from personally relating to God as Father, Christ as Lord, and the Holy Spirit as teacher, leader and guide.

I am sure we need to use the material set out in Study I in order to understand the functional pattern of the early church. The proclamation of the word of God, the radical transformation of life, and 'the 'great grace' that was upon the church, enabled the community to live without the clinical assistance which is available to us today. The structure of ministry, of elders and of deacons, with the use of gifts and spiritual weapons, - not omitting worship - all made ideally for a community which needed little 'clinical' help.

Whatever the value of modern clinical therapies, we ought to work towards restoration of the use of Scripture and the teaching of it, as also the manner of community life known in the early church. Nothing could be more comprehensive than, 'All

scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work' (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The material we saw in Study 2 enables us to develop and use the wisdom we have in humility, especially when advice, direction and understanding are required. 'Knowing man' follows 'knowing God', and both are what we can 'relational' matters. We can, reasonably speaking, pinpoint where a person is 'at', knowing the elements which relate to creational fullness, fallenness, the redeemed state of man, his battles for holiness and his life lived in great hope as he anticipates the end things.

Study Three helps us to bring the power of salvation into relationships which are both vertical and horizontal. The immense value of reconciliation, and its restoration to true relationships between God and man, man and God, and man and man, are most valuable in *restoring* love and dignity to the community. The true counsellor must be able to communicate these facts, and help God's people live in them. He can also assist in the righting of wrong relationships, for, as Christ said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers', i.e. 'the reconcilers'.

The largest problem facing man is authority, i.e. laws, commands, submission and obedience. Where this situation is 'cracked', i.e. broken open, and God's authority is seen as love, then the impact of this will be seen practically in the way a person accepts and lives life. The peace to conscience which comes from pursuing the way of love, itself acts as a further constraint and encouragement. Study 4 then, should be valuable, providing - as in other cases - that the counsellor is a person of love.

The heart of the human matter is relationships that stem from God. In creation a functional pattern was set up, but men at his fall into sin repudiated this. The renewal of human sonship of God helps to restore child-parent, and parent-child relationships. The materials in Study 5 should prove of immense

practical value when the filial drive in man finds its fulfilment and purpose in relating to God as Father, and to Christ as the Elder Brother. This familial renewal can result in an strong impact upon community life, healing mankind of its ills. Again, the counsellor must himself be a person who genuinely knows God as Father.

The two Studies, 6 and 7, touch on the most sensitive area of all. We need to know why human beings are angry, so that we can lead them to the causes of anger, and then to its cure. The causes lies in man's alienation from God, his emotional starvation or deprivation, and his refusal to walk in the will of God. Anything which gets in his way thus causes this (irrational) anger.

Linked with this is man's sense of injustice. He sees God as slow to exact justice or requite injustice. He sees heredity, parental upbringing, environment, and circumstances, as strong factors in making him what he is when in fact his choices of will have really determined what he has become.

The knowledge that God has taken away his guilt, that Christ has borne it on the Cross, and that he has also taken into himself the pain, grief and suffering of the human race is the only thing which turns back the anger, and in fact dissolves it. Again, we see it is love which brings serenity to the human spirit. Tranquillity - God's own peace - is a great gift to mankind.

The healing of a person comes primarily through the Cross. God deals with the cause of much sickness - sin and its guilt - and then with the consequences of that guilt, disturbance in the inner person, and, often sickness itself. The remedial and transforming actions of God as seen in Studies I -7 come into full play in the healing of persons. For this reason counselling people should not be the healing of a wound 'lightly', i.e. 'as though it were a scratch', but seeing and proclaiming the great work of the Spirit, i.e. 'the washing of regeneration' and 'the renewal of the Holy Spirit' as the true work which transforms a person. Only grace ever finally reaches the depths of a human being, and this grace is the true 'balm of Gilead', i.e. the salve of the Cross.

Of course where a human being is deliberately obstinate, intransigent, so that he refuses the grace of God, no counselling - not in all the world - can change and heal that one.

All in all, then, the materials we have brought together form a strong unity. They spring, in themselves, from the wisdom of God, and when such wisdom understood by us, we are well on the way to good counselling, i.e. the proclamation of the saving Gospel, and the use of true God-given commonsense, that commonsense which avoids like the plague anything esoteric, gnostic, occultic, sacerdotal or mystical. 'The things which are secret belong to God. The things which are revealed belong to us - to do them!' This is a slight paraphrase of Deuteronomy 29:29, and serves as a good warning against adding to the wisdom of God!

A PORTRAIT OF A CHRISTIAN COUNSELLOR

There is of course no ideal Christian counsellor, but the following points may prove helpful in shaping up a helpful image or pattern of a counsellor. By 'Christian counsellor' we simply mean a Christian who counsels, i.e. one who gives helpful advice and direction to another needs, and desires it.

The following shows that a true counsellor is a person who has been 'relationalised', a person who has come to know God as Father, Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Elder Brother. Only in first relating to God can one then relate to others. Even so one, having been forgiven and loved by God, must deliberately love all, forgive all, desire forgiveness from all.

A counsellor is one who,

- (i) is a wise person, i.e. has that wisdom gained from Scripture, life, and experience which fits the situation of the counsellee. Wise is the person who knows when he does not have the required wisdom, and does not go beyond what he has.
- (ii) is a person who has repented, 'come to faith, been forgiven, justified, and sanctified, and who has received the gifts of love and the Holy Spirit. This means he is a person of holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth and love. None of these things exists without the other. This means he is a man or woman transformed, filled, and led by the Spirit, even to discovering at his point of need that wisdom which he lacks.
- (iii) is a witness to the truth, i.e. a person of the truth, because he has come to the truth. Witness in the early church was telling what one had seen and heard No one can witness beyond what he or she has experienced. The witness is to the truth of the Father, the Son, by the Spirit. It is 'telling the word of grace'.

- (iv) is a person of love, compassion, tenderness. This is part of 'doing the truth', i.e. 'truing it in love'. All must be done in love (I Cor. 16:14), or it is worth nothing (I Cor. 13:1-3) Love is not emotional softness, nor mere sentimentality. No one should relate to another 'horizontally' who does not first relate 'vertically' to God. See I Thess. 1:5-6, 2:7-8,11.
- (v) is a person who has suffered and suffers. II Cor. 1:3-7 teaches that we can genuinely comfort others in their suffering when we ourselves have suffered.
- (vi) is a person who ministers not from 'strength', but from 'weakness'. See II Cor. 3:5-6, II Cor. 12:1-10, I Cor. 1:25-31, cf. II Cor. 13:4. In this case his 'weakness' is his 'strength'. Needy persons are threatened by 'strength' (cf. Romans chs. 14-15, I Cor. ch. 8).
- (vii) is a person of authority, i.e. is himself submitted to God 'from the heart', and is obedient to God's law. This one speaks from submission and does not 'lord it' over others (1 Pet. 5:2-3). This means he lives in truth and love and can thus direct others. There may be occasions when the counsellor has to discipline another, in love, but this is different from 'lording it'.
- (viii) is a person who points to God - the Father and the Son - and not to himself. He is not 'father', and 'teacher' and 'master'. On the one hand he can say 'Be imitators of me as I am of Christ', and yet not claim their personal following for himself, nor stand in the way of their *direct* relationship with Christ. In no way must he ever be 'mediatorial'. This does not mean he is severely detached from the person, but also it means he is not sentimentally and emotionally 'attached'.
- (ix) is a person who believes in the sovereignty of God, i.e. who sees God working in all, and so does not see himself as a 'Mr. Fixit'. True wisdom helps us to see our own limitations, but God's 'non-limitations'. Thus the counsellor is not hasty, fearful, despairing, but believing, knowing that God is working, even

though the end outcome of another person may prove to be judgement at the hand of God. See Prov. 16:4, with Prov. 1:7, 25, 29-30, 12:1, 15:10). The true counsellor will come to recognise he can accomplish nothing where the counsellee will not truly listen particularly because his will is set against true counsel.

Let me stress again what I have pointed out in the notes, anyone can share the wisdom he or she has with anyone who needs it. In the early church all members shared their gifts with one another. They worked for, and with, all others, and they served one another. Whilst some may have a special gift and skill for counselling, all can counsel, i.e. give helpful advice, assist in direction, and comfort and encourage one another.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This present book is small, and has no hope of covering the issues it raises, let alone the wider scope of full counselling. For this reason I have not tried to give a definitive bibliography. Instead I refer readers to comprehensive bibliographies in the books, 'The Things We Firmly Believe' (a comprehensive bibliography of theology), 'Man Woman and Sexuality', and 'The Wounding and the Healing'. There are also useful bibliographies in some of the 'Living Faith Studies'. These 50 studies are in 5 volumes, and touch on many themes which are relevant to the material contained in this book.

I have listed the 8 studies, and some of my own books which relate to them. The dates of publication are not listed.

STUDY ONE. WHAT IS BIBLICAL COUNSELLING.?' with 'Practical Christian Counselling', 'The Things We Firmly Believe'.

STUDY TWO. 'COMING TO KNOW MAN THROUGH GOD' with, 'I, The Man !' 'Man is What!', 'Man, Woman, and Sexuality', 'The Things We Firmly Believe', 'Discovering Your Identity'.

STUDY THREE. 'HOW, THEN, SHALL WE RELATE?' with, 'Freely Flows Forgiveness', 'Where I Love I Live', 'Christ's People in Today's World'.

STUDY FOUR. 'AUTHORITY AND THE LIFE OF LOVE' with, 'The Constraint of Love' (1986), 'True God or New Guru?', 'Man, Woman and Sexuality', 'The Authority and Submission of Love'.

STUDY FIVE. 'RELEASE AND FULFILMENT IN HIS FATHERHOOD' with 'Oh Father! Our Father!', 'The God and Father of Us All', 'True God or New Guru?'

STUDY SIX. 'LOSING ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY with 'Angry Heart of Tranquil Mind?' 'The Justice Men and the Great Rage', 'Sabbath Rest or Human Turmoil?'

STUDY SEVEN. 'LOSING 'ANGER AND FINDING TRANQUILLITY ' II .' with 'Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind', 'Sabbath Rest or Human Turmoil'.

STUDY EIGHT. 'HOW THEN, SHALL WE HEAL?' with 'The Wounding and the Healing', 'Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?'

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