

Man of Dust!
Man of Glory!

Geoffrey C. Bingham

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THE WAY OF A MAN

*'The way of a man is not in himself:
It is Not in man to direct his own footsteps'..*

JEREMIAH 10:23

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PREFACE

Some years ago I wrote a small book entitled *What is Man?* The material in this formed the basis for an expanded publication called *I, the Man!* Both works were primarily theological, and the reading of them before reading the present volume could prove useful.

This volume, *Man of Dust! Man of Glory!* is an attempt to enter into Man as he was, and is, and will be, and to experience what he experienced, experiences and will experience. This sort of treatment is closer to our hearts than a directly theological one and especially so to our emotions. When we can feel our humanity and our personhood, then we are at home with the material we read.

A short story writer of quite some vintage, I have always been fascinated by human beings. Brought up in what might almost be called a severe school of theology, and having shared with humanity within the confines of a Japanese Prisoner-of-War camp, I have had plenty of time to observe human beings at close range.

The one at closest range of all is, of course, oneself. Too close to see ourselves properly, we have to wait on the kindness and frankness of our friends, no less than the censure of our enemies. What a shock to discover things about yourself! I remember clearly so many self-

revelations, yet even these have not destroyed the high view of man which I learned in the Scriptures. Jesus is, of course, man par excellence, yet not so as to cast us into despair about ourselves.

It is a thrilling thing to discover what it is to be man—just a little lower than God! I trust that the reading of these essays—yes, they are essays—will be profitable to you as they proved to be to me in the writing of them. What makes their truth so wonderful is—to use the words of Athanasius—'God became man, so that man might become God'. Of course he did not mean that man attains to Godhead, but that he becomes 'a partaker in the Divine Nature'.

*Geoffrey Bingham
Coromandel
December 1985*

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The term 'man' is a difficult one to use, especially in these days when it is generally taken to mean 'the male'. Its generic use in the Bible includes both male and female, eg. 'In His image made He them; male and female made He them, and He called them man'. Them of course means man-and-woman, and they are man. For the most part that is how I use the term in this book. Thus when I write, 'I, The Forgiven Man' I mean 'the forgiven male', 'the forgiven female', but equally 'the forgiven of mankind'. Indeed the word is often synonymous with 'mankind' or 'humanity'. For those who are sensitive concerning the word 'man' because they think it refers to the male, let me say gently that in the Bible it is the specific word for the male (as well as—in other cases—the generic word), but not in this volume. In this book it covers both the male and the female, and when gender is needed then the words 'male' and 'female' are used. It is a most difficult practice to keep on saying 'his/her', 'she/he'. I hope the reader will see that.

Even so, the use of the word 'man' has its difficulties in this writing. Sometimes I want to talk about man as a corporate entity in which case I use the word Man, but even then I want the speaker (writer) to speak also as a single man. For this reason the reader has to be patient

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and understanding, especially as 'Man' and 'man' seemed to undertake bewildering changes. The matter becomes even more complicated when we realise that one part of Man (the corporate) is seen to be in God or in Christ, and the other part to be out of Him. We have to recognise that the whole human race is an entity, one family. Man's sinfulness does separate him from God, and so mankind has two families, those who are essentially the children of God through Christ, and those who—by separation from God—have denied themselves this sonship. Hence when I speak of 'Man', I sometimes refer specifically to those in the faith, and exclude those who are not. I say again that the matter is complicated.

I trust this will intrigue the reader rather than put him off reading.

ONE

I, THE MAN, FROM THE BEGINNING UNTIL NOW

THIS WAS THE BEGINNING

I am the man: I am Man: 'I am a man. I am the one whom God created. Before time began, God purposed me. He purposed my destiny. He purposed my destiny as man—corporate man, Man who is male and female. He also purposed me as a man, a person, a single human being. He purposes all human beings, one way or another. He keeps all history in His hands. The mystery of such elective intention, as also such elective love, is beyond human telling. It is, however, something I experience in time, continue to experience in time, and will know in eternity. It is a glorious destiny to have been created by the hand of God.

Once I was not. There was time when I was not. 'It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves'. That should be one of the guiding revelations of God's nature and man's understanding of himself. Since I have not made myself, I belong to my Maker: since He made me, I am His creature. This brings humility, comfort and security.

It guards me against pride.

As created man, I was a creature of joy. I will briefly tell you of those primal days. In the sight of celestial creatures, God chose to fashion me in His own image: everything that He was, I was like that, but then anything He was (is) essentially, I was none of that. Such simple dependence upon God as Creator was most beautiful; for those were days of sheer serenity since I knew only innocence. Nor was that innocence ignorance of any kind. My Creator was pleased to endow me with pure intelligence. My thoughts were true and, so, magnificent.

In primal times, I knew things which now I know only by revelation. Later I will explain this puzzling mystery. I knew God to be Creator, and I knew Him to be King over all His works, over things in heaven, and upon earth. He created dazzling arrays of celestial beings, and gave them power over the various kingdoms He had designed. When He made me, His desire was that I—I and all my race—should be part of that Kingdom. He was my King.

He was also my Father. I must explain briefly. History has shown Him to be the Father of the eternal Son, the One who, at a certain point in time, left the celestial glory to become man! The revelation the Son brought was of His Father. With this came a further revelation—man is the child of God! This was so when I was created: man was a child of the Creator, but the understanding became lost. As I said before, I will try to explain this fact later. Millenniums after man's creation, the apostle Paul quoted a pagan poet of his day to a Greek audience, 'we are indeed His offspring'. Luke, the Gospel writer, records, 'Adam was the son of God'.

As a child of God, creature of the Creator, and willing subject of God, in His Kingdom my life was profoundly rich. As modern sinful man, it is difficult for me to remember those days. Indeed, it is quite painful: to contrast the then-glory with the now-degradation is a matter of anguish. So excruciating is it that I am often forced to pull down a blind over it. Even then I see the shadows of those wonderful things through the pulled blind of my memory. This is what I mean by saying man lost his innocence and his pure knowledge of God, himself and the creation. What he needs to know of these must now come to him by revelation.

At first, I was man without woman. All creatures were complete in their mateship, I alone was alone, but I must say clearly that I was not *lonely*, for my fellowship was with God. When He 'created woman it was in a particular way. To create me, he had taken the soil and moulded it into my shape. Then He had breathed into that shaped earth, and I had become a living creature. The old stories say that I was very beautiful, glowing with glory. That does not mean I disliked coming from earth, as though it were too lowly, for I loved coming from the earth, since earth, too, is beautiful.

God must have had great purpose for the woman, for He took part of me to shape her, and intimately fashioned her with His powers. When He gave her to me, I cried out, 'She is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone!' I meant, 'She is part of me, and we belong to one another!' This is a mystery, and has something to it that no other mateship in all the creation can parallel or equal.

But I linger long over this story. Memory comes to me sweetly in regard to those great events and wonderful

days. I was a man: she was a woman. Together we were Man. In the loins of the male were the billions of progeny to come—the entire human race. In her loins was fecundity beyond any dreaming. What days of glory they were!

Now comes the painful pan. As Man, I gave entry to sin and death, two tyrants who henceforth were to dominate the human race, and bring them to terrible misery. I think you have read my story, the story of primeval man and woman, who, when tempted, went against God's will. They listened to the heady suggestion that man could become as God—a patently impossible thing, if one were able to view it detachedly, objectively, but we were passionate for higher things than being merely human. Being like God was not enough for us. 'I must be as God!', we said. Therein lay my huge sin, my vast evil desire, and with it the deceit of evil.

The ruin that followed has always been part of the history of the human race. Sin and death established themselves as tyrannous enemies, and the serpent of those days—now known as 'that ancient serpent, the devil'—continued (and continues) to befoul man and creation with his heady pride and obscene ambition to equal God in His own universe.

We lost all: we lost life. We became Spiritless creatures. Our innocent relationship with God gave way to a guilty one. We could only see and sense Him through guilt. The joy of the Garden, as such, was gone. Beauty confronted us, rather than was a way of life. Serenity seemed like a ghost-memory, and joy had given away to sickening emptiness. The heady thought of being as God—'knowing good and evil'—no longer

sustained us as Man. The judgement He gave to the serpent, and the judgements He gave to us—with prophecies—were certainly the basis for hope, but then we were not thinking in terms of hope.

So that—as I have described it—is the story of man as created, as mated, as in fellowship with God, and as tempted to rival God! It is the story of the race's origins of guilt, and the rationale of its fear of death, as also its subjection to both sin and death. It explains why—from time to time—we become nostalgic about some Paradise, and we think of the richest of human relationships—never marred by anger. We seem to remember a time when to know God fully was natural to our humanity. I, we, are that humanity.

You may call it lost, or you may call it fallen. 'Spiritless' is what I would call it: no one's total person henceforth ever being truly integrated, ever wholly real. Sad as this picture appears—and it is sad—I must tell you that even so the grace of the Creator-Father-King was not absent from the event. I scarcely realised the good hand of God upon the ancient event. Whilst it is true that He promised doom to the serpent and ascent to the man, yet I never really understood.

Now, of course, I know, but that is a different story. It must come later. There is much in between the 'then' and the 'later'.

This Was the Centre of History

Theologians speak about me—man—as being a solitary body. All humanity, they say, was in the loins of the first

man: all have come from him. He is their history and they are his. We are all one. Even so, each man is a person. He or she has separate and unique identity. At the same time 'no man is an island unto himself. We are all part of that solidary whole, and where our identity lies so does our experience and our responsibility. The history of the race is in some way, also, the history of the person.

Ejection from Eden—the garden of delight—did not necessarily mean rejection by God. As man of all time I can—now in these later ages—see many of the mistakes we made. How else would we have thought than the way we did. When human beings are sure they know the difference between good and evil, they assume that their discernments and ideas are correct ones. On their own assessments and evaluations they live their lives. Time would fail me to tell the outcome and results of deficient perception and discernment. Such folly is universal.

Cain's hatred of his brother through insecurity of personhood was the primal paradigm of man's greatest problem—anger. Anger is rooted in enmity to God and so to His creation, and the humanity He has made. Anger leads to violence. I must confess that I am at once the peaceful man, the temperate man and the indolent man. I am also the envious, jealous, bitter and ambitious man. I cause the violence I abhor. I admire the brilliance I see in myself, and deplore God's handling of His own creation. I am always a contradiction: within me the image of God is a compelling thrust towards the good, but my pride and rebellion refuse to respond.

Violence was in me up until the Flood. This Flood was God's way of judgement, otherwise we would have

persisted in our sin. The Flood was no handy rinse to make the world all fresh and pure. The Flood was the wrath of God in sensible action. The Flood led to the great families of the earth, namely those of Ham, Shem and Japheth. We might say that man's true history began with Shem, or, rather his descendants, and in particular Abraham.

In one sense all history prior to Abraham was simply to slant man towards covenant, that agreement which God made with the man Abraham, promising the blessing first to the descendants of Abraham, and then to all who blessed themselves by Abraham, ie. received him as God's man, and so accepted his God. Paul tells us that the greatest thing of that blessing was justification, for 'Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness [justification: right standing with God, and in the sight of His law]'. Whilst the history of this covenant is fascinating, it led to a division between humanity. I, man: I, the human race, was divided.

We cannot say the division was not there before. Keen readers of history will see that there have always been men of faith as well as those of unbelief. This is most powerfully seen in the case of Cain and Abel. Abel was a righteous (justified) man, and a prophet, and Cain hated him 'because his brother's deeds were righteous and his own were evil'. Doubtless Cain's problem lay in guilt, and feeling—by reason of guilt—alienated from God, he hated the intimacy Abel seemed to have with God. Guilt brings insecurity: Cain saw an elitism in Abel. His anger grew to violence and murder. So the non-Israelite nations have hated what seems to be an elitism in the case of Israel. Israel claims to know the truth! 'What conceit!', cry the nations, 'and what exclusive claims to

God!' I am man, and I have to confess that our race has always had divisions: this division of all divisions that of Jew and Gentile has always been the cause of unending anger.

One of the most remarkable men in all history was Saul of Tarsus, persecutor of Christians, and enemy of the Gospel of Messiah. His Judaism (Jewish faith) was exclusivist. Whilst he would have seen the nations ultimately included in the Abrahamic covenant, he certainly did not see that covenant coming into fullness through the blasphemer, Jesus of Nazareth. At his conversion, Paul immediately perceived that the Gospel was for both Jew and Gentile. His mind was set to go throughout the world proclaiming this. For our purposes the first three chapters of Romans are a brilliant setting out of the misery of mankind through its rebellion against God, and in this exposition he shows that so far as our humanity is concerned *there is no fundamental difference between a Jew and a Gentile*, for we are all of the one (common) stock. He shows that human misery is universal and, because of sin, is endemic in both Jew and Gentile. It is about that misery I now write briefly.

Human misery arises from human guilt: there is no mystery about this. Rejection of God is really rejection of one's *essential* self. 'The way of a man is not in himself: it is not in a man to direct his own footsteps.' Sin is against true human nature: it causes fearful dislocation and malfunction of the authentic human ego. As man I (we) have lived in unending and intolerable anguish until the very ego itself has known such division and fragmenting that living has become intolerable. The measures

taken to counter this misery, by nature of the case, cannot be finally successful. What we have failed to realise is that the very misery man knows is in fact—seen from another vantage point—the very wrath of God working in us. I suppose that much—if not all our anger—is directed at God for being angry with us! We not only think He has no right to such anger, but that He has no cause for it.

Whatever the merits or otherwise of our reasoning we are constantly in suffering and misery. The human race can say, 'I am man. I suffer without cessation. My remedies for suffering never succeed. I refuse to admit that I am man: under-doom. I will find my way to truth and liberation, come what may!' You see, then, that I write as divided man. I am a (the) sinner against God, denying always that I am essentially a sinner.

Only the covenant with Abraham can give hope to the world. Apart from that gift of God, the human race is left forever in its own guilt, shame, anger and division. Three great religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—acknowledge that something of great significance happened in history when '... the God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham'. Other religions remain oblivious of this event, or see it as a mere historical happening, having no special importance for us—the human race.

The importance of the ancient covenant is astronomical. Rooted in history, in that branch of the Semitic people called Israelites, the principle of the Abrahamic covenant was first narrowed down to Abraham's blood descendants through Isaac and Jacob, and expressed through Israel's great prophet-leader Moses. For one

and a half millenniums it worked itself out in Palestine in Jewish nationalism with some success and much failure. Of itself, the Mosaic expression of the Abrahamic covenant failed to be the answer to human misery. It was not, anyway, designed to be the answer to universal human need. The function of Israel was to be the matrix for the coming of the universal Messiah. He alone can deal with man's dilemma, ie. his sinfulness in the light of the holy God.

I, man, had never succeeded in healing the breach between myself (the human race) and God. I, man, am ever rebellious against God. Even as I am man-in-Israel, I am still basically rebellious. These are the fruits of my ambitious move in the ancient garden. Who, then, can cure me, and free me of our misery?

The Divided Self, The Split Personality

Here I must speak. Here we must speak. I am man. I am an entity. I am whole being. I am a solidary body. I am unified by creation. I am Adam: I am Man. The mystery of my unity is hidden because of the Fall happening in my history, in our time. I can no longer speak as one: and the cause of this happened as follows:

When God created me as man—as male and female He created me one. My humanity is not of two races, ie. male and female, but of one male-female entity. Male is not superior to or inferior to female, nor female superior or inferior to male. The two are of the one being, undivided humanity. We would understand this mystery more clearly had we not become unnaturally divided by sin. When the woman was tempted to eat of the fruit of

the tree of knowledge of good and evil, she began to break from God. When the man (male) also ate of it, he broke off from God. In the event, male broke from female, female from male. They were divided, and not truly 'one flesh', although their biological unity was not functionally impaired. To break off from God is to break off from each other. This is the disunity.

Man, then, is one and not-one. He is one essentially as a race, and one in male-female unity. All man's seed is of the one solidary body. Yet breaking fellowship with God means the breaking of true human unity. The thrust for it is there, but the power to effect it is broken. Evil is always disparate, fragmented, incapable of love's unification. It has no ontological reality. It can build nothing. Where evil exists, man must fight for any element of unity, racially and humanly. The unity that comes in order to effect selfish gain is a temporary, though dynamic, unity.

I must now speak of, and from, and about, my divided self. First I have the Cain-Abel dividedness. He who loves God loves his brother. This is normal to true human creational being. He who hates God hates his brother: he who hates his brother hates God. This is the counter-self, denying what God has made us to be as humanity.

We live, then, in the tragedy of the Cain-Abel division. First Cain speaks to declare' his position, and after him, Abel:

Cain: 'I am Cain. I am of the noblest birth. My parents created by God decided to go it alone. They defied God. I am of that seed. I, too, defy God. I wish for His acceptance. I offer my sacrifice: I will cause God to accept me. He does not accept

me. My offering was good of the fruits of my labours, but He does not see it is good. This means He is critical of me. I am angry with Him. He ought not to accept my brother, Abel, and not accept me. That is an injustice. I am as good as my brother: he is as bad as me. God made him to be a prophet, and he does the works he believes he should do. So do I. Why, then, the difference? I cannot be at one with God. I cannot be at one with my brother. I know my anger moves me deeply, but I will get justice, whatever. I will take the law into my own hands.

'I am the Cain of all history—the Cains if you like. How can I be one with a person such as Abel? He is an elitist. He gives himself out that he is better than I am. That is intolerable. No man is better than another. We all have the same origins. Our division, therefore, must remain, since our minds are incompatible.'

Abel: 'I love my brother Cain. I know he does not believe this. Certainly he does not want it. I have faith in God. There is nothing meritorious about my sacrifice. It is offered to God not as a bribe, or to curry favour, but to acknowledge my need of Him, and my faith is that He receives me, in spite of my sin, and the sin of my parents. I am not an elitist. I do not think myself better than my brother, although he thinks that I do.'

'My problem is that the sin of our father is in us all, and its effects upon us all. Our race is now divided. You would think that to love others would unite us, but because those who reject God really reject love, so our love for them divides instead of unifies. There seems to be no way out of this problem, since those who oppose God are always in conflict with those who have faith in Him. Hatred always works in that way.'

'It seems, then, that down through the history of the human race this problem will remain until some special person comes and some special happening takes place. It will have to be a happening that can—by its miraculous nature—reunite us.'

I have spoken of my divided self. Now I must speak of my further divided self I must mention my being as both Jew and Gentile. It is inconceivable that man should be a functional entity and yet be divided, so that he is at odds with himself. This, sadly enough, is the case. There is no difference in principle in the Jew-Gentile and Cain-Abel matter. Both are divided on account of God. In order to understand this you will have to understand my history as man. When as man I chose to be *as* God, and not simply *like* God, then I really rejected the true natures of both God and man. I was a unity when one with God, and now sought to have my own unity: I need such unity *against* God. What I did not reckon on was the image of God in man or 'man-in-the-image-of-God'. I did not realise man would always be fighting himself when against God.

Even more, I had not reckoned on God's sovereignty, His choice of human beings over and against themselves. I had not reckoned on election, and the powerful elective love of God. Even after many, many millenniums I do not understand it. However I have been ceaselessly faced with this reality. From the very beginning there have been men and women of faith. Abel was a man of faith. It seems Eve was a person of faith also. She was delighted with God that He had given her Seth, the substitute for murdered Abel. He was a substitute in *kind*, and not only in *number*. He was a godly man.

Much if not most—of the history of the human race can be summed up in one word—idolatry. As man I must have an object of worship. Setting out to make myself the primary object of honour, I soon found myself craving idols. I needed something to adore, something to address myself to, since one cannot exist

alone. Idols soon increase themselves. The fewer the idols there are, the more one is self-integrated; the more the idols, the less self-integrated. Many idols make for many loyalties, and many loyalties make for much division. 'A double-hearted man is unstable in all his ways', the writer James once said. Jesus said, 'No man can serve two masters'. Serving many masters is confusing. It fragments the spirit of a man. Spiritless men and women are more easily fragmented than others. One of the great men of my history was Abraham. From being a worshipper of idols, he became the worshipper of one God, the true and living God. This was because, 'The God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham'.

There had always been men and women of faith, as I have already observed. However Abraham was remarkable for his faith, perhaps above all men, and especially in an age of idolatry. His grandson Jacob—later known as Israel—was the father of twelve sons, and their descendants form the people of Israel. They were called to worship the true God, and, because of this, God gave them a special 'people-covenant'. Within that covenant they had the glory of God, the law, the worship, the promises, and their sonship of their Covenant-Father, God. These things were unique in the history of the world. No other people had ever had them. What is more, this people came to the world in the name of their God, Yahweh, declaring Him to be Lord over all the universe, and their God in particular.

Thus the division was polarised. All idolaters were proclaimed to be outside God's Kingdom, and all people of the covenant to be inside it. That has angered the nations down through the centuries. It is the Cain-Abel affair on a national-international scale. But the rift is

on human estimate—irreparable. The nations of the world have deep enmity for this small company of people who call themselves the covenant-people of God.

I have, then, described the rift in humanity, but I have not dealt with its anguish. Whilst the division of the race is a sad matter, it is experience of that division which is for some a matter of deep suffering, and even greater envy. Perhaps you have never felt the need of expiation for guilt. Perhaps you are one of those who know only contempt for people who suffer deeply in guilt. If, however, you were in their state and longed for some anodyne for your pain, then the sight of the Jewish altar of sacrifice would be agony. To stand in the court of the Gentiles (also being the court of sinners), and to look on God's way of expiation would be greatly frustrating. To imagine your guilt swallowed up in the dramatic scene of bloodletting, victim offering, fire-immolating sacrifice would be to bring sheer relief to the conscience, a sense of cool peace to the mind, and serenity to the troubled spirit. To think in terms of really knowing God, sharing the gift of law, the glory of the Presence, the prophetic promises and the sonship—to say nothing of the Messiah—would be wonderful beyond measure. Of course you would need to want these things, to wish for them out of deep desire.

Were they then to be denied to you so that you were 'separated from Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise, *having no hope, and without God in the world*'; then that would be a sorry matter. For some it might be a matter of rage, an occasion to accuse God of favouritism, and grounds for intentional atheism.

I tell you all of these things so that you can understand the pain and anguish of the human race, divided in itself, and without hope of reconciliation and final harmony.

Christ—My New History

The old prophets spoke of the coming of a special Person. They had various images of him, and many predictions concerning him. This Man to come was not me, but he was, and is, most necessary for me to survive, to become what I am not, and to restore me to what I once was, and to make me even more than that. As I keep saying, I am Man (male and female) created, fallen, and in terrible despair. I am man divided, and I must become man united. Of this I have spoken in 'The Divided Self, the Split Personality', page 10, so that I will not pursue the subject here. Rather I will continue on from my previous theme, 'This Was the Centre of History', proceeding to the Person whom Luther called 'The Proper Man'.

This Proper Man was given various names by the prophets such as 'the Seed', 'Shiloh', 'the Lord', 'the Prophet', 'Son of God', 'Son of man', 'Messiah', 'Son of David', 'the Righteous Branch' and 'the Servant of God'. There was no such explicit term 'Son of God', but it is strongly implied. 'Son of man' might have had less clarity had we not read the New Testament, but the fact is that if all the names we have written were applied to one person, then he would be the most remarkable person to have lived upon the earth.

This man came to bring in the New Covenant, to close the gap between Israel and the other nations. Indeed, he

came to show the universal nature of the Abrahamic covenant, and to bring divided humanity together. He came to heal the split in my being, the Cain-Abel split, and the Jew-Gentile split. Something had to happen for these divisions were intolerable.

In my divided self, I was both waiting for the coming of The Man, and fearing his advent. As I have shown, man's angers are very deep, but then so are his needs, especially his need to worship God. This you can read in the essay on 'I, Man, the Worshipper', page 87. You will know that Cain and Abel were divided over the matter of worship, and so were Jew and Gentile. Worship is simply giving the true worth to a person or object which it has (functionally) in the order of heaven and earth, in the order of the whole creation.

Christ came to bring man to unity. Paul put it very clearly when he said that God's 'plan for the fulness of time [was] to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth'. He put it in other ways, such as saying Christ would fill up 'all [empty] things', 'reconcile all [unreconciled] things', and 'harmonise all things [previously in disharmony]'.

There is so much we can say about this Man, but the things we treat here are the things that concern me as Man (corporate) and as a man personally. They relate specially to this reconciliation, this unifying the divided self the self of the human race, and the self of the person. In doing this we must remind ourselves that Israel had been given 'the worship', ie. it alone had the true worship. Paul claimed this, and Jesus told it to the woman at the well in Samaria when he said, 'Salvation is of the Jews'. However he also told her that the time had

come when God's worship would not be confined to the *locale* of Israel (ie. headed up by Jerusalem and its temple) but would be the coming of the true children to the true Father-God.

Paul tells us that the powerful event of the Cross effected unity within the human race. If we put all his writings together we get something like the following:

'In the Cross, Christ became sin for the human race. Through him, sin was judged as he bore it in his body (flesh). He took the guilt of the world. This guilt was in one part *Jewish* and in one part *Gentile*, although in fact all had sinned and come short of the glory of God, and so of their own true manhood. By bearing the guilt of Israel and meeting its (Jewish) law's demands, he fulfilled the law. As the universal sacrifice for sin, he fulfilled the demands of all law—however we may understand that phrase. By being the Suffering Servant—the crucified Messiah—he filled up the law of Israel and so ushered in the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was now defunct, and the New became the true order for man. This new true order was not confined to Israel, but was for all the people upon earth.'

This meant, in effect, that I—as Man—had no more need to be divided. Indeed in that Cross he 'made one new man', ie. a *new* humanity, and so, indeed a *new* race, called by some '*the third race*'. This was extraordinary because it meant that he had not made an amalgamated race from Jew and Gentile but a new race which was neither Jew nor Gentile but a *freshly minted humanity*. I keep using these italics (which personally I ordinarily do not care to use) to underline the amazing

thing that has happened in history, namely, the new race, the third race!

Notice that it was the destruction of guilt which brought release to the human race, and healed it of its divisions. The dealing with personal human guilt liberates the person whose guilt it was. Now he can take up his reconciliation with God. Also as corporate humanity we can be reconciled to one another. Because there is no elitist possession of 'the worship', then we can worship God and come to our true fulfilment in it. In the essays which follow, such as 'I, the Forgiven Man' and 'I, the Justified Man', we can see the personal impact of Christ as the New Man, as the mediator of the New Covenant, as he calls us into being 'new creations'.

We do not understand the agony of that act of the Cross where he took into himself the hatreds, the angers, the wrath and the rage of a fallen and polluted humanity, but we do know that the Father initiated that suffering so that the human race could be released from its terrible human dilemma of being unholy in the face of a holy God. He desired that love should constrain and motivate us in this world, and so liberate us from the anguish of a split humanity, and personally divided (inner) selves.

I, the Man, am aware that many reject this gift of grace, bought in blood on that Cross, but what it means to me, as Man the corporate, and man the single, is that division in the human race is not essential: nor is it humanity's doom, for 'In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, but *you [we] are all one in Christ* *Jesus*'.

TWO

I, THE JUSTIFIED MAN

I am the justified man. I speak firstly as corporate Man, the man created by God in His image, but then I also speak as a special person. Whilst I am all men, I am also each man in his own being. Whilst being all humans corporately, I am a person singly. Within the *corpus* of humanity there are those who remain sinners, those who have not heard the good news of God, or who remain impervious to that Gospel. Once I was numbered among these, but something has happened to me. I speak as a person. I want to share with you what has happened to me. This, as I have said, has not happened to all men.

Before sharing the experience I had of guilt, and then of justification, I want to explain what I understand by the word 'justification'. I take it to be that act of God whereby He accounts a sinful person to be as if he had never sinned. Justification never suggests that a man has not sinned, but that he has been acquitted from the charge and guilt of sin. This act of justification is by the grace of God, and when a person has a revelation of that act of grace, faith comes into operation within him and

he believes. His faith does not make justification to come into being: it is already in being because of the work of the Cross, but faith certainly receives the gift of justification, and thus a person is justified. Now let me tell you my story.

I have lived all my life under a sense of guilt. Whilst I do not suppose I am unique in that matter, I have to say that living under guilt is a very difficult thing. I do not mean that every moment of every day was filled with a conscious sense of guilt: that was surely not the case. Yet, in another way, it was. I was never wholly free. I did not understand that my problems were related to this guilt or that I had sought in many ways to atone for my guilt by means of self-criticism, self-punishment and the like. Looking back I can see that I did attempt these sorts of things. Basically I knew myself to be a guilty man. It was only when I was brought to the truth of justification that everything changed for me. I was justified by faith.

What, then, do I mean by the phrase 'justified by faith'? I mean I was wholly acquitted from the accusation and penalty of my sin. Whilst I acknowledge that this sort of statement is rarely made these days, that it sounds old-fashioned and unrelated, yet I must, nevertheless, underline it, for it is enormously important. What happened to me was that I was wholly acquitted from the guilt and penalty of sin, and hence from the shame and burden of my sins which I had previously felt and known. When you ask how this happened, I can only answer, 'Through the death of Christ: by means of his work on the Cross'. I know this may sound like some religious cliché, but then it is true. I do not rightly understand the 'how' and 'what' of that Cross, but I

know it was sufficient to take away my guilt and establish me as a guiltless person. Christ himself said—before going to that Cross—'This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins'.

One reason why I am sure that my guilt has been removed is the fact that the Scriptures reveal a well-planned action of God called 'the propitiation for sins'. Again, I cannot fully explain this act of God, but I know' it was devised in the counsel of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who then executed it in history. By 'propitiation' I understand that act of God whereby sin receives its judgement, and the sinner, who should rightly suffer for all his sins, is pronounced free of guilt because Christ, the Son, has suffered the guilt himself, in his own person. I do not fully know what it is to suffer totally for guilt: no one could ever do that! I only know something of what it means to suffer guilt: I know the hurt and burden and remorse of it, with all the other elements such as shame, pain, the sense of defilement, and the like, and I know that even if I battled for centuries with these elements of my own guilt, I would never be able to do anything about either them or the guilt. I do not fully understand what he did on the Cross, but I comprehend to some degree a number of the statements made about his suffering.

One is, 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree'. Another is, 'God made him to be sin for us'. Yet another is, 'Christ died also for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous'. There are still more statements such as, 'Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many', 'he has appeared at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself', 'Christ... offered for all

time a single sacrifice for sins', 'Where there is forgiveness of these [sins] there is no longer any offering for sin', 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all... by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities'. Whilst these are not all the statements pertaining to justification, and the justifying act of the Cross, yet they are more than enough to show that God has provided, in His Son, that propitiation which is effective to justify the ungodly.

You can see, then, that I have had a remarkable experience in life and that I understand its nature with great clarity. In his first recorded sermon, Paul, the apostle, told his audience at Antioch in Pisidia, 'Let it be known to you therefore brethren, that through this man [Jesus] the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone that believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses'. This was an amazing statement to make. Such has always been the case: whenever justification has been proclaimed, human beings have been puzzled and even affronted. The statement that particularly worries, and even angers, them is, 'And to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness'.

Why should the clause, 'who justifies the ungodly', cause so much anger? The answer is that the human race is incurably religious. Men and women have suffered greatly because of their guilt. Why, then, should an ungodly man be declared righteous? It seems unfair and out of keeping with a holy God. The answer to this anger

is not an easy one. We could say that God chooses to justify ungodly people, and He may do as He wishes, but is this all the answer? The true answer must be that all mankind is ungodly. Where this seems not to be the case, either ungodly people are being deceptive in their outward appearance or godly people have found the grace of justification which has already worked effectively.

My desire in speaking to you in this way is that you should know simply that where persons have put their faith in God that He has sent Christ to justify them, that they may now enter into the good of God's guilt-clearing, may be released from the sad effects of guilt, and may now become justified human beings. That has been my own rich experience of justification. So many people lack a theology of justification: in fact some of them do not even understand the term, but then that does not make them any the less justified. They are simply justified by faith in Christ, and the Father who initiated the event of justification. There is no good reason why you, too, reading these lines, should not immediately come into justification. To have simple faith in Christ's work of the Cross is sufficient to bring you into the dynamic reality of justification. Do, then, have faith without hesitation.

For this reason—that justification is a wonderful and obtainable thing—I want to quote Paul in one of his great statements concerning justification: 'But now the [a] righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God *through faith in Christ Jesus* for all who believe. For there is no distinction;

since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, *they are justified by his grace as a gift*, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom *God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith*'. God's righteousness (called '*the righteousness of God*') is generally known by the law He has given and the acts He has carried out in history. Paul, in our passage above is speaking of 'a righteousness of God', namely His righteousness which accounts a sinner as acquitted from the charge and condemnation of sin. Whilst this 'a righteousness of God' seems to be against '*the righteousness of God*', it is in fact not opposed to it. In some wonderful way the judgement of all sin has been effected on the Cross in Christ's propitiatory death. Hence the legal demands of the law have been satisfied, God's holiness (especially in its wrath upon sin) has been vindicated, and God in perfect righteousness can declare the ungodly to be righteous.

What I have written above is mind-boggling. Of course, it will not be mind-changing if it is seen simply as a doctrinal argument. It must be seen in relation to one's own problem of guilt, for it means a man is *wholly acquitted of all guilt for all time*. The statement in Paul's letters, 'There is therefore now no condemnation' is amazing. The *effect* of this declaration of God that the sinner is guiltless sounds unbelievable. Many understandably enough—see it as highly dangerous. They see it as giving man licence to sin. This is far from the case. The power of sin lies in guilt, and when guilt is removed, then the power of sin is broken. Also the formerly guilty (now non-guilty) person sees God and His law in a different light altogether. It is *the light of grace!* Paul

said, 'They are justified by his grace as a gift', and 'If, because of one man's trespass [ie. the sin of Adam], death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness [justification] reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ'. We must then understand this incredible gift of justification to be wholly the gift of grace. It is grace which is dynamic, grace which liberates and grace which continues to sustain the ungodly person who has believed God.

This brings us to the very natural question, 'What, then, is the relationship between grace and faith? Are we justified by faith or by grace? The answer must be that (i) we are saved by grace and grace alone, and (ii) faith is born in us by the revelation of God's grace, and faith reaches out to take the proffered gift. Had there been no gift of grace, faith would have no authentic basis, and justification would not be a fact. That we are justified by grace means God wholly took the initiative and effected the gift which He then offered to us. Our taking of that gift added nothing to it. Even the faith by which we responded is shown in the New Testament to also be a gift of God, hence grace is wholly grace.

For me, as the man who has come to know justification, this gift of God is so rich, so superb, so life-changing, that to speak about it merely as a reporter is not enough. It leaves you who listen to me simply receiving information from a reporter. Justification is so necessary for you, I must directly ask you a question. The question is, 'Have you been justified, receiving by faith this gift of God, thus being delivered from the

penalty of sin, the grim demands of the law, and thus do you 'reign in life by one Christ Jesus'?

On your response to this question lies the nature of *your future*, that is whether *you* will continue in human guilt or be freed from it.

I, then, as the Man, the human race, know our hope lies only in that Cross. I, as the single person, wrought *upon* and changed by that Cross, long *for* the human race to find its future within that great act of God's love.

THREE

I, THE FORGIVEN MAN

It may sound strange when I make the claim that I am the forgiven man. I suppose I should say, 'I am a forgiven man, rather than *the* forgiven man, but then both are true. I am one man forgiven amongst many others. I also represent *the* forgiven man, for I am a type of every forgiven person, man or woman, young or old. I am the forgiven man.

My statement may sound curious to you. You have undoubtedly had something to do with forgiveness. You have been forgiven by people, and have forgiven others. Perhaps your forgiveness counted little. It may have meant, 'Oh, please excuse me', or 'I am sorry for what I did', or 'I apologise: do forgive me'. This is a nice Western way of ridding ourselves of minor guilts occasioned by our errant behaviour. It is to be doubted whether it has much to do with basic and honest forgiveness, and I suppose the half-excusing of ourselves is a way of escaping genuine repentance. If we are really sorry for our sins, it will mean they grieve us, and that we are sorry we have grieved others—both God and man.

I am the man who is blessed. I live in a state of blessing. David, the great—yet sinful—Psalmist once said, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile'. He who has had his guilt erased is in a state of blessedness. By 'blessedness' we mean 'serenity, joy, delight', and even 'bliss'. That is a wonderful state. What we have to understand about forgiveness is that it removes the guilt and shame and pollution of our sins. It means the restoration of a relationship interrupted and divided by sin. Sin separates us from others—from God, from neighbours and friends, and from our own selves. To be forgiven is to be restored.

I, then, the forgiven man, am in a state of bliss. Only the guilty man has guile. in his spirit. All his life—one way or another he is seeking to justify himself before God, before man, and before himself. When he is forgiven he is necessarily, also, justified. He now has no need of that cosmetic living which is at once 'make-up' and 'cover-up'. He has no need to use guile in order to be accepted or to triumph. The forgiven man is closest to what it is to be truly, and authentically, human. Man without guilt was bonded to God: he delighted in being God's creature, child and servant. This state of being constituted his true humanity. The unforgiven man has to be a person of guile—he is constantly beset around by his sins, so he has to deal with guilt, shame and the burden of his failures.

In discussing sin, we have to see that it is no part of the true man, the man created by God. Man was not created in sin, or to sin. He was given choice of will, which was real enough and not merely apparent. He sinned, but sin

is still no essential part of him. This is why even the most sinful have confessed to me from time to time that they long for purity. It is true that they have a desire for purity but do not pursue that desire. Perhaps what they are saying is, 'I know that if I were wholly pure, then I would really be in a state of bliss', and if this is what they mean, then I agree with them. To be pure in heart is to see God, and this is to be 'blessed'.

Without forgiveness there is no hope of true blessedness. One writer speaks of 'the pleasures of sin for a season', meaning that the so-called joy that sin gives is fleeting. Nothing stabilises where sin is. Sin deceives us into thinking it is actually pleasurable. Competent sinners tell us that even in the midst of the illusory pleasure, the conscience and its guilts are already closing around its victim. We are all competent sinners if it comes to that! It is so true that, 'our sins will find us out', and that 'the wages of sin is death', and that 'the iniquities of the wicked ensnare him and he is caught in the toils of his sin... and because of his, great folly he is lost'. Some come to the terrible understanding that 'the wicked are like the tossing sea: for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace for the wicked'.

This being so, then the message of forgiveness comes like a healing balm to the human spirit. I am aware that this last sentence sounds like spiritualised piety, but I must insist that it is true. Sin carries its own inbuilt deceit, and rationalises itself to be no great problem. It even encourages man to think of himself as moral, and competent to make up for his desultory failures. But to the man who is troubled by his sin, the thought of total forgiveness comes like an incredible dream: he cannot

believe, but greatly longs for it.

Forgiveness is a dominant theme in the Scriptures. Many of the Old Testament sacrifices were structured to bring the peace of God's forgiveness to the human heart. On occasions, God directly forgave—even apart from the sacrifices. The promise of the forgiveness of sins is found in the prophets, particularly the one which states, 'I will forgive their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more'. This promise appears to be forgiveness apart from cultic sacrifices. If so, then it is a wonderful and new revelation. Unfortunately, some see forgiveness as God's responsibility: as though He ought gratuitously to forgive all, ie. 'to know all is to forgive all'. This shallow thinking is far from His nature. We do not know the nature of sin—so terrible is it, and so fearful the nature of its judgement.

It was Jesus who came to reveal the true nature of forgiveness, and so, the true nature of God and man. One of my favourite statements is Paul's saying, 'This saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'. If I had not been a sinner, then Christ's coming would have been pointless for me. The angel said to Joseph, 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins'. Notice the word 'from' as though sins were some devilish slave-masters. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' Jesus, in accordance with the prophets, spoke of the forgiveness of God, and called upon men to forgive one another. On the night of the Last Supper, he distributed bread and said, in the giving of the paschal cup, 'This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed

for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins'. The disciples were to understand his Cross as the cause and grounds of forgiveness. In the context of the new covenant, God had said, prophetically, 'I will forgive their sins, and their iniquities I will remember no more'.

I now want to share with you the understanding of the forgiven man: how he sees the forgiveness of God, and how he obtains it. Only a forgiven man can tell you what has happened to him. Once forgiven, he feels impelled to tell others. Even so, he cannot go outside the guidelines of the Scriptures. Before ascending to his Father, Jesus opened these Scriptures to his disciples, showing that the suffering of the Cross was to be expected and accepted. As a result of the Cross and Resurrection, 'repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his [Jesus'] name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem'. Likewise, 'he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you retain the sins of 'any, they are retained"''. They were to go out with the liberating message of the forgiveness of sins. On the day of Pentecost, Peter said, 'Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of sins*; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Paul, in his first recorded sermon, said, 'Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you'. Paul understood the forgiveness of sins. He could never forget what had happened to him in the days of his conversion when Ananias had come to him and said, 'Rise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on his name'. The enormous relief he felt always kept

him proclaiming God's forgiveness to others.

We now come to the crux of the matter. I speak of my rich experience of forgiveness, but possibly that could be an illusion. If real, then it must be based on something quite objective: only then will my subjective apprehension of it be valid. What, then, is the objective basis of forgiveness? We have said that God's forgiveness cannot be merely gratuitous, ie. arbitrary, given to all without thought. To forgive one man one sin would mean—in seeming justice—to then forgive all men all their sins, but this cannot be. The law would then become a mockery. The judgement evil must know would dissolve. No, even God may not forgive sin without an authentic moral basis, otherwise His holiness would be violated.

The basis of all forgiveness is the Cross. We speak loosely of God's 'attitude of forgiveness', ie. His good desire to forgive, but gratuitous forgiveness would breed looseness towards sin, and would take away judgement, without which there is no moral meaning to the law or the universe. To understand the Cross as both the basis for, and place of, forgiveness, is a simple, though profound, matter. There are many statements by New Testament apostles and writers who saw these as basic to the utterances of the Old Testament prophets. Some of these statements are:

'He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree';

'He made him to be sin';

'He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin';

'Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins';

'Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood';

‘who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification’;

‘He condemned sin in the flesh [of Christ]’;

‘He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all’;

‘He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors’;

‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities’;

‘the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all’;

‘[He] sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins’.

Any reading of such Scriptures ought to deeply move us, but to come to understand their meaning is to be brought into another world of thinking. We can scarcely begin to comprehend what happened on the Cross in order that the forgiveness of sins might become a reality. From the verses above, we see that Christ went through enormous moral, spiritual, mental and physical suffering, and that these were all of the one piece in that suffering. We know something of what it is to bear guilt of sins, but we cannot really understand because we do not have pure consciences. To be engulfed in man’s moral-spiritual impurity and pollution must have caused intense suffering. To bear within his body the evilly dynamic operations of sins with their innate elements and ingredients would be beyond telling. When we realise that there is no sin which is not primarily against God, then we will understand the horror of David as he cried, ‘Against you, and you only have I sinned’. That gives us deep insight into the nature of sin. Likewise when the prodigal son says to his father, ‘I have sinned *against* heaven and *before* you’, he is saying that his sin is against God. In this lies a deep insight into the nature of sin.

On the Cross, Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!’ Here is the deepest exposition of the nature of sin—(i) it is against God, and only God can forgive, and (ii) no man really understands the nature of the sin he commits. In human thinking, we often comment, ‘I cannot forgive that man for what he has done to my friend’. The answer to this statement is, ‘You have neither the right to forgive or not to forgive. All sin is against God, and if anyone is called upon to forgive, it would be your friend’. So far as I can trace the principle of forgiveness in the Old Testament, no person was called upon to forgive another. I have assumed from this interesting ‘discovery that under covenant all forgiveness proceeded from God to man, and mostly via the medium of sacrifice. Where God forgives, it is impertinent for man not to forgive. It seems that Jesus introduced the idea to his listeners that they must forgive the brethren when sinned against. Probably behind this was the reasoning that in any case God would be the prime-mover in forgiveness, and that we should not lag behind him.

When now we proceed to the act of the Cross, we see that Jesus actually bore our sins in his body on the tree. Sin against God is such a high offence; we cannot but tremble to think of the judgement that must come upon sin. We saw that *God judged* sin in Christ’s flesh. Sin, being a thing humans do, must be worked out in the human person -mind, body and being. The bearing of guilt, the identification with the sinner (‘he was numbered with the transgressors and bore the sin of many’), the taking upon himself the ignominy of rebellion, the confusion that sin brings to the human spirit, the taking

upon himself of all human defilement, and the utter degradation and indescribable poverty of the fallen human spirit, are all too much for us to comprehend even in token measure. Only when we listen to the cry of dereliction—'My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?' can we in any measure understand the shame and sorrow and anguish of the Cross. In one sense, no creature has been abandoned by God—not in the ultimate, final, irreversible sense—and so that cry reveals the horror humanity must experience in the ultimate of judgement. Christ did not cry as the Son to the Father, but as sinful humanity to the holy God. Herein lies the mystery of what we call 'propitiation', and herein lies something the old theologians called 'satisfaction'. The terror, the horror, the utter degradation and full defilement are heard in this terrible cry. On the basis of this alone does, and can, God forgive sin. To seal the reality of that he cried, 'It is finished!' and to show that the Father received him wholly—he, having finished the work given him to do—said with great fervour and trust, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit'.

On these things we build the reality of forgiveness. 'The saying is sure, and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' We need no more than that. It is that which brought me to understand the totality of forgiveness, and to see why the New Testament speaks of 'the forgiveness of sins' as though it is a once-for-all event in which the sins he bore of each man—those sins from the cradle to the grave—are all forgiven in one sweeping act. True as it may be that we face the sins we commit each day, it is equally

true that grace covers the entirety of our sin. There must be no reversion to imagined 'good works' and no attempt to have 'ledger-dealings' with God. Forgiveness is not on the instalment system. We may well speak of 'keeping short accounts with God', but for His part we have no account whatever. He has *accounted* us as righteous: there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now I say at the end of this short essay that forgiveness is the most liberating thing of all. Our consciences are now free, operating in grace. Freed from the paralysis guilt brings to us, we can now be truly human, using the gifts and graces God has imparted to each of us. Does grace in forgiveness then give us a licence to sin without care? To the contrary: the cost of grace is so high to God that we dare not presume upon it as forgiven humans. Jesus said, 'He who is forgiven little loves little. He that is forgiven much, loves much'. We have been forgiven 'much', yes, and far beyond 'much'. We have been forgiven all. We could not even begin to comprehend the vast dimensions required for our forgiveness, moral dimensions beyond our chartering. We love Him because He has forgiven all our trespasses, sins, rebellion, evil and haughtiness. Slowly—ever so slowly—we come to see and understand the terrible evil which was ours, which he bore at Calvary. Love of great dimension is born in us, and becomes the basis of our new holiness, our new obedience to God. 'Blessed then is the man whose sins are forgiven, whose iniquities are covered, and to whom the Lord imputes no sin.'

How marvellous is He Who casts our sins into the depths of the sea, Who removes them from us as far as

the east is from the west, Who washes them—our sins as white as snow, yes, from their glaring and gaudy crimson to utter whiteness. The forgiven man, the liberated man, the man who has been washed and loosed from his sins may rightly cry:

*'Who is a pardoning God like thee,
And who has grace so rich and free?'*

Of course, Father, I receive Your Fatherly forgiveness, made valid and dynamic by, and through, the death of Your Son. Of course, I must forgive as I have been forgiven, love as I have been loved, and live as I am being forgiven and being loved. I, the forgiven man, have become man the forgiving, man the truly loving.

FOUR

I, THE SANCTIFIED MAN

I am the sanctified man: I am the holy man. This sounds to be a high claim: some would call it outrageous. What man can claim he is holy? 'Sanctified' sounds better because sanctification seems to be something that has been done to one, not done by another One. Of course this is true. Nevertheless I must make the claim: I am a holy man.

Down through history, men and women have sought holiness. When we ask, 'Why?', then the answer must be that it is requisite to true humanity to be holy. We were created holy. Moral impurity is not part of true man. We do not often think of it that way, but it is true. Complete man has no place for impurity.

The Scriptures give us plenty of incentive to be pure. Leaving aside the command, 'Be you holy for I am holy', we read, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God'. To see God is a magnificent event. It is the richest experience a human can know. Many have written about 'the beatific vision'. The Hebrews thought they could see God, and did, from time to time, but they

never thought they saw Him directly. They understood the principle of 'theophany', ie. seeing manifestations of God, but not God Himself. These manifestations they often called 'the angel of the Lord'. They had no difficulty in believing God would show Himself to His people. They knew that they would have to be holy in His presence. To be otherwise would be intolerable, and dangerous.

The Psalmist had sung, 'Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place?' The answer was, 'He that has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully'. A New Testament writer said:

'Follow after peace with all menwithout which no man shall see the Lord.
See to it that... no root of bitterness spring up... and by it the many become defiled.'

Man—by nature of the case—cannot see God if man—is impure. When we try to see God with the eyes of impurity, we face an impossible task. A psalmist said, 'To the pure You will show Yourself pure, but to the crooked You will show Yourself perverse'. Paul knew this principle: he said, 'To the pure in heart all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted'.

In the book of the Revelation, one thing is certain: the impure will never see God, and they will never enter His heaven. At the end—when the chips are down—then 'let the filthy still be filthy ... and the holy still be holy'. Why? Because 'nothing that is unclean, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood' shall enter the Holy City. Men will be judged as either pure or impure. Only the pure shall dare to see God's face, and only the pure

would wish to do so.

Such views of holiness could drive us to despair. Who, at any point in time, could rightly claim, 'I am holy!?' The answer must be, 'Not one human being'. Yet here am I claiming that I am a holy man, and I must stand by that claim. Of course, I must explain what I mean and I shall. For the moment, I just want to point to the *need to be holy*. Without holiness no person will see God. In holiness any person may see God. Without seeing God, no human being is ever fulfilled. It is native to man—the image of God—to have union with God. That is why Jesus said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God'. The blessing is purity of heart, itself. Man is in a state of rich serenity when he is pure in heart. In this state he can really understand-God.

Man was created pure. An ancient writer said, 'Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the issues of life'. He meant, 'By creation you are a source of wonderful elements of life. You were given a pure heart, and its flow was meant to be into society, into the lives of others. Out of you, as out of them, come wonderful things and these contribute to all life, and to all society. If, however, you don't keep your heart pure, then what will flow from it will be polluted elements'. The prophet Jeremiah said that through sin the heart had, in fact, become a source of terrible impurity. 'The heart', he said, 'is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt'. So bad had it become that he said, 'Who can know the heart? Only God can'.

Jesus also observed that the heart was horribly impure. 'From it', he said, 'proceed evil thoughts,

fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness'. He added, 'All these evil things come from within and they defile a man'. When a person has become defiled, he loses his sensitivity to purity. Jesus spoke of those who thought that the darkness which was in them was actually light! When moral sensitivity is lost, then the 'blessedness' of the pure heart is also lost.

How does a person become holy? How is a human being morally depolluted and sanctified afresh? The answer lies in Jesus of Nazareth. As we have seen, forgiveness and justification come through him alone. So does basic cleansing. In the Old Testament, God promised that He would bring cleansing to His people:

'On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness';

'And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem, will be called holy .. when the Lord shall .have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgement, and by a spirit of burning';

'I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me';

'And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you'.

With the coming of Jesus, these promises were bound to be fulfilled. John the Baptist, pointing to Jesus, said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. Jesus said, 'This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of

sins'. The writer of Hebrews reports, 'When he had made purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high', 'he has appeared at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, 'And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all', 'the blood of Christ purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God'. John adds, 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin'.

Paul has a strong teaching regarding purification. He says, 'you were washed, you were sanctified ... in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God'. He speaks of 'the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit'. He himself had been told to 'arise and be baptised, washing away your sins'. Peter spoke of baptism as 'an appeal to God for a clear conscience'. The teaching of new birth and the new creation point us to the fact that the work of the Cross of Christ is basic to our purification, this purification being radical and affecting every element of our beings. Purification is the basis for holiness of life.

I return, then, to my original claim. I am the sanctified man: I am the holy man. That is, I am the man in Christ, the man in the New Man. Sanctification has come to me only because God has elected me to holiness, and not by any endeavour of mine. Paul says, 'Before the foundation of the world He chose us in him [Christ] that we should be holy and blameless before Him'. God planned such holiness, and those whom He has called *shall* be holy. That is why Paul calls the Colossians 'God's chosen ones, holy and beloved'. He tells them that through the Cross, He has reconciled them 'in order to present you

holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him'. He tells another church, 'He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ'. Also he said, 'He who calls you is faithful and He will do it'. All of these things tell me that I am holy because God planned it this way. Sanctification means He has separated me from the world-system of evil, which is doomed, and brought me into the body of His holy people.

If I go into all this matter in great detail, I will have to write many more pages. What I have discovered is that God is holy, and therefore desires His people to be holy. Man will not be holy unless God calls him, and then he will need the grace of God to live the life of holiness. In our essay on 'I, The Man of Victory', page 56, I have outlined the ways in which the new person can defeat the powers of darkness. This is really the practical life of holiness. Also in our essay 'I, The Man of the Spirit', page 76, I have shown how holiness can only be lived out in practice by the power and aid of the Spirit: such holiness is in the context of prayer, worship, love, unity, fellowship and the use of both Spirit-gifts and Spirit-weapons. Man's holiness, which is a gift from God, will soon be opposed by the powers of evil. They will try quickly to unseat him from his new purity of life. The saints of God, ie. the sanctified people of God, the church of Christ, are anathema to Satan and his evil hosts. Each holy child of God is a threat to the whole system of sin, flesh, the world and its prince, ie. the devil.

As a sanctified person, I know this. I know that every moment of my life is attacked by evil. Yet as the pure in

heart are blessed, so that very blessedness is a barrier against evil. It is good to know one is clean, that one does not have to mess with sin, that one does not have to be deceived by the offers sin makes of pleasure. When the holy person refuses to be seduced, he is then grimly threatened by evil. When threats are ignored, then the really subtle work of suggestive accusation begins. 'How', it is asked, 'can he really call himself holy? Does not the so-called holy person still have the same temptations? Is there still not the possibility of every kind of sin? In fact, cannot the mind have the same fleshly images as before, and cannot one be as devious as one was previously?'

To all these questions the holy man can easily say, 'Yes', and that without surprise. He is not questioning his own *capacity* for sin, but he is questioning his *desire*. He may even do that which he hates (ie. the evil), and not do that which he loves (ie. the good), *but his heart is not in it.*^t He has a new heart—one which hates sin: this he did not have before. When he is almost in despair because of doing wrong, he cries, 'I must be a holy man for I hate sin, and do not wish to do it!' This is the triumph of the holy man. We have seen that the man of victory is always led in victory in Christ: he does not accomplish this himself. Now we have to see that the holy man always has God 'for him'.

What do we mean by 'God for him'? Paul in the eighth chapter of his letter to the Romans sets out three powerful facts:

- (i) the holy man is, of himself, weak, and so weak that he does not know how to pray, and what to pray for, so the Spirit intercedes within him. In this the Spirit is deeply moved: so much so that he authors groans which must not be articulated.

This intimate ministry of the Spirit is known and recognised by the Father who takes the mind of the Spirit to be the very heart of the holy man. In this way the sanctified person is guarded by the Holy Spirit.

- (ii) God the Father meets the accusations against His holy ones by refusing the accusations. He—God—has justified His elect: how then can they be rightly accused? He has justified them!
- (iii) this justification is based upon the death and resurrection of the Son, so that it cannot be displaced. Moreover the Son has risen and is now intervening for the holy ones at the right hand of God. He is not pleading their case for justification since God has already stated their position. No: he is intervening against the accusing powers of darkness, and defeating them. This is the basis of holy living: the saint of God is secure. He has been called to be a saint, he has been purified and kept pure, and he has been incorporated in the holy people of God.

All of this I know as a holy man of God. I urge you, if you are in Christ, to so regard yourself, to be encouraged to think of yourself as a member of Christ's bride, which he has sanctified, 'having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word'. She is clean through the word he has spoken to her. He attends her continually 'that he might present her to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, *that she might be holy and without blemish*. This is how she is pictured at the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. She is beautifully adorned, and most pure. Since we are all members of this bride, we, too, must be pure.

It is breathtaking to be part of all this. It is holiness by grace. It is holiness by 'acts of righteousness unto sanctification'. It is holiness that faces the barrage every day of vicious, deceitful and seductive temptations and

does not give way. It is holiness that is fortified by prayer, suffering and persecution. It is holiness in the corporate life of 'the New Man', the church, the people of God, but then it is *personal* holiness. It is the true way of life. It looks forward, not to some rare or occasional beatific vision, but to the time when it will see Him, face-to-face, and not be afraid.

FIVE

I, THE MAN OF TRUTH

Unaided we know little of man. We do not know who he is, or what he is. We can only conjecture as to his destiny. We have seen men in different stages, different conditions, different operations. We have never seen perfect man; we have never seen full or complete man. Unaided we cannot know man.

There are reasons for this. Whatever man was in creation, two things can be said about him:

- (i) whilst complete enough to be man he was not yet fulfilled as man in history all that lay ahead of him, if ever it were to come to pass; and
- (ii) because man rejected God, refusing to be thankful to Him for all things, man lost his full knowledge and ability by which he could understand the nature of man.

The reader of Scripture would claim to be able to formulate a biblical anthropology. From studying creation, he would claim to know 'created man'. He could then go to look at man as 'fallen', as 'under the grace of covenant', as redeemed, as in the processes of sanctification, and he could even arrive at some description of

man as 'glorified'. Yet—given all this—the deduced biblical anthropology would be greatly deficient.

It is not from Adam—even fallen Adam—that we discover the true man. It is only with the incarnation of the Word, the Creator-Son that we see true man. The whole matter is wonderfully summed up in Paul's words: 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he were rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might become rich'. The terms 'poor' and 'rich' are quite significant. Paul is inferring that fallen man is in deep poverty. The poverty is of course a moral-spiritual one. Christ before his incarnation is wonderfully rich. He voluntarily becomes poor, so that through this act of self-improvement, poverty stricken man may become wonderfully rich.

When this is translated into terms of Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension, we are confronted by God's grace in its boundless dimensions. In Christ, there is no spiritual *schema* formulated by which we are saved. There is no esoteric truth, no gnostic body of ideas, nor as in Buddhism—no 'truth' that is argued from the cosmic scene by which man arrives at some pattern for living, and some way of salvation. There is only the man! When we say 'only', we mean that he is unique and is exclusively himself the truth! It is the man who primarily confronts, and not any philosophy or body of ideas as such.

What we must first see is that our ignorance of God stems from the primal Adamic rebellion in which we are all involved. Our involvement did not come willy-nilly. Our race in the primal couple—deliberated the matter—in the action of the Fall, the entire human race struck for

autonomy: we required self-rule. We also sought the ability to know good and evil for ourselves, and by ourselves. Paul says we 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie'. That means we exchanged the truth of man for a lie, and the truth of the cosmos (creation) for a lie. We have, then, lived in the lie. Not all our research and enquiry into God, man and the cosmos has altered anything. Our scientific labours have sieved up an immense amount of knowledge, but not the truth. In scientific men of faith, research may have confirmed much that is in their knowledge of truth, but the truth did not come from research into the phenomenology of the cosmos.

Man and history had to await the coming of the Rich One. It had to see him divested of celestial glory and immediate universal authority: it had first to see him as a babe in the Bethlehem hostelry, and then as a boy, a man, a preacher and a dying person. Only by faith could it stand beside an empty grave, or see the Shekinah glory hide him from human sight. Only visionary faith could see him restored to the right hand of the Father. But to know what is true humanity, the spirit of man must be humbled to simple faith and worship. Then—and only then—will it discover truly what and who is man. In other words, man's original rebellion against God must be reversed. Because man 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie', he must 'exchange the lie for the truth of God'. A whole change must take place in his *nous*, ie. his mind, attitude or thinking, his understanding. By nature of the case, man cannot effect this from, or of, himself. It requires the revelation of Christ himself, by means of the Holy Spirit who effects such revelation. Today we find this effected in and through the Scriptures of both Old

and New Testaments.

In what way is Jesus of Nazareth *true* man? In what way is he complete man? He claimed he was without sin, and his followers insisted that this claim was correct. Few have tried to subvert the claim. John the apostle is strongly insistent that Jesus was truly man, and that he was the Word become man. For him, 'Jesus Christ came in the flesh'. That flesh is real, and not a mere appearance. For Paul also, Jesus was truly man. In fact, Paul's theology of salvation would fragment if Jesus had not been truly man, and if in fact—he were not still man. Paul said, 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law ...' 'God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the [his, Jesus'] flesh.'

Whilst Jesus was born 'in the likeness of sinful flesh', he was not born in the likeness of flesh, but in flesh. He was not born in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. This last statement is not easy to explain. It must, however, mean two things—whatever else it may mean mainly:

- (i) Jesus took upon him our human nature with the *effects* of man's rebellion upon it; and
- (ii) he was in no way a person who was 'fleshly', ie. his taking of human flesh did not mean he was a rebel against God as are those who are in Adam.

What is also difficult for us to define and understand is Paul's statement, 'though he was in the form of God [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. being born in the likeness of men'. 'Emptied himself cannot mean he emptied himself of his deity,

since that is impossible by nature of the case. It must mean that he truly became man and lived within the limitations of that humanity, never effecting his humanity by means of his deity. He did, however, effect his humanity by the means which are open to all human beings, namely the grace and power of God. In this sense, he did not 'have the edge' on us. If we can in some measure comprehend this, then we can proceed to look at the true man and his true humanity.

When we look at that humanity it does not mean our endeavour elsewhere in Scripture to develop a biblical anthropology is fruitless or pointless. It means that now we see what true humanity is in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and so can more usefully use the materials we have gathered. Who then, and what then, is this man, this Jesus of Nazareth? Our first response must be that he is truly in the image of God. He, as man, is 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person'. We are not thinking in terms of metaphysical or supernatural being concealed in flesh, but of Jesus' humanity reflecting in every way the glory and person of God. Another way of saying this is that Jesus spelled out the nature of God in terms of his own humanity. These, incidentally, are the only terms we can really understand. There is nothing speculative about them.

Jesus said, 'He that has seen me has seen the Father'. 'I and the Father are one.' 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.' John said, 'The word became flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the

only Son from the Father'. 'No one has ever seen God; the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made Him known.' Jesus claimed that he did nothing but what the Father showed him, and that the Father loved him and showed him all things. He said that he said nothing from himself; the Father who dwelled in him, He was the One who did the works which others supposed Jesus to have done, from himself.

If we can come to the point of agreeing that all works were done by the Father through the obedience of Christ, we, nevertheless, need to be able to interpret what Jesus did. The apostles and other writers of the Acts, the Letters and the Revelation seek to do this. In fact, we are laced with a body of interpretation which we call 'the apostolic truth'. In the light of it we can understand the acts and teaching of Jesus. What we have to note is that Jesus and these writers all claim that the events were all in accordance with both the law and the prophets. Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophets. This makes his work and teaching to be authentic, and the rule by which we interpret it is the prophetic Scriptures. With this measure we can understand Jesus as the man in his various roles as. Messiah, Davidic King, 'the Prophet', the suffering Servant, and so on. By saying this we mean that Jesus' *vocation* was unique and not paradigmatic for all humans.

When we come to examine the humanity itself, we find nothing that does not comport with teaching already given to us in the Hebrew Scriptures regarding man. His humanity is simply remarkable for what it was not when compared with sinful humanity. He did not sin: he did not disobey the will of the Father. He did not desire to do his own will, even when it appeared not to

violate moral principles. It was not as though his humanity was a prodigy. Human elements are so evident, such as tiredness, sorrows, tears and anger. Jesus' knowledge was limited. He was subjected to the temptations which come to all humanity. In the light of these things, we find nothing remarkable in his humanity. In fact, it is with a sense of relief that we realise he was a human being like any human being.

What is it, then, that makes him remarkable, that sets him apart from us in that he is unique amongst all, and must be our paradigm if we are to be fully human?

The answer is that he was fully obedient to the Father, and participated with Him in His plan for all creation. Where we do this we are truly following him. Where we do not do this, we are following father-Adam. We are seeking to be autonomous within the realm of our own egos.

What really shocks us is that he never wishes to do other than the Father's will. He has no desire to justify himself, to gain power, to win the praises of the human race, to save himself when he must give himself. His life is a scandal, because if it is true in its goodness, its righteousness, its holiness, its love and its truth, then our lives are fearfully wrong. They are not merely lesser in degree of accomplishment, but they are qualitatively different; they are frighteningly wrong. They are, in fact, vastly evil. We cannot even plead human weakness or seek to hide behind finiteness. Our weakness is culpable; he exercised true obedience within the limits which we call 'finite'.

Finally, we come to the truth of the true man. What no man could ever have been—not even such men as Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist or Paul—

Jesus was. His incarnation, his life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension were the revelation of the nature of the Father. He powerfully and beautifully showed the truth of God—that God is holy, that God is light, that He is love, and that He planned to destroy evil and redeem mankind from its sin, its lostness and its doom. It may be thought that God could do this in some way other than the incarnation, the Cross and the resurrection. It may be considered that God has many options: so often we think of Him possessing unlimited power. We think that by a thought of His mind or a fiat of lips He can, or would, suddenly change everything. This is to misunderstand both the nature of God and the nature of man. Our thoughts about God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence are more metaphysical than actual, more speculative than real. We do not associate such foolishness as incarnation, humbling, suffering, death of crucifixion, death in a grave and the like with Deity which is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Likewise we do not associate these things with truly powerful and successful humanity. Incarnation, suffering, the Cross and the grave have always been things of offence in the spelling out of the Gospel.

We can only repeat, then, that the humanity of Jesus is inexplicable without the revelation of the Spirit. It points to a humanity which does not operate as does ours for all its 'human' likenesses. It points to the God who becomes man to redeem him, and that is not a principle of the God of human theism. That is why Christ's humanity is a mystery to those without faith. That is why it is the true paradigm to the person of faith. In fact, it is humanity's only hope!

SIX

I, THE MAN OF VICTORY

I am the man of victory. I am the victorious man. First let me hasten to qualify this: I have never had a moral victory in my life, which came from me, out of my own inner resources. I have to be clear about this, for with all the people of God, I am, of myself, innately weak, particularly in regard to moral or spiritual accomplishment. I insert this rider because if any person thinks he is sufficient of himself, then he is not only mistaken, but that mistake will lead him into great problems in life. Paul said, 'Not that we are competent to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God...' He also said, 'Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands [ie. of himself] take heed lest he fall'. He says, from his own experience, 'When I am weak, then am I strong'. We need to stress this from the beginning, ie. that man only knows power in his weakness, for then he is reliant upon the power of God. Man is not required of God to be powerful of himself, or in himself. As man, he needs only to be man: but then he does need to be man, ie. one with God and strong in God.

Given in all I have said above, I am the man of victory, the victorious man. What, then, do I mean by saying I am the victorious man? I mean I am one whom God has chosen, and whom He has released from the powers of evil to be what He created me to be, namely His son, servant, and subject within His Fatherhood, His plan and His Kingdom. That is, He has released me from my former slavery to forms of evil, so that I am now only subject to Him. If you ask me the forms of my previous slavery, I answer that I was a slave of sin, of Satan (along with his world powers and world system), and of the flesh. These caused me to live in bondage to the law, to my conscience, and in fear of the wrath of God, so that I dreaded death because it was so final, and because it led to inevitable judgement. In order to escape the misery of life without the pleasure and joy of oneness with God, I constantly chose the idols which would satisfy my desires. I became an idolater, along with every other human being. If you ask me why I did not apply to God, I must reveal that not only I, but you, and indeed all humanity are enemies of God because of man's rebellion against Him in the dawn time of man's history. This rebellion brought fear and hatred of God, so that living in guilt, we did not ever want to know God, although created in His most marvellous image, and destined by both creation and grace to be His children.

There! I have told you my story. It-is also your story and the story of others. I know there appears to be exceptions. people who seem to love God from birth, but the reasons for this are hid in the mystery of covenant and God's election. For our purposes I will confine myself to those of its who did not know these

mysteries of covenant. We are the human race, in general, and in fact there is none born of Adam who does not at some time or other have to come to terms with the matter of slavery to evil.

I, then, was the enslaved man. I would have had to continue in that state all my life, and indeed beyond into death had not God in His grace intervened. He planned His intervention before time and effected it in time. His intervention came in the form of sending His Son at the appointed time into the world of man. There are many reasons given for sending His Son. I set some of them out here:

‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil’;

‘Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he likewise himself partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage’;

‘But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons’;

‘And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised’;

‘For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living’; ‘The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’;

‘.. He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins’;

‘... God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, judged sin in the flesh ...’;

‘You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins’.

That he came on time is attested by Jesus himself. He said, ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the gospel’.

We see, then, from the above verses, that what the prophets had prophesied in the Old Testament was fulfilled in Christ and his coming. He came to be the liberator of men and women from the bondage in which they lived. When we ask, ‘What is the bondage of man?’. the answer is very simple. ‘Man, because he is a guilty creature, is under bondage to all forms of evil. If he had never fallen, if he had remained innocent and pure, then nothing of evil could ever have touched him. Man is only under bondage because he is guilty before God. All forms of evil manipulate him by reason of his guilt. Because of this guilt the holy law of God, the conscience God has given him, and’ the wrath which is deservedly upon all evil, become his enemies. The idols to whom he goes for pleasure, comfort and direction are also tyrannical. In every way man is in bondage because of his guilt.’

We must now see how Christ came and delivered from bondage.

If we look back a couple of paragraphs, we see the purposes for which Christ came into the world. They really divide into two: (i) the fulfilment of the Father’s will, and (ii) the rescue of mankind. If we look further into ‘(i)’. we see that God’s will is related to the entire universe and in regard to all time. God, in Christ, purposes to vindicate Himself as the true Creator, Father and Redeemer. Christ, then, must come as the true Son, Mediator-Creator and Mediator-Redeemer.

This means he comes as the Son of the Father-King, and is the Son-King, the King of the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom will ultimately triumph over all evil. God's holiness will be vindicated and established in the eyes of His creation forever. If we look further into '(ii)', we see that it relates to man, or to all mankind, and particularly to the people of God. God has chosen His elect and will redeem them via the work of Christ, and in the processes of history. It remains for us, then, to see what Christ did on the Cross, and how this has effected the liberation of His people, and so each of His elect comes to be 'the victorious man'.

At Christ's baptism, the Father acclaimed him as His Son: 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased'. In Old Testament terms that meant the Son was the King chosen by God to reign over. His empire. Hence such statements as 'the Kingdom of the Son of His love', and 'the Kingdom of Christ and of God'. As King, he moved triumphantly through Israel as it was located in Palestine. Wherever Christ went, there the Kingdom went in the person of the Son-King. Even so, it wasn't a Kingdom as yet sealed and consummated; hence the necessity of the Cross. Christ indicated a number of times that there was an opposition-kingdom, namely that of Satan, who held much of mankind in his bondage, and that he, Christ, would overcome Satan and liberate those in bondage. He was there 'to destroy the works of the devil', and this was quite a tall order.

On the Cross, Christ was lifted up as a serpent, ie. as the epitome of all evil, especially Satanic evil. The entire body of humanity was crucified with him. The world-system was crucified with him. All the 'flesh' of humanity

was crucified with him. The sins of all humanity were crucified with him. Each person was personally crucified with him. Another way of saying this is that Christ took upon himself the entire guilt of the human race. That must mean he suffered the total judgement of all sins. He was 'made to be sin' and 'he, himself, bore our sins in his body on the tree'. Also 'he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities', and 'the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all'. What, then, are the fruits of this completed work?

The fruits are that he removed the guilt of sins of each person: and whilst only the elect receive the benefits of this by faith, yet the grace of God completed this work for all men. God not only destroyed human guilt, but He broke its power in a world where men would rebel against His given grace.' We can see, then, that Jesus' promise, '... the Son shall make you free', was no empty promise. His statement, 'Now is the judgement of this world... Now is the prince of this world cast out', was also not an empty affirmation. He—by his death— (paralysed, made ineffective) the work of Satan: he thus 'destroyed the works of the devil'. Now man can be free: being delivered, this man can be victorious.

Let us see how this works out in practice. We are told, 'Sin shall not have dominion, since you are not under law but under grace'. To be 'under law' means to be in the realm and action of guilt. To be 'under grace' means to have a new environment, and new master-principle, namely grace, ie. God-in-action-for-us. Sin's power lies in guilt, in law, 'the power of sin is the law'. Living in grace means guilt has been erased and 'there is therefore now no condemnation'. Sin can make no claim upon us.

For that matter, neither can Satan. God's believers can overcome this Dragon-Serpent-Satan 'by the blood of the Lamb', ie. they can refuse Satanic accusation since the guilt of their sins has been borne by the Son-King. This is why Peter says, 'Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith'. It is why James says, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you'. It is why John states, 'I write to you young men, because you have overcome the evil one ... because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one'. It is why a hymn writer penned the following words:

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

We see, then, that Satan and sin have been defeated. What of death? Yes, that too. Guilt is the reason for death's power for, 'The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law'. The sting has been drawn from death by the Cross. We have no need to fear death or judgement because 'there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus' and 'perfect love casts out fear, for fear relates to punishment'. The punishment of sin
its guilt, terror and dread of judgement—was all borne by Christ. His perfect love has cast out all fear for 'as he is [ie. in relation to judgement] so are we *in this world*', ie. here and now! The dread of death is taken away when the conscience is 'purified from dead works' by 'the blood of Christ', because Christ 'has appeared at the end of the age to put away sin'.

As for the flesh—'our humanity as conditioned by

sin', that incorrigible anti-God anti-law principle of humanity spawned by Adam—it, too, is defeated for 'they that are Christ's crucified the flesh with its passions and desires'. When and where did they do this? On the Cross, where all crucifixion took place, ie. that of the 'old man', of the 'I', of 'the world' and of 'the flesh'. Faith sees it all crucified there, and leaves it all there—as defeated.

This, then, is the victory. It may be better to say, 'This, then is the deliverance'. We repeat that we, of ourselves, are not victorious: he alone is the Victor. His is the victory. That is why Paul says, 'Thanks be to God who in Christ always 'leads us in triumph', and why he adds elsewhere, 'In all these things [of deadly opposition] we are more than conquerors through him who loved us'. It is why he can say, 'I Can do all things in him who strengthens me'.

What, then, does all this mean in the practics of life? It means so much! It means that we are not the slaves of sin, of Satan, of the world powers and the world system. We are not the slaves of fear in regard to death and judgement. We are not bound to follow the dictates of the flesh. We are free from our idols, for, having seen God's love in liberation of our spirits, we now love Him with a new true love. It means that we are free from law as a legal way of action, and free from it as an imagined means of being justified. It means we see God and His holiness without dread and anxiety. Therefore we see His creation through new eyes and know that 'He has given us all things richly to enjoy'. We are now freed, within the perimeters of our personalities, to become what God planned we should be, and so enjoy our new

life. It does not mean that we now have no troubles, and that life is simple and easy. In fact, all the enemies which once possessed us will try to repossess us. They will oppose us in our new life. Moreover we will now suffer for His sake, both in living the new life and in proclaiming the Gospel of liberation. We will, in fact, experience suffering in new ways, and know the pressures of evil, and its attempts to deceive and seduce us. Even so, we will be led in triumph by Christ, who through his death, sealed the Kingdom for the Father and unseated Satan in his realm of rule.

As the victorious man, I must always be on the alert against the deceptive teaching of 'triumphalism'. This teaching is that we can never fall or fail: we have all power. We must always be victorious. We need not even sin. Certainly we will never lack anything, and suffering is only for the weak and foolish! This false teaching has brought many down to spiritual destitution. Some have gone on in the illusion that they are great and powerful, but they fly in the face of the facts. We will always—of ourselves—be weak. Christ alone will be our sufficiency. He has won the victory over all enemies, but we must abide in him and rely on him every moment of the day, or that victory will not manifest itself authentically.

At the same time, we must realise that the victory of Christ is the basis and source of our genuine Christian living. In the midst of pressure and attack, we can remain unmoved. Suffering with him and for him has its great joys. To be secure in him, ie. to have our life hid with Christ in God, is a truly wonderful thing. In the face of all this, we can only say:

'Thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph';

and

'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgements,
And how inscrutable His ways!'

SEVEN

I, THE MAN OF LOVE

This is really the same as saying, 'I am the forgiven man. I am the justified man. I am the sanctified man. I am the man of the Spirit'. All of these things mean that I am the person of love, or—if you will—a person of love. To be a person of love must mean that (i) God loves me and I know it and have responded to it, and (ii) I now love others. You might add a third element; namely that a person of love has a healthy love for himself/herself.

Following our normal pattern in these studies, we see first what God created man to be. Then we see how man interfered with this creational pattern by his rebellion against God. After this, we look at what God has done in the work of Christ to restore and renew man, and finally we see the finished work of God when man is glorified.

In creation, man was the work of God. When creation was completed on the sixth day that creation included man, and God saw that all creation was 'very good'. It was not simply morally good, comporting with the nature of the Creator, but it was of necessity functionally

good. It functioned properly. There was an order for function, hence the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes said, 'You have made everything beautiful in its own time', meaning, 'Everything is appropriate and functional'. The good order of creation cannot be other than love.

What do we mean by that last statement? To give an answer we must first go to the New Testament. Here both Paul and James equate the moral law, namely the ten commandments, with love. It would be safe to say they see love to God and love to neighbour as summing up the moral law. John the apostle speaks of the law of love as being 'an old commandment which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard'. His term 'from the beginning' may mean:

- (i) the beginning when Jesus came and taught;
- (ii) the beginning as Jews when the law was:
 - (a) 'love God with all your heart, soul and mind'; and
 - (b) 'love your neighbour as yourself';
- (iii) the beginning as at creation.

It may mean all three elements.

Paul uses the term 'the law of Christ'. This must mean primarily 'the law of love', for Christ summed up the law as love to God and to one's neighbour. He also gave his disciples the commandment to love one another. Twice Paul says that fulfilling the whole law is loving one's neighbour. The two contexts in which Paul uses the term 'the law of Christ' relate to practical love for others. We are safe, then, in saying that the moral law existed from creation, and the essence of it then—as now—was love. In other words *the functional way of creation was the law of love*. To spell out this principle would require much explanatory detail but that the creational law was

the law of love was required by the nature of God, and the fact that man was made in His image. As God is both light and love, then man must have been created as a creature of light and love. It would have been unnatural for man to live in moral darkness, and to exercise hatred and irrational anger. Man—by creation—was a lover!

When man made his breakaway from God in the Fall, the evidence is that love faded. The man who was 'one flesh' with his woman, now accused her of tempting him. Some relational break occurred between the male and the female. The first child turned out to be a murderer. John the apostle saw Cain as a child of the devil. In fact, he saw two families, one being the family of God the Father, and the other being the family of the devil the father. He saw the anger of Cain as murderous, and said that if a man hates his brother then he, too, is a murderer, even if he never commits an overt act of killing his brother.

Paul's two famous chapters on the active sinfulness of man (Romans chapters 1 and 3) underline the principle that when man rejected God he really rejected all true (loving and holy) relationships. When man breaks his relationship with God, he breaks it with man. I, then, as the Adamic man, as man singular and man corporate (in Adam) have to speak of the anguish that we as the human race experience when we love neither God nor man. Paul describes us:

'Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to deceive';

'The venom of asps is under their lips';

'Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness';

'Their feet are swift to shed blood, in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they do not know.'

Close examination of this document shows us how sad is the matter of human relationships. Every day these ancient words are borne out by the news bulletins, the tangled mass of human relationships that exists, and the commentaries that come to us through the media, and through art, music and literature. In his letter to Titus, Paul uses strong words in this regard. He says, 'For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, hated by men and hating one another'. This is a sad commentary on our human race, but it is factual. The history of mankind with its wars, its cruelties, selfishness, angers and hatreds as well as its innumerable crimes tells us the unloving state of the human race. This is depressing, to say the least.

We say that the full coming of love was with Jesus Christ. Paul calls him 'the Son of His [the Father's] love'. Jesus said on more than one occasion, 'the Father loves me', and 'the Father loves the Son'. He also said that he loved the Father. He spoke of his Father's love for the world, and then of his love for mankind. He loved intimately those who were near him, but his love was also for Israel as a nation, and Jerusalem as its holy city.

When we read the apostolic letters, we see that God's people had a great love for Him. The order of love is (i) the Father loves mankind and sends His Son to be the propitiation for their sins, (ii) the Son also loves mankind, and gives himself up to death for them, (iii) the true people of God love because God first loved them, ie. they love God and they love the brethren. Their love extends to men and women beyond the church perimeters. All of this is dynamic. The community shows its

response to God's love by its practical love for the brethren, seen in the daily distribution to all who have need, in caring for the widows, the orphans, the poor and the weak. It extends to healing, to visiting prisoners and giving hospitality to those in need of it. It is also seen in acts of love which are made possible through the gifts God has given to members of the church. The elders and deacons care for the spiritual, emotional and material needs of their communities. How, then, did the early church come to this love, and what impelled them to exercise it?

We said above that the order of love is that God first loves man, and man responds to that love. How, then, does man come to see God's love? The answer is a little complicated. The system—if we may call it that—is set out below:

- (i) Man because of his rejection of God hates Him, and does not wish to see Him as light and love.
- (ii) God does not cease to love man because of this rejection and hatred. He shows His love by creation, by His care for His creation, and by the means of covenant, especially the Abrahamic covenant. None of these things is received or recognised by man. The covenant with Israel seems only to underline the human view that God is partial and so not just (holy) and loving.
- (iii) God sends His Son to redeem man who, because of his sin and guilt, is lost. The only way this guilt and sin can be taken from man is through Christ bearing it all in his death. He does this by identifying with each person as a sinner, bearing his guilt, impurity and shame, along with all the elements that pertain to sin. He thus frees man from guilt, and at the same time, breaks the power of man's enemies, thus liberating him from all bondage.
- (iv) This act of the Cross (and resurrection) is a revelation to man of God's love. However, man unaided cannot understand Christ

and the work of the Cross. That is why the Holy Spirit has to be sent to man, so that he may understand the Cross. When he has a revelation of God's love in the Cross, he responds in love.

- (v) Love is known personally and experientially in the gift of forgiveness. Jesus said, 'He loves little who has been forgiven little'. God never forgives 'little', but only totally, and His gifts are without recall. A man is wholly forgiven, not partially. Thus his response is total.
- (vi) Even so, love comes to him as a gift. Repentance and faith are the initial gifts whereby love may be received. Paul said, 'The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'. John said, 'We love because He first loved us'. Peter said, 'Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth [the gospel] *with a view to* a sincere love of the brethren ...' These three statements mean that God is known as love in and by the forgiveness of sins, and so the response of love is as John says, 'If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us'.

So, then, we have come to be responders to love, ie. people of love. What, then, is this new life of love?

The new life of love is lived because God goes on loving us. He showed His love at the Cross, and by the Spirit, we, understanding that love, came to love. We do not, however, only look back to love ('the Son of God who loved me', 'He [the Father] loved us ...'), but we live in love; 'The love of Christ constrains us...' , 'May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God', 'Keep yourselves in the love of God'. Love has been poured into our hearts, love constrains us, we keep ourselves in the love of God, and 'he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him'. This, then, is the life of love.

The working out of that life of love comes through abiding in God, and so abiding in His love. This is very

practical. Every moment of time God is working out His love in and by His deeds. So must we. There are deeds which appear to be love and yet are not from love; they are worthless. Paul tells us this in his famous Corinthian chapter on love. One can have gifts and use them without love, and so they have no value. Love has been described as those deeds which meet genuine needs. It is the use of gifts for others: it is putting others before oneself. It is caring for others, having thought for them. It is giving oneself for another, laying down one's life for love. It is giving oneself to another or others. It is all of these things provided it is love motivating their actions, and not counterfeit love. This means that love only truly works as love when the Father's love is continually evoking love for others.

Nothing has value apart from love. Paul speaks of 'faith which works by love'. He means that faith without love has no value. The whole life of faith, then, must at the same time be one of love. This also goes for hope. He says, 'We are not ashamed to hope because the love of God is flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit'. Hope is a fixed assurance based upon the revelation of God in His love. Hope believes the promises of God. God promises wonderful things out of His love, things such as resurrection of the body, eternal life, glorification of the body and person, a beautiful inheritance, and life as kings and priests in eternity. The things of hope keep us motivated for useful and purposive living.

What we need to notice is that light (holiness) and love are never apart. In the essay entitled 'I, The Sanctified Man', page 39, we saw that holiness springs from actions

of righteousness, ie. obedience to 'the just requirements of the law'. John says, 'This is the love of God that we keep His commandments'. Love not only motivates obedience: obedience *is* love. Jesus said, 'If you love me you *will* keep my commandments'. That is why Paul says, 'The love of Christ constrains us'. John says, 'He who says, 'I know Him' but disobeys His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him: but whoever keeps His word in him truly God's love is perfected'. This brings us to a most important fact, namely that love is not only fulfilling the *needs* of others. It seeks to bring men and women to fulfil the high demands of God, for only then will they be truly people of love. It is action which takes into account the holiness of God and seeks to draw others into that frame of mind, and action which comports with God as holy. In other words, love does not lower the standards of righteousness, does not ignore true justice, and seeks to act towards others in genuine righteousness and holiness. This differs from a lesser view of love which excuses the weakness and foibles of others, and permits sin and failure because of so-called 'loving understanding' of the sinful human race. Genuine love seeks to draw others to a life of 'fulfilling the just requirements of the law', not excusing what they call 'human weakness'.

So, then, to be a man of love is most wonderful. If (creationally being in the image of God) we were made to be love-creatures, then that accounts for the sheer relief, and the high joy which we have when we love. We have become natural again. We have been released into what it is to be truly human. We ought to be honest and admit that the flesh is slothful when it comes to the

matter of loving. The flesh does not recognise law, let alone obey it. All true law is love, or, rather, is in the service of love. To be loving is to live the authentic functional way, and that is pleasing. We have to confess that it is always a battle to live in this matter, but the rewards are rich. The greatest of these is the growth of character and maturity into which loving brings us.

Finally, then, we speak of the maturity of love. Paul's love chapter in the Corinthian letter is proof of this. Paul speaks of his immature actions as a child. Now that he has become a man he has put away childish things. Ultimately he will see all and understand all, but only if he has gone through the maturing of love. Paul sees the value of love-maturation so that he prays for those at Philippi, 'that your love may abound more and more with all knowledge and discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be *pure and blameless for the day of Jesus Christ filled with the fruits of righteousness*'. He prays the same maturing experience of love for the Thessalonians, '... may the Lord make you to increase and abound in love to one another, and to all men, as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts *unblamable in holiness* before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints'. This maturity is worth all the pains and sufferings through which it is wrought. Without pride it also brings a wonderful sense of well-being.

Love will always be the test of our life in Christ. The church is the new humanity, the true community of love. All too often it has proved otherwise, but grace can restore any church to the warmth of love. Such love does

not remain within the perimeter of the community but reaches out to the total community of man. When love is on this sort of business it flourishes richly in the community of the church. It is good to be the people of love, proclaiming the love of God.

EIGHT

I, THE MAN OF THE SPIRIT

I mean I am a man of the Spirit. In one sense all human beings are beings of the Spirit for He has created them: in a second sense all human beings are creatures of spirit, for without this they would not have life. All sentient things have spirit: this is common to man and all creatures. When they die that spirit goes back to God. What then happens to the particular life of the creature is in His hands. We conjecture about what happens but can only know what has been revealed to us.

When God created man he was a creature of the Spirit in that God breathed into him the breath of life. He breathed this from Himself into man. Man, then, was not merely sentient. He was related directly to God for, in man's case, God made him in His own image and likeness. Man of all creatures—even celestial creatures—had a special relationship with God. God had not breathed the breath of life into any other creature. In the act of creation, they were given life: man's case was different. This

sorrow of man. It all happened in the following way:

Man related to God with the intimacy of a servant to the Master, of a creature to the Creator, and as a child to the Father. This meant his true being lay in his state of dependence, ie. a dependent relationship: his identity was total only in full dependency. Tempted to become a person in his own right, he acceded to the desire to be independent, to make his own judgements and decisions. In that moment he died to his own identity and 'came alive' to a different one. As regards creation, he was still a person of the Spirit: as regards being his true self, he was no longer a person of the Spirit. What this means in terms of a true anthropology we may never be able to understand, much less state. He ceased, in the best sense, to be a man of the Spirit. In a manner of speaking he became 'Spiritless', although he was still—as are all creatures dependent upon the Creator-Spirit for his biological existence.

This fall or degradation of man has many terms in the Scriptures. One of them is 'dead'; another 'devoid of the Spirit'; another 'natural' or 'physical'. Such people are described as 'born of the flesh' and whilst all human creatures are 'born of the flesh', to be born *only* of the flesh is inadequate. Being born of the flesh simply means natural birth the union of two people, and the resultant child of that conception.

I am a man of the Spirit. This means—among other things that I have had a new birth over and above the birth of the flesh. I have been reborn in a miracle which is beyond full description. Whilst in one sense it is a

mystery, in another, it is humanly understandable. Jesus called for this new birth or rebirth. He insisted that it is indispensable if a human being is (a) to *see* the Kingdom of God, and (b) to *enter* it. John, his follower, spoke of the same new birth. He said it happens 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God'. He meant that it comes not from humanity, nor from the will of man (parental desire), nor from any person himself, for such birth comes only from God. Jesus said it came only from and through the Holy Spirit of God. How, then, does this happen?

In the New Testament, the new birth is always connected with the Cross. Jesus, in speaking of the new birth, said, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes on his name should not perish but have eternal life'. He referred to an incident in the Old Testament where Israelites were dying from snake bite and the cause of their death was—so to speak—fixed to a pole. When they looked at this transfixed snake they could live, ie. have 'new life'. He meant, 'That serpent of evil which has caused the death of the human race, and brought people into Spiritless existence, is now transfixed forever on the Cross. Look to the Cross—the defeat of evil—and believe and live!'

Jesus' followers used different ways of talking about this new birth. James—Jesus' brother—said, 'Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures'. Peter said, 'We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ... born anew not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God'. John

speaks many times of the new birth and the changes it accomplished in a new-born person. Paul talks of 'the washing of regeneration, and the renewal in the Holy Spirit'. In all these quotes, fact, method and results are described. Human birth is always a beautiful mystery and miracle, and no less spiritual new birth. From being a Spiritless human creature, we now become—or are restored to being—a human of the Spirit.

I, then, have become a man of the Spirit. I was—to use Paul's words—'dead in trespasses and sins', but now something has happened to me. I am a new creation: old things have passed away, and all things have become new. What, then, is this work of the Spirit which has made me new? How is it possible for a human being to change so radically? Does such a thing really happen, and if so, how? Questions such as these must be answered, otherwise what I have said above is just so much religious jargon and pious claims.

We have seen two things above, (i) that new birth is always linked with the Cross of Christ, and (ii) it is always linked with the Spirit and the word of God. Jesus said he had to be lifted up as a snake so that those who gazed on him in faith could live, ie. come to life out of their dying. He was lifted up as a snake on the Cross. Evil is often typified by a snake. The ancient serpent beguiled Eve to eat wrongly of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Evil in the New Testament is called variously 'our old humanity', 'the flesh', 'the Devil', 'the world', 'our sins', 'sin', and Christ is said to have crucified 'our old humanity' with himself on the Cross. In fact, I was crucified with him, ie. myself personally as a sinner. He bore my sins in his body on the tree (the

Cross), and in this way 'crucified the flesh', ie. my humanity as affected and conditioned by sin. He was 'made sin for us', suffering the outcome of our sins. Paul said that the world also was crucified with him, meaning that the whole Satanic system of evil was taken up into the Cross. When a person realises that he/she is a sinner, then to look at that Cross is to know one's self has gone through a mysterious and practical death on the Cross. One, then, is free.

Such a statement sounds absurd apart from the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth who leads us into truth. Hence his word is the word of truth. So dynamic is the ministry of the Spirit, and so powerful and penetrating is the word he utters, that the truth strikes home internally, reaching the secret heart of the (now) believing person. This is described as 'the Holy Spirit applying the word of redemption to the heart'. In other words, what happened in Christ's death and resurrection now becomes real to the hearer, and effective within him. He realises that all his sins are forgiven, taken away and destroyed. Thus the grip of the past is prised from the (now) new person. Not only does the Spirit apply the death, but also the resurrection. He brings the once 'dead' (ie. Spiritless) person to life, ie. to *new* life. This is a great miracle, a moral revolution, a radical transformation, a new creation out of an old one. Our essays on forgiveness (page 28), justification (page 20), victory (page 56) and sanctification (page 39) show us this, but we must understand them, for the matter is staggering in its proportions and significance.

I have then begun to be a man of the Spirit. I came to be this by converting (turning around), repenting and having faith. Yet even though I claim to have done these

things, it was really the Spirit who initiated these acts in me, drawing out my response by revealing the love of God. The miracle was vast, but it was (and is) a miracle in the midst of life as the world calls life its existence. Outwardly there was no radical change, and my native abilities for thinking, feeling and doing did not alter. What altered was my *nous*, ie. my 'mind', my attitude, my thrust of life, my understanding. Such a radical change affected my will so that I am a different person. To put it into an even better way, *the Spirit came to me*, and changed me from being a Spiritless person to a Spirit-person, ie. a *person filled with* the Holy Spirit. So now I live daily in the Spirit, and all my being and existence is in one way or another affected by his presence.

To be a Spirit-person is to be a natural person. It is also a glorious thing. It is rarely if ever seen by those around us. They can sense and even see something of a change, but they cannot know what it is. John said, 'The world does not know us, but then it did not know *him* [Christ]'. This does not matter: what matters is that we are now Spirit-persons and Spirit-filled.

In speaking of myself as a man of the Spirit, I find there is so much about the Spirit that I have not said that I need to write more. I must try to write briefly as a full account would take up a whole book.

The first thing I want to describe is the crisis which happens when the Spirit first comes to a person. When God the Father sent him into my heart (ie. my mind, person, life, etc.), then my first impulse was to cry 'Father!' for Paul says, 'Because we are sons, God has

sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, "Abba! Father!" In another place he says, 'The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God'. This Spirit brings the sense and assurance that we are God's sons. This gives us confidence in God as our Father, and life is now secure because of this new relationship. As is shown so powerfully in Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount', God is our Father in every human situation.

Jesus as the Son of God was always led by the Spirit. His conception, birth, baptism, temptation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension are, in the New Testament, all said to be effected by the Holy Spirit. Paul says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God'. As a man of the Spirit it should be natural for me to be led by the Spirit. Paul says, 'Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfil the lust of the flesh'. '... if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.' 'If we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit.'

Living by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit are all helped by that most remarkable of gifts called 'the fruit of the Spirit'. The word 'fruit' is better translated 'harvest'. Some people think they have to create and develop this harvest. In fact, it is the harvest of the Spirit *himself*. He effects the harvest. He brings 'love, joy, peace' as the immediate result of God's forgiveness and because we have these we can then experience 'patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control'. We cannot possibly create such rich states of living but we can—and must—*habituate* them. In one way, the Christian life consists in habituating the gift-harvest of the Spirit. Habituation is

the patient insistence on using each element of the Spirit's fruit. It is the practice of the will in every situation. As in any skill, practice helps to develop the proposed way of action. There are other gifts of the Spirit. These are many, but probably no one receives all of them. The Spirit distributes them to every person as his wisdom dictates. People who are Spiritless have natural gifts, which generally they use for themselves, or for their own ends. In addition to natural gifts, Spirit-persons have one or more gifts of the Spirit. These are given that they may be used in the purposes of love. Paul says very clearly that we may have the most outstanding gifts but they would prove worthless without love. For example, he says, 'Though I have such faith that I could move mountains, if I do not have love [in the use of faith] then I am nothing'.

I want to pause for a useful observation. I have been so preoccupied in telling you the way in which I am a man of the Spirit that I have left out the intimate and personal side of it all. It is good to be a person of the Spirit. It is wonderful, daily, to have back again the life which man lost so long ago. It is rich and beautiful to be at peace with God, to relate to Him as a forgiven, justified and sanctified person. It is wonderful to have the Spirit living in my life. His harvest is indescribable in its richness. I am a most favoured man. Grace meets me at every moment of my day: love, joy and peace are wonderful aids to true life. I dread to think what life would be without the Spirit, but then there will never be life without the Spirit.

Even so, I must not presume upon the grace of the Spirit. Being a man of the Spirit also carries responsi-

bilities and duties. The command to walk in the Spirit and be led by him shows that I am not permitted self-rule. Paul said in another place, 'You are not under law, but under grace'. That means that grace's rule is just as strong as was that of law: so the Spirit's rule equals that of grace. It is not, however, a domineering rule: it is firm but at the same time enabling and encouraging. Thus as a Spirit-man I know the joy of obedience. I can obey from the heart by the Spirit. This may seem rather abstract, but if we look at the work of the Spirit in the sanctified man (cf. essay page 39), then we see it is:

- (i) through the Spirit I put to death the deeds of the body, thus defeating the flesh. This is the same as living in the Spirit my own personal life of holiness;
- (ii) through the Spirit I am enabled to pray, hence 'praying in the Spirit'. There is no other kind of prayer which is genuine apart from this. Because of my weakness, I do not know how to pray but the Spirit intercedes within me, and the Father receives that as my prayer;
- (iii) through the Spirit I know how to love, and am enabled to do so. Since he is 'the Spirit of love', 'the Spirit of unity' and 'the Spirit of fellowship', these three elements constitute the one strong life of the body of Christ, ie. the church;
- (iv) through the Spirit I am enabled to worship God. 'God is spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth', Jesus said, and Paul said, 'We are those who worship God by the Spirit'. Because he is the Spirit of truth, we can worship in truth. Whilst this may, again, sound theoretical and abstract, this is not the case in the practice of worship. What we need to note is that service and worship are virtually the one: we serve the living God because of His mercies, because He has cleansed our consciences from dead works. The Spirit is thus the Spirit of service. Paul said that since we have died to the law (so far as its condemnation and demanding legalism is concerned) we now serve God 'in the newness of the Spirit';

- (v) through the Spirit we receive power to proclaim the gospel of Christ. The disciples had to await the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in order to receive the required power (love, revelation, enablement) to preach, since the task was so great and demanding. I, then, have this power to proclaim the truth. Inside that act of proclaiming I need guidance as to where to go, when to speak, and to whom to speak. For the most part this happens fairly simply—'as you go, you know, and as you know, you go'—but I must not do other than the Spirit tells me. This is always within the fellowship of Christ's church. I need the power and love of the Spirit in order to exercise properly the gifts of the Spirit;
- (vi) Paul said, '... through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness [justification]'. Paul knew that all hope is linked with the Spirit, the Spirit of hope. I cannot live this life fully unless I am assured of the future, especially the ultimate of the future when the Father will renew all things. I need the Spirit to keep me in hope of that ultimate sonship, redemption of the body, the truth of glory, of inheritance and of eternal life. 'We are not ashamed to hope because the love of God has been flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to US?'

There are many more things we could link with the person and work of the Holy Spirit, but they would be endless as we enquired into life in the Spirit. It is sufficient to conclude that whilst life in the Spirit is by no means easy, yet it is rich and substantial. To be a Spiritless person is a tragedy. To be confined to the orbit and perimeter of oneself is a sad matter. To be a Spirit-person is at the same time to be a Father-person, and a Son-person, that is a God-person. This is a 'demanding but rich occupation—ie. being a person of God. We must certainly not think of it as a simple, automatic and spontaneous matter, as though a Spirit-person sails along easily in life, being borne, willy-nilly on some

stream of the Spirit. It is clearly designated as a life of warfare and persecution, but then the Spirit provides 'spiritual weapons'. He aids us—both as persons and as the body, the church—in our warfare. Especially powerful is 'the sword of the Spirit', ie. the word of God. Even so, such battling—though it may bring fear, wounds and even temporary defeats—is most worthwhile.

One final thing needs to be said: 'I, as a man of the Spirit, must always *be filled* with the Spirit'. Paul says, 'Be aglow with the Spirit'. He might have said, 'Go on having full life—as a man—in and by the Spirit'. Paul knew that man is indeed lifeless without the Spirit. 'Go on being filled with the Spirit', he exhorted. He reminded the churches in Galatia, 'He [God] goes on supplying the Spirit'. Paul spoke gratefully of 'the supply of the Spirit', which means 'that which the Spirit supplies'. This state of Spirit-fulness is as much a matter of our willing it to be so as it is of continuing obedience. God, for His part, always goes on supplying the Spirit.

It is indeed good to be a person of the Spirit. As the listless countryside under intense heat and drought looks hopeless and lifeless, so it changes when the wind comes, especially as it brings with it the renewing rain. Suddenly flora and fauna revive. New hope is born. All things become alert. Life rises to top-pitch.

So is everyone born of the Spirit. Such become the Spirit-people of God.

NINE

I, MAN, THE WORSHIPPER

I have now to tell you of myself. I am Man, the worshipper. If you can lift your eyes from what you, yourself, are doing—or you too are the worshipper— and look around you, then you will see that much of the life of man is occupied in worship. Perhaps, at first sight, you will think there is little worship. You may take note of great cathedrals where solemn worship takes place. You will then note that many a church is thronged with people whilst others are nearly empty. Some have long ago been deserted, hired out to commercial enterprises or even sold to them. Some are just derelict buildings.

There are not only churches: there are temples, mosques, shrines and open worship-places. The varieties and modes of worship are legion. You will see Moslems caught up in rapt wonder at the transcendent Allah whilst no less the fervid Hindu will cry 'Ram! Ram!' Some eastern cities have the incessant ringing of church bells, and in others or even the same cities—are the endless cries of the muezzin.

There are other kinds of worship. You will see the rapt

wonder of the young people as they adore their rock stars, their sports heroes, the favourite driver of the Grand Prix. Worship can lead to great frenzy and high hysteria—So much is it part of our beings. Places of commerce are places of the Baals of this age. The almighty dollar takes prime worship, but behind this worship is the almost crazed worship of sex, especially illicit sex with all its gradations and permutations of deviant nature. Worship of power is the strongest driving motive for many. The parliaments and senates of the nations are truly called ‘the halls of power’, and as Howard Spring once put it, ‘Fame is the Spur’. There are numberless little Hitlers, Mussolinis, Alexanders, Napoleons and Stalins in our midst. Power-worship is found in the halls of commerce, the labour unions, and countless homes and families where members battle out the bid for personal supremacy.

These, then, are some of the ways man worships. I tell you truly that there is not one moment of the lives of human creatures—waking or sleeping—that we are not at worship. It may be life-worship and it may be death-worship, but worship there is, and worship there will always be, because worship there must be for man. He is incurably and compulsively the worshipper. It is that which he worships which determines who and what he is. His life pivots around worship.

As primal Man, I was the true worshipper of God, of Him Who is Spirit and Truth. Worship of Him was not difficult, seeing He created me. He was my Creator and I His creature. He was Father and I His child. He was King and I His subject. Such was my functional affinity with the Creator of all the earth, and in the worship of

Him lay my deep peace, my full joy, my complete vocation. As ‘deep calls unto deep’, so—in His likeness—I was one with Him. I lived in such dependence that dread, restlessness, and person-aberrations were all absent. Bliss possessed me, and worship gave wholesome meaning to my life. As male, I worshipped God and honoured my woman, my wife. She was wonderful in my eyes. As female, I honoured my man, my husband, and there was no bitterness between us. We were innocent together. We had no fear of the creation about us. Our worship of the Eternal God was not the worship of fearful and naked power, but genuine trust and the delight of affinity. Whilst we worshipped God, we honoured each other and all things.

You have heard what happened in that early time. Indeed the terrible happening keeps resounding within all of us. Man the worshipper of God became the worshipper of himself. My primal knowledge of good and evil derived from God. I was content to have it that way until it was suggested that I could value all things through my own estimation of them. If anything attracted me it was that—to have an ‘on the spot’ evaluation of all things. It would save me from having to go to God. It would make me independent. Of course I would only use such an ability for good!

This, you know, has come to pass. In our human race there is not one person who does not know what is good and what is evil. I mean that every human being is sure he is right in his evaluations. Our arguments and battles arise from the differences we have in such evaluations and convictions. We know what is ‘good’ for us and what is ‘bad’. The fact that we differ on the ‘goodness’

and 'badness' of many things does not alter our minds. We believe it is an inalienable human right to make judgements, and then to seek to implement them. So much does man worship himself! Uneasily he may venture to line up his own judgements with those of God, but in the ultimate he will come down on the side of his judgements. He will become angry when thwarted in any of them.

I, then, am that man. But as I have said on numerous occasions in these essays, something has happened to Me—the human race. Part of my number worships truly, and part worships falsely. I am the divided man, the psychotic human race. I have varieties of worship. What I now tell you is the rediscovery that a part of our race has made in regard to the worship of God.

First let me share some principles with you. Worship is service: service is worship. I cannot serve two lords and remain undivided. Every object of worship that I have makes demands upon my loyalties. 'A double-hearted man is unstable in all his ways.' The polygamist must divide his worship between his wives; the polyandrist between her husbands. Union in worship is essential to authentic adoration and service, and worship is essential to the true personhood I desire to have. I cannot serve two masters yet I cannot *not* serve one! As I have said, I am incurably and compulsively the worshipper.

To illustrate the matter of worship: I was Man—I was both Cain and Abel. As Cain, I brought my offerings to God. Sacrifice is a joyous admission of dependence upon God, and gratitude to Him for His very Being. It is the expression of thanksgiving and the occasion of special fellowship. When I offered the fruits of my earth-

labour to Him, He turned from it: He did not accept it. I was angry, for the very core of my life was disturbed by His non-acceptance. Acceptance was vital to me. In my evaluations of good and evil, I knew that. My anger was at such injustice: I hated my brother Abel because God accepted him. I saw the utter injustice of that acceptance, and my anger drove me to kill my brother. You may say that was wrong, yet I saw God as untrustworthy, partial to one of us, over and against another. What else could I do?

I was Abel. I have faith in God. My faith was that God would accept my worship as fitting to His holy Being. I brought of the flock and offered it to God. I had no hesitation in doing so, and no thought that it would be unacceptable, because I knew He was the One who propitiated for my sins—and they were many. You may say that such worship was costly, but I say it was indescribably beautiful, soul-satisfying, and, in the light of that, my untimely death was but a minor matter. Personal integrity is what matters.

With Cain—if not with me, the Fallen Man- the fallen Male and Female—began orgies of worship which are both sad and fearful to describe. When we worship the ego of ourselves, then we come into rivalry with all egos. When we cannot have what we worship most then we have great anger. Worship is giving worth to a thing- -simply that—but it is also proceeding to act in the light of that evaluation. To give worth to one thing over and against another brings confusion. When millions are at rivalry in their worships, then much anger arises, and violence is bred, and out of it and with it rape, mayhem, cruelty and perversion. The dreadful results of false worship the false evaluation of God,

man and the creation—are too terrible even to describe. Negatively these things are proof that man ought not worship what is false, and so be false in worship. He must worship the only true God and he must worship Him with a true spirit, and worship Him in truth.

My one act of seeking to be myself apart from God set loose the most terrible consequences in man's history. It gave birth to idolatry. Above, I have described modern idolatry, but in one sense nothing has changed from that first recourse to idolatry. The great man Paul taught us that when we refused to honour God then the floodgates of idolatry were opened. Evil lords descended upon us. In one way they were fallen angelic powers who, together with their leader Satan, lust for worship and honour. In another way we created our idols for—creationally speaking—there is no such thing, essentially, as an idol. It is of our making. We create it from our desires, and we endue it with the qualities which will satisfy our desires for joy, peace and pleasure. No idol can give us these things, and we eventually become angry with idols, with the same anger we have towards God because He, too, did not give us what we were asking!

A world gripped by idolatry is a world which 'worships and serves the creature [creation and its parts] more than [ie. rather than] the Creator'. It was in the midst of such a world that God came to me, Man, through our father, Abraham. Stephen said, 'The God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham'. To be confronted by God's glory was to show clearly the sham of the idols, their pathetic and evil nature. It was to set the heart aflame with a true understanding of God.

I take Abraham because he was the father of the new, true people of God. They were the people of Israel. To them, God gave a beautiful gift—'the worship'. This worship was unique in the world. Through the writings of their Bible we can discover the intimacies and intricacies of their worship. God was holy. God dwelt in their midst. God had fellowship with His people. Along with the gift of (unique) worship He also gave the gifts of the law, the promises, the covenants, the sonship, the glory, and even the Messiah. This people—part of Me, the Man—could worship in spirit and in truth. Insofar as they worshipped God truly, then to that degree they were the most truthful and fulfilled of all people upon the earth.

They, too, sadly enough, had great trouble with the idols. We must understand that at the heart of worship is love. When God released His people from the grip of Pharaoh, He gave them a law, and the heart of this law was to love God with all their heart, soul and mind, and to love others as themselves. This is really the law which was from the beginning. Idolatry in their writings was often called 'fornication' or 'adultery'. The essence of this is that love is the compelling power for us—as humans to achieve union with another. It goes beyond mere detached rationality. It draws upon our yearning for the union that we have just mentioned. Fornication is illicit union. Adultery is interfering with an already licit union. Masturbation is the (foolish) union with oneself! To covet anything is idolatry for it puts that worth upon the object, person, ambition or relationship which is contrary to the worth of God. Idolatry is the giving of that worth to anything which rightly belongs to God.

Idolatry plagued Israel. In the very midst of its being liberated from Egypt, it set up the golden calf, and was nearly exterminated as a nation for this horrible act. Stephen gave a sermon to the Jewish parliament (the Sanhedrin) saying that idolatry had always been at the heart of Israel. For this they killed him: any form of idolatry which is attacked will meet with deadly resistance from its devotees.

The great sin of Israel was that God had given it the symbol and place of worship in the tent of meeting. Here the structure symbolised the people of God, the modes of true worship, and the presence of God in His people, yet hidden in the Holy of Holies was that they should not presume upon that holiness which was Him. Much was taught through the law, the sacrifices and the practices which enabled them to know and worship God.

What is not always appreciated is that their worship was unique in the world and exclusive to Israel. This occasioned great anger in the other nations. Whilst some regarded this great nation with indifference, and even contempt, the word spread that this was God's special people, and it is enough to say that many were jealous of the grace of the sacrifices, and the special presence of God in Israel. If our claim is true that worship is the most essential element for man, and the one which really determines what he is, then exclusion from the revealed way of worship in Israel must be a powerful factor (as it was in Cain) in causing human beings to hate the true worshipping people of God.

One of the prophets had made a radical prediction. His message was that one day God would open His house to all nations. It would be for all people 'the house of prayer'. Outcasts from Israel, and foreigners from all

nations would be admitted to the true worship (see Isaiah 56:6-8). When Jesus came, he told a woman in Samaria that God's worship would not be located in one special place or be after a certain mode. All are to know that God is Father, that man has affinity with God, and can (through Christ) worship Him in their spirits (by the Holy Spirit) as the true God, for they now know the truth. In fact Christ is the new temple, and his people are living stones in this new temple. Worship is now open to all mankind, that is true worship has been restored to us.

I, Man, as true Man-in-Christ, tell you that what the world has needed since its rebellion against God is now available to all. That is, because of the coming of Christ—his life, death, resurrection and ascension—and because of the coming of the Holy Spirit, we of the human race can now truly worship. This is wonderful news for mankind. The dividing wall in the Jewish temple which disallowed non-jews to worship after Jewish fashion—has been broken down. There is now no difference between Jew and Gentile: all are the one. The law, the glory, the covenants, the promises, the sonship and *the worship* all now belong to all mankind.

Thus, I, Man, am now the true worshipper as I have come into Christ, the Messiah of God. My body and person which was once polluted has been cleansed by the death of Christ: I am purged from dead works to worship the living God. The true Humanity (humanity-in-Christ) has made its robes white in the blood of the Lamb and therefore worships (serves) Him day and night in His temple. Hence one famous apostle of Christ exhorts us to present our bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God' so that we can truly worship

God. This means that every part of our lives, every activity of our mind, body and its limbs is the living and dynamic worship of God.

This brilliant disclosure of truth means that idolatry is trifling, piffling and puerile as it is contrasted to the rich worship of God. It may well be dangerous, and may enlarge its seductiveness and deceit, but the idols are slain in and by the love of God, and their worship is defeated.

I, the Man, the true Humanity, the people of God, have become the true worshipper, the authentic servant of God. I worship in His temple, for His temple, too, is the true people of God—'a dwelling place for Him, in the Spirit'. I have had disclosed to me the beautiful truth of worship. I have been called to worship everlastingly, to be a priest—a kingdom of priests unto Him, and indeed to all mankind.

This is the true worship of the only true God. The idols are but as dust.

TEN

I, THE SERVANT OF ALL

I am Man the servant. I am the servant of God serving Him in His creation. My primary service is to Him, but at the same time it is to man. As corporate Man, as the Human Race, our service is mutual: we serve one another. As the body of created humanity, we serve Him who created us, and gave us glory as a wonderful race.

I am aware that all things in His creation were made in such ways that it is natural for them to worship and adore God, and true worship is true service. These things I say are not mere words, for serving flows from the heart of God, and in parallel should flow from the heart of Man. Each man is complete only when he serves. To serve is not to be servile: it is not to be below or inferior. It is to be as God, for He is servant of all.

You will know that: you will know that God is both Worker and Servant. He made the creation, the universe and all that is in it, and He made it complete as a functional whole. So complete is it in its essential nature that the psalmist can say, 'All your works praise you'.

On the seventh day He rested from the labours of creation only to take on the labour of providence, of upholding all things by the word of His power. Never has He ceased to do this. He is no absentee landlord, remote from His creation but every moment He sustains it.

More than this, He commenced His great work of salvation history, planning in grace before time that he would redeem His elect people, which will be a multitude that no man can number, out of all the tribes and places of the earth. At the end-time—as man counts time—He will unify all things in His Creator-Redeemer-Son, the One who became Jesus of Nazareth, and whose continuing humanity is now glorified. In these ways God is Worker-Servant, and in this way of being His glory lies, as it is also shown forth in His acts, the acts we see in the history of time.

I, as Man, am made in the image and likeness of God so that it is natural for me also to be servant. Had there been no Fall, no attempt to make myself free-standing and to have my own knowledge of good and evil, then the word ‘servant’ would be a precious one to me, unsullied by the associations sin brings to it. In the world of autonomous man, it is better to be served than to serve, to be worked for, rather than to work. Yet even in this state, human beings cannot deny they often find joy in the work of their hands, and in serving others, especially if those be the ones they love. Work and service are constantly changing mysteries in a sinful world but we know enough of them to be able to give worth to work and service, whether done by us, or done for us.

I will not dwell upon the shame of that human Fall, that time when Man turned to ‘worship the creature rather than the Creator’. His worship—by nature of the case—could not be satisfying, and it compounded his desire for rich fulfilment, compulsively driving him towards ‘inordinate affection’, the inflamed lust and passion for full satisfaction, the incessant idolatry. Such has always been counter-productive, but We—Man, the human race—have always persisted in the delusion that one day We will achieve inner peace and joy. It is not on record that this has ever happened.

Man, then, will work in order to achieve his own ends. St. Paul had a noble doctrine of work. He said, ‘... let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that *he may be able to give to those in need*’. God’s noble doctrine of work is that man may have true purpose in vocation, and out of his vocation serve both God and man. Rightly understood, this is the heart of true human fulfilment.

Now I will talk of the outcome of selfishness, ie. self-worship and the attempt—by self—for self-fulfilment. It is the misery of the human race, the tragedy of rivalry, competition, cruelty, bitterness, anger, injustice, rape, anarchy and murder. These words—among many others we could have used—tell us both the evil acts of human beings, and the painful results they bring. Paul saw only one answer to these things, ‘By love serve one another’, or ‘Serve one another as slaves’.

If we think about his prescription or remedy then we can visualise what a radical change would come about in the world were we to use it. Overnight war would cease. Hunger and suffering would quickly come to an end.

The resources of the earth would be supplied to those who have need. Trust and joy would be born and grow. Without doubt St. Paul has the remedy but even as I write, I know it will never be universally accepted and applied. Why not, then? The answer is, 'Until man's heart is changed by God's love, he will not love in this way'. Is it possible, then, for God's love to change the heart of man? The answer is, 'Yes'.

If man could see God's love in creation, and in God's creating him, plus His love in sustaining him, then he would love God. Man does not see this. He would wish to accredit the creation of man to anything other than God—to evolution (without God at its genesis), to a fortuitous happening, to anything—rather than be obligated to God. No man needs more than this to make him love God and serve his fellow-creatures.

What is required is a cross, indeed *the* Cross. It requires God to become man, the great Servant to become the servant of man and redeem him. In Isaiah especially in the last 26 chapters or so—a figure appears who has something of mystery about him. In time he has become known as 'the Suffering Servant'. The Jews pondered (and ponder) him deeply. The Christian church reveres statements about him, especially about his humility and the fruitfulness of his servanthip. More wonderfully, yet most terribly, one passage of Isaiah (52:14-53:12) outlines the nature and work of this wonderful purpose. His suffering is immense yet not one jot or tittle of it is punishment for his own sin, for he had no sin. We call his suffering 'vicarious', that is, 'in the place of, and for, others'.

The Christian church has always claimed that this Suffering Servant is the man Jesus. Listening to his words and looking at his acts, it sees him as the Servant *par excellence*. His own words designate him as a servant (*the* Servant). He said, 'I am among you as one who serves'. 'The Son of man has not come to be served, but to serve.' He taught, 'He that would be greatest among you, let him be servant'. In such words, and in his acts, he was unveiling what it is to be a servant. He urged us to become servants. He, himself, was never servile: often his very serving took the form of warning and rebuking those who lived in pride, selfishness and sin.

He taught the reason for, and the way of, serving by saying it flowed from love. In the Old Testament—and in fact in the New Testament also—to worship God meant to serve Him: to serve Him meant to worship Him. On the horizontal level of human living, we do not speak so much of worshipping our fellow-creatures as honouring them. Children are to honour parents, husbands are to honour wives, even the stranger and traveller is to be treated with honour. This principle is no less strongly expressed in the New Testament. We are to 'outdo one another in showing honour', and we are to 'honour all men', and to 'honour the king'. Honouring is not simply a commendable attitude. It is expressed dynamically in service to others.

To return to a previous point: God is known as Servant through a (the) cross. It is here we see His love and His saving work and service. Yet such a work cannot be carried out unless, and until, God becomes man. The Son (sometimes called 'the eternal Son') was with His Father before time. He tells us 'the Father has always

been working and I go on working', meaning, in essence, that he and the Father have always worked together. This is how the Jews heard what he said for they accused him of making himself equal with God. The Father and the Son worked together in creation, and then in redemption. The Son who always saw himself as the servant of the Father, brought that servanthip into the form of human servanthip. He became man to be the servant of man. In order to understand this, we should read a special passage. Here we quote part of a passage, in one of Paul's writings:

'Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death ...'

In this passage Paul is urging his readers to have exactly the same attitude ('mind') as was that of the Son (or, 'the Word') before he became human. As his readers are to 'count others better than yourselves', so *Christ counted us (humanity) better than himself!* This may seem a radical idea but it is substantially correct. To count others better than ourselves is not to regard the quality or ability of the other persons higher than ourselves, but is to put the other persons *before* ourselves.

If this is true then the sense of the passage is that the Son was not reluctant to become man, or even resigned to becoming man but *earnestly desired to become man.*

To put it in very human terms, he *longed* to become man: it would have been anguish for him not to become man because of his great love and grace for the human race. This is so different from what we call 'normal human thinking' that we cannot look at the dazzling light of its truth. We are blinded by it. If—by God's grace—we understand, then we are immensely humbled.

If the incarnation shows us brilliantly the humility of Christ, then even more the Cross shows us the depths and quality of that humility. When Paul says Christ 'emptied himself' he did not mean 'emptied himself of his deity'—for that would have been impossible. No, he divested himself of his divine prerogatives to be truly man, as man. He never drew upon his deity to effect his humanity. He was not *docetic* man! Because of the grace of his incarnation he could fulfil his role as the Suffering Servant. He could rightly say, 'I am among you as one who serves'. He could urge genuine servanthip upon his followers, 'He that would be greatest among you, let him be servant'. He could say, 'The Son of man has not come to be served but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many'.

'Give his life a ransom for many'—this was the nub of the matter. He genuinely served in his signs and miracles, his healing and exorcisms, his feeding of the hungry thousands, his gifts of forgiveness to guilty men and women, but this was simply preliminary to the greatest act of service, the giving of his life as a ransom for many. Beautiful as is his servanthip in John chapter 13, where he took a towel and a basin of water and girded himself to do the despised service of washing feet, this event is but a symptom and symbol of the immense love and service of that Cross.

In that Cross. he penetrated to the sad and obscene depths of human depravity, the fearful secret inner heart where the loathsomeness of man's spirit is privatised and secreted. There, in the most powerful act of identification, he bore our sins and became all that is sin, that he might liberate us from pollution and penalty and bring us to God, purified and acquitted from paralysing guilt. In all of this, he was truly Servant.

Nor is that the end of his service. In the time between the ascension and his return he is putting down the enemies of God and man, taking the kingdoms of this world into his sovereignty and labouring so that it will be said, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ', and 'He gives the Kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all'. He is still serving both God and man.

Now, then, we have the paradigm, the true pattern of Servanthood. We always have this before us in order to execute our own servanthship. What is more, we have 'this mind which was [and is] in Christ Jesus'. We possess the dynamic Christ: we live in the servant Christ. Paul uses Christ as the true pattern for our ministry. He says, 'We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me"'. Again Paul says, 'Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the

Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy'.

We, then, are the servants of God. Christ is the Suffering Servant, but he was preceded by many servants who suffered. John the Baptist was one of these. God spoke of 'My servants, the prophets'. The great prophet of the Old Testament was Moses, and God spoke of him continually as 'Moses, my servant'. Later the great apostle John had a vision of heaven and sees a great people, and describes them, saying, 'They sing the song of Moses the servant'. In the same prophecy, 'His servants the prophets' is a term still used. We can think of the service of a prophet such as Jeremiah who could well be called 'the suffering servant'. The serving of these prophets was the communication of God's word in the face of the dismay, and even the hatred, of the listeners. In all these things they served God and the people. Moses was prepared to have his name blotted out of the book of life in order to save his people from wrath, and Daniel laboured in anguish of intercession so that God might renew His people. No less do the servants of God suffer in the age of the new covenant. To read Paul's accounts of his own servant-suffering is to see Christ-the-servant in Paul the slave-of-God. And so, also, with many more.

What, then, is the order of service? It is this: God serves us as Father, Son and Spirit. We are wrought upon by God; we are constrained by His creative and redeeming love. So we desire to serve Him. We are also constrained to serve others. This we do as single persons, and also corporately as the people of God. Serving God must mean serving man. Serving God and man are

simultaneous ministries: they are the one act. To say we serve God when we do not serve man is to say something which is a contradiction. To serve in a privatised way is to see ourselves out of context: we are part of the one community. This community—the church, the people of God—is the prophetic community, the priestly community and the kingly community. Christ is the true Prophet, Priest and King, and that is what makes us the prophetic, priestly and royal community. In this context, then, we serve. A prophet is a servant of God and the people. So, too, is a priest, and a king is father and servant to his people.

Having said these things, we need to keep seeing the truth that to be a servant is to be a true person, an authentic human being. God could not be God unless He were Servant. He could not be Servant unless He were God. This truth parallels the nature of man. By nature he is servant, serving God, man and creation. When he refuses servanthood he refuses his true manhood. Discovery of servanthood is the discovery of true selfhood. It is a rich and wonderful discovery. Man in this way knows his vocation, and vocation constitutes genuine purposefulness and occupation. Personal vocation is unique to each human being.

It remains now only to refresh ourselves in the constraints and modes of being servants of God and man. Paul says, 'By love serve one another', or 'Be slave-servants of one another'. Love is the spur, and love is the mode. Love gives, love discerns and supplies the need, love honours the personhood of others, love bears, believes, hopes and endures all things. Love lays down its life for the other. Love knows no limits: it never fails.

In all these ways it serves.

Paul put it simply, 'Do good unto all men, and especially those who are of the household of faith'. We are not partisan to the people of God, but they are under siege from evil powers and need primary care. We are to love all men, for Christ has died not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world. We are to pray for all men everywhere, for kings and rulers as well as for the humble, and we are also to honour all. Again we are to remember the poor and to visit the orphans and widows. We are to supply the needs of others when we have the ability to do so.

There are many things we should do out of servant-impulse and servant-vocation. With the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost came the practical concern of men and women for one another. The daily distribution to meet the needs of the needy immediately commenced. It continued when the churches of Asia and Europe helped to supply the needs of the believers in Jerusalem and Judea. Most of all it showed itself in the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. The church turned outwards as the servant-church. Man's deepest need is to know God, to receive salvation, to become part of the living people of God. It is to come into his true destiny, the destiny of ultimate glorification. The heart of Christ's servanthood was to 'give his life a ransom for many'. The heart of our servanthood is to share the fruits of that ransom with the entire world.

I then, the Man, the primal Man, the created of God, I—who sought my own self-rule, self-service, self-extension and self-preservation—have become liberated

and free in the service of God. In seeing God as Servant through His Servant-Son -especially through his incarnation and most dreadful redeeming death- I have become glad in my newly discovered servanthood. I not only recommend this new way of humanity to you, but I exhort you not to lose what is most wonderful by seeking only to be served, by rejecting the gift of serving both God and man. Come, let us serve!

ELEVEN

I, THE COMPASSIONATE PROCLAIMER

I am the Man who proclaims. What do I proclaim? It is that I must tell the news which has changed me, ie. the truth of God. I proclaim His grace and His love. I declare this to those who are in need of that love although they may not realise there is this need. It is the greatest need of all, but then it is not need I proclaim, but God, as Creator, as Father, as King and as Redeemer. I proclaim His Son as Saviour of the world, and all this I proclaim, not in my human powers, as such, but in the power of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, who alone can bring the gospel effectively and truly to the hearts of men.

Why, then, do I give myself to proclamation, the preaching of the Gospel? I do this for a number of reasons. The first is very personal. I was the Man who rebelled against God at the beginning, the time of innocency. I gave myself over to sin and death, not believing this to be the case although He had warned me. Down through the centuries I have lived in that tragedy,

but I have seen God send His Son, and I have seen the Son come to be a man. I have also followed his work which he did. Part of Me—part of humanity has always been faithful. It may have been sinful but faith taught it that God provides the dynamic way of sacrifice. Only this way could man escape disastrous judgement.

I have seen that Christ in the way that God appointed—has become the Saviour of the world. This news—and my experience of it has fired me with passion to tell the world the Good News. So powerful has that proclamation been down through the centuries that I cannot desist from being the proclaimer. Let me tell you that those of the early church were proclaimers. It is true that they did this by virtue of special calling, and through the gifts given by Christ, but they did it because the Gospel had gripped them. and the Holy Spirit had come to be the driving power in telling out the Gospel.

Some were apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and others pastors and teachers. It was their primary work. Whilst they did not neglect the ministry of love within the new (Christian) community, they said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching to serve at tables ... we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word'. They had a sense of constraint, and could not forbear from declaring the wonderful news. Indeed there was strong reason for their major emphasis upon preaching the Worthy One. We are the redeemed humanity]

The coming of Christ was not to be only for Israel. Whilst Jesus ministered exclusively to Israel, he had the whole world in mind. This was not just a whim. It was

part of God's plan. Jacob's last prophecy was that the kingship would not depart from Judah until he came to whom the kingship belonged, and to him was to be 'the obedience of the nations'. God's plan, formed before time, concerned the nations of the earth. The salvation Christ obtained through the Cross was to be for both Jew and Gentile. Accordingly he gave his disciples—us his people—directions to preach the gospel to every person, and to make disciples of all nations. This had the coming time in mind when 'every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father'. That will be the day when he shall have put under himself everything that is known as evil, every principality and power and enemy, and, having won the kingdoms of this world, will turn and give the Kingdom to the Father.

I, as Man, as Humanity, and now that part of humanity which is saved, tell you that proclamation is not merely promotion of the Christian community and its faith. Whilst the Gospel is 'good news for bad men, and bad news for good men', I have to declare primarily that Jesus (the man) is Lord over all things, in this and every age. This is not only good news announced but it is a command proclaimed. Men must repent, have faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, and respond to the Gospel. The term is often 'obey the Gospel', since the Gospel is a command and not merely an entreaty or invitation. 'God has commanded all men everywhere to repent.' Paul observed, 'They have not all obeyed the Gospel'. Luke wrote, 'A great company of the priests was obedient to the faith'. Paul warned, that 'the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in

flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who *do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*'. This is clear enough: the Gospel must be obeyed under pain of judgement.

Even so, the Gospel is a beautiful message. In his address to the elders of the Ephesian church, Paul gave the following elements of the Gospel:—'repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ', '... the gospel of the grace of God', '...preaching the kingdom', '...the whole counsel of God', '...the word of His grace'. The full proclamation was known as the *kerugma* (proclamation). Generally speaking it had the following form:

- (i) The prophecies have been fulfilled in and by the coming of Messiah;
- (ii) This Messiah has been attested by signs, wonders and mighty works;
- (iii) His crucifixion was in accordance with the prophecies;
- (iv) His resurrection was in accordance with the prophecies, and shows that God has accepted him. Thus Israel made a mistake in crucifying him;
- (v) Since God has raised Jesus from the dead, he is attested as both Lord and Messiah (Christ);
- (vi) This Lordship must be acknowledged: men must repent and believe;
- (vii) When men repent and believe they will receive the gifts of forgiveness of sins and justification. They will also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What I have written above is the more formal pattern of the teaching, but in practice we know it is most dynamic. I tell you, as Man the Proclaimer, that the Spirit makes this wonderful truth come alive when we begin to preach it under the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel comes 'not in word only, but in much

assurance and in demonstration of the Spirit and of power'. It has to be this way if men and women are going to be radically changed. The Gospel is not clever persuasion, or by appeal of moving eloquence. I tell you the heart of man is astute. You cannot entice a person, or catch him by guile, and the proclaimer had better not try such methods. That is why Paul said, '... my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God'.

We, as the people of God, have gone on proclaiming the saving truth. I have not ceased, down through these many centuries, to take the Gospel out, far and wide, to the whole world. The compassion of love requires us never to relinquish the task. Tremendous joy comes when rebellious creatures come back to their Creator, prodigal sons and daughters to the loving Father, and lost servants to their forgiving King. There is joy in heaven as well as on earth. This is because man was made for God as the bird for the air, the sky for the earth, the fish for the ocean. Peace and relief come when God's reconciliation transforms man and his relationships.

I tell you also that the reconciliation man has with God brings admission into the true Church, the new people of the Father, the body of Christ, the temple of God. Believing man has been given a new identity—his true one. He also has vocation. By all means within his power he, too, must become a proclaimer. He may not be an evangelist, a prophet or an apostle, but he is in the business of proclaiming. He or she may only be able to say a word here and there, to quietly witness to the

power of the transforming Christ, but that is telling the truth, if only by act.

Ultimately, then, there will be a number such as no man can number, and these will be out of every people and tribe and tongue and nation, and together they will praise God for the death and resurrection of His Son, for in all the earth there is nothing more powerful than that great act of God.

'The word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God unto salvation.'

'When in the wisdom of God the world by [its] wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the folly of what we preach to save them that believe.'

Whilst this is true we shall never cease to proclaim that good news.

TWELVE

I, THE EMBATTLED MAN

I am the embattled man. I am beleaguered by many forces, dark and grim forces that have only my destruction in view. Day and night they lay a siege about me. They wait for my soul, and are relentless and ruthless in their pursuit of me.

You would wonder what my being could mean to them. I am Man, the vast and entire human race, and I am man, the single personal being. These hosts of darkness pursue me as Man, and as man. All my life I have known their unceasing action towards me, their attempts to bring me into fear, and their actions to destroy what peace I may from time to time obtain.

Such forces themselves need to be battled. Man needs to lay a siege for them in order to capture and destroy them. He should reconnoitre their outposts. He should know the nature and size of them. He should not be ignorant of their devices, their dispositions of troops, their strategies of war, their ultimate goal for this world in which Man lives, and which they seek to invade and capture.

Let me tell you some of the history of this beleaguering force.

When I was—at the beginning man in purity, I was free. I did not truly appreciate that freedom. I naturally enough took it for granted. I revelled in God and His creation. As Man, I was man and woman, and we celebrated life in all its serenity and joy. We had nothing with which to compare our joy, and in that sense it was incomparable. It was life in innocence, and that was truly bliss.

Our Creator warned us against the matter of death. He told us that were we to eat of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then we would surely die. We knew His word to be truth, but then we scarcely thought of 'untruth' as such. We scarcely thought of life as against death. What happened then—the tragedy of our rebellion—has driven from our minds the rich and deep knowledge we had in our sheer innocence. Sin's sophistication has given a slant to those wonderful days, and wishing in retrospect cannot bring back the knowledge that innocence gives to a person.

In other essays of this book, I have talked about the Fall. Indeed you may gather that as Man our collective mind and memory is obsessed by this past event and happening. I know now that the most brilliant and beautiful creature we had seen—the serpent—betrayed us into losing our innocence. The woman who was part of our humanity listened to the serpent who deceived her. It is simple enough to say that she ought not to have listened, ought not to have believed that as Man we could be *as God*. She was gripped by the beauty of the tree—good for food, pleasant to the eyes, a tree to be

desired 'to make one wise'. She desired the goodness of food, the pleasantness of the eyes' love, and as for wisdom, she greatly wished for that. So she ate of that tree, and—without difficulty for I wished to do so—persuaded me, the man, to eat. I, as a man, ate with relish, knowing I was wrong in listening to her voice, and that she was wrong in listening to the serpent's voice. What I knew clearly enough was that there is only one true voice—the Voice. What we did not know was that this was the first strategic move by the powers of darkness to beleaguer us—Man. Later, one of Christ's apostles—John—stated the result bluntly. He said, 'The whole world lies in the evil one'.

The serpentine Evil—sometimes called Satan, the Devil, the Destroyer, the Deceiver and the Accuser—had natural and created beauty. This he used to attract, tempt, deceive and ensnare, and because I did not advert to God and depend upon Him for that decision which would have rejected evil, I fell, I, man-and-woman, I, Man. I tell you, we as Man felt naked and ashamed. The glory we had known unconsciously now consciously departed, and we were left miserable and afraid. There must have been mocking laughter in those hours. The serpent was jealous of our fellowship with God and covetous of our unspoiled innocence. How stupid of us to surrender innocence, yes, but then how evil also were we to rebel against the Most High and seek to grasp at an autonomy of being. This would only further enslave us to Self, and cause us to seek illicit pleasure to compensate for the growing dread of our guilt, and the deep shame of our betrayal of the One who had created us.

As I have told you in the sad essay entitled, 'The Divided Self, the Split Personality', page 10, I became a

race of human creatures some of whom—wonderfully enough—had faith in the God of grace, and some who—sadly enough—had hatred for God, and much anger against Him, the human race, and themselves. This was the first triumph of the Evil One. He had sought to convince man that God now hated sinners, and cast them off, which was not true. God had given the gift of worship and sacrifice to man, but man would not use it. Some of Me (Us), such as Abel, did use this gift properly, and were at peace with God. Some of Me (Us), such as Cain, sought to use it as a form of Self-atonement, but this did not deceive God. Part of me was Cain, so angry and murderous. I, Cain, judged and condemned, did not wish God to cast me to the wolves—so to speak. Nor did He. As New Man, I marvel at His grace.

Now I must tell you again of the sorrows of us, the Human Race. They are the sorrows of sin. Separated from God, we are lonely, guilty, afraid. We carry with us a sense of loathsome' pollution. We try to be strong and brave, but underneath the bravado is a deep and deadly fear. This Evil One keeps alarming us up to judgement, to fear of God and death, and all the time he portrays God as grim, hard and judgemental, so that we will hate Him further, and further go our own way, be wholly beleaguered, caught in the territory of the Evil Tyrant.

I cannot compute the billions of Man-hours that have been wasted in senseless living, not only of lustful emptiness and death-dealing defilement, but also of hopeless emptiness, the despairing anguish of non-achievement, and the cynical bitterness that results from it. No wonder I, Man, became an idolater. I tell you,

briefly, that Man was made to worship *and worship he must/He* must—and will—find some object of worship. Casting off from God, Man cast on to his dear darling idols.

Idols, like their Head and Controller—the Evil One—are as deceitful as the serpent himself. They deceive their devotees. They promise all kinds of worship-fulfilment, devotion-delight, and emotional richness. I tell you that is a hideous lie. They are tyrants. I, Man, as New Man, have discovered that, as fallen Man, I dreamed up my idols, always urged on and encouraged by the gloating Deceiver. I created my own idols. out of my mind and imagination. I built them out of my desires. The excitement of the illicit worship which I had conceived kept me at idolatry.

You see, I really asked of my idol what I could only ever have had from God Himself. But then, I did not want emotional and personal fulfilment on God's terms. I wanted my heady freedom and so I placed upon my idol (and my idols) the powers to grant me satisfaction. Of course, the idols were a delusion—a cruel delusion— and they could not give me what I wanted. Alas, the multiplicity of the idols—they keep dividing, breeding, enlarging—made me a multiplied divided self. I fissiparated—torn this way and that—in my many-centred worship.

Each time of disillusionment would deepen my bondage to the Evil One, and would drive me deeper and deeper into his innermost prison cells. Oh, the utter loneliness of anger, the deep bitterness of disillusionment and resulting cynicism! As total Human Race, I was a seething mass and mess of horror, perversion, quest-and-loss, anger-and-hatred. Truly the whole race of

sinful humanity lay—and still lies in the Evil One. We were forced to ‘follow the course of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience’.

Now I will tell you how I—Man of Faith—escaped from the coils of the Serpentine One. I escaped not of my own will and ability, but because God sent Messiah, the Liberating One, the Emancipator of lost humanity. On coming, he was announced by Father-God to be His Son. As Messiah-Son, he made his own announcement:

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

Peter, one of his followers, later described him: ‘Jesus of Nazareth whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about healing all those who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him’.

I tell you, He delivered Us, Man. In his ministry in Palestine, he healed people whose sicknesses had come from guilt, idolatry and demonic possession. He brought release, cleansing, forgiveness to many a person in sin’s bondage, and, with it, he promised full deliverance—‘If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed’. He accomplished and sealed this victory over evil in his death and resurrection. Evil princes and powers brought man to cry for the death of the Holy One, and he submitted to that death, but he also achieved his unchangeable and irreversible victory by doing so.

‘He plunged in his imperial strength
To depths of darkness down.
He brought his trophy up at last,
The foiled usurper’s crown.’

Truly in that hour he liberated Man, he made an open display of the defeated powers of darkness, and he recaptured man from the domination of Satan and evil powers, from tyrannical idolatry, and from the putrescence of his evil and devious mind. It was indeed great liberation.

The Victory was there for Me, for Us all, for Man, but not all of us wanted that liberation. ‘The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God.’ We who are freed from the Evil One fight on in order to liberate our lost brethren. We pray and work that their eyes may be opened, and that they become undeceived believing in the Father of love, and he who was ‘sent into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil’.

Now I must tell you the story of Satan’s unrelenting attempts to keep Us beleaguered. Those of Us who are his slaves will—perhaps—not even recognise our slavery. We will imagine we are free in our wills to do as we wish in life. Alas! We do as our clever deceiver-master wishes us to do. Those of Us who are under Messiah will know that he has accomplished the defeat of Satan and his unclean hosts. We will know that and refuse to come under bondage again. Even so, I tell you that in the depths of many a night, and also the heart of many a day, the Evil One and his evil ones will visit us to threaten, mock, accuse and

persecute. If these devices do not succeed, then he the Evil One- will disguise himself as a veritable angel of light. His old Lucifer beauty will shine upon us as though he were still a holy archangel, and he will try to entice us by an assumed morality, spirituality, pioucity and holy devotion. If it were possible, such a display of seeming godliness would deceive the elect, and if it does not do so, then he will do such great signs and wonders that we will be drawn to believe that God Himself is amongst us in great power. So great is the passion of the Evil One to deceive us away from God, that he will in his inner rage seek to use every device at his disposal. Paul once said, 'But we are not ignorant of Satan's devices'.

Nor are we bereft of weapons. We have weapons which will unhand and defeat this defeated foe, this victim of Calvary, this conquered of the resurrection, this overpowered of Pentecost. 'Our weapons are not worldly, but have divine power to destroy strongholds [of Satan].'

I must not extend this essay, for if I were to go into the many details of spiritual warfare, it would take endless pages to so do. I only wish to tell you that one of Satan's most powerful weapons is accusation. Time and again I must tell Myself—as redeemed Man—that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus'. I must realise that 'being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'. I must remember to 'stand fast in that liberty for which Christ has set us free and not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage'.

When must I remember this? In the silent night times when evil powers come to visit me, and when the eye of the Evil One is most cruelly upon me. In those nights the

subtle suggestion comes in every breeze which stirs my curtains, in every turn of my half-awakened mind, insinuating that my past sins are too great to be forgiven, and my present sins prove I am evil. In that hour, I say I must turn to the affirmations of God's own word that no one may lay anything to the charge of God's elect for it is He (alone) who justifies. Is anyone to condemn me? It is Christ who has died, and my condemnation has gone.

He has not only died, but certified the power of his redeeming death by rising again. He has risen for my justification. Yet that, too, is not all. He is now seated in the place of highest regal power and authority. He is seated at the right hand of God and his royal and eagle eye is upon me. He is the Intervener; he intercedes for me. He and the Father are against the Evil One. Together they will thwart him.

In the nights and days when deadly insinuation comes, I will rest back in the affirmation of the Father and the Intervention of the Son. Ah, yes! And there is the Spirit also interceding within me, for in those situations I do not know how to pray as I ought, nor what to pray for as I should. The Spirit prays in power, and God, in searching my heart for my good, knows the mind of the Spirit and takes it to be the true essential thoughts of my heart. Such prayer is costly to the Spirit who groans in this exercise, and I remain in holy freedom because of his holy anguish.

You see it is that word 'holy' which draws me out to honest—though sad —confession. I am a holy man because God has sanctified me by grace, and brought holiness to me by faith. Yet I am so unholy. I am tempted every moment of every day. I know that temptation as

such does not make me unholy, but I sense that something in me is tempted to respond, and I know the evil powers seek to lure me back to old ways. They keep assuring me that the gods will reward me for my worship. They talk of incredible pleasures beyond the perimeters of my present enjoyment in Christ. They flash visions of great power and authority: they tell me I can be known, famous, a figure for posterity to admire. Such are their lies, and I must be alert lest some flesh in me respond to them, and the fires of old evil blaze out afresh.

No, beleaguer me though they may—these evil powers—I am yet safe in Christ, secure in the Father, protected by the Spirit. They—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—encourage me to have great faith and so conquer the evil ones of this present evil age. They encourage me to have humility, to remain under Their hand, and then face evil in faith, and see it dissolve, in fact flee in terror. So John spoke to his beloved children in the faith: ‘I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and have overcome the evil one’. All the world does not now lie under the Evil One. Even though he, the Devil, still has power over some, the day is coming when he will have no power over any. He will be destroyed, and I want to talk about this after I make an important point about the domestic nature of human sin.

Human sin is primarily domestic. By this I mean that whilst some may go into hideous and infamous forms of sin, for the most part the human spirit is worn away by attrition, the constant giving into small and seemingly insignificant temptations. A wrong thought here, a falsity of utterance there, a meanness of mind and spirit

in the centre. On the whole, few of us—comparatively speaking—embark on great and disastrous sins. In any case, it is an illusion that there are great sins: all sin is mean. ‘The little foxes spoil the vines.’ Piffling-seemingly trifling—sins rot our minds and spirits. It is then in the domestic area that we have to be alert. Temptations to doubt God, to call Him in question, to feel justified in our angers against Him and others—these are the really deadly things. An excusing of ourselves from perpetual vigilance, a failure to use the means of grace, an excusing ourselves from the intensity of the battle—and all on grounds that a quiet and steady life will win out! So the white-anteing takes place: there are termites in the mind, and lethal sloth in the spirit.

I say all this because I am certain that some of us who sing militant hymns and choruses with great gusto are paper warriors. We are loyal to morality, but sluggish in living it with joy and determination. We return from the battle to Rest Area, saying we will recuperate for more battle, but we stay in our Area, resting. Underneath there is anger that we must continually fight. Others take refuge in high spirituality, pondering the sin of the world but never getting into its struggle against evil. Prayer in the closet is good and vitally necessary but sometimes it becomes mere rumination, a dreaming over the issues and a desire that matters may resolve themselves under the sovereignty of God. So do we opt out of the conflict.

In this last section, we will speak -for our comfort and encouragement of the defeat of the beleaguering forces of evil. In the Scriptures, the language of the final battle seems magnificent. We are attracted by the drama of it. but I repeat that all action of evil is sordid: there is

nothing grand or magnificent about it. In our case, I repeat that the conflict is mainly domestic, down to the matter of daily relationships, concerned with the small decisions of life, linked with the everyday of human living. Only some of the battles take place in the unusual realms of living.

Yes, the battle will be finally joined. The New Testament tells us that Christ's victory at the Cross, by taking the guilt of man, broke the power of Satan and his hosts. Even every day the battle is joined, i.e. the battle of faith by which the new man in Christ rests firmly on the fact that Satan has no legal power over him. He overcomes 'by the blood of the Lamb, the word of his testimony, and he loves not his life unto death', so that Satan can then have no hold. I tell you, if it were not for this, I, as the new man, would still have a certain terror and confusion.

The end will be joined. Satan—the Dragon, that old serpent the Devil will be cast into the lake of fire. Along with him will go the beast that sought to dominate the world, and the false prophet who used prophetic powers to beguile humanity into false hopes. No less will Babylon the gaudy whore be spared. She too along with her seductive delicacies will be destroyed. This, then, will be the end when every enemy shall have been put under Messiah's feet and 'the kingdom of this world will have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ -and He shall reign forever!'

Meanwhile the battle remains joined. The defeated Evil One is in his death throes, and in them he often seems fierce, terrible and powerful. Even so, 'one little word shall fell him'. I will expect him at nights as he accuses, and in the days when he seeks to seduce, but he

had better know that I, the Man, am in Christ, and I shall stand firm in the faith by grace—and remain undeceived. Often as I am under God's mighty hand -he shall flee in terror.

THIRTEEN

I, THE GLORIFIED MAN

I Am a Man Who Knows and Lives in Glory

It is strange that I, a man who has not yet come to what we call human death, should say I am a glorified man. Is this true? The answer is 'Yes, and no!' 'Yes', because Paul tells us, 'Those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified'. 'No!', because that glorification, although assured and promised, has yet to be completed, ie. in me. In God's reckoning it has been completed: in time it is being completed. The end—glorification—is not in doubt, but the process is presently going on.

The truth of the matter is that once I was most marvellously glorified —I, Man. God said, in His own heavenly counsel at the time of creation, 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness'. For many of us that is an incomprehensible statement. How could man be made in God's glory? Paul, very bold, once said, 'Man is the image and glory of God'. What did he mean? He

meant that whilst man of himself is not glorious, yet he reflects the glory of God. He does this by being the living, palpable image of God so that far from being a static idol, or a manufactured image, he is a living creature whose every movement shows us what the Creator is like. In practice, this means we have some visible image that conveys to us elements of the nature and being of God. Everything that God is, man is *like*, but he is not God. Three times in the book of Genesis, man is referred to as being made in the image of God. One of the most moving statements is in Psalm 8, where it says of God's creation (me):

'Thou hast made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honour.
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy
hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.'

What, then, is God's glory and what my glory? God's glory is His very being, for it is that which I was created to reflect. His glory is everything—His holiness, truthfulness, righteousness, goodness and love. It is His greatness, power, substantiality, faithfulness, His planning of creation, and the goal He has set for it—namely its peerless glory.

His glory is something we cannot rightly analyse, dissect and examine. We must look at it, viewing it with awe, wonder and delight. In the Scriptures, all God's created things praise His glory. His celestial creatures endlessly adore that glory. Man—when in his right mind- is over-awed by the richness of that glory. When he perceives his true self, he wonders at the loving kindness that created him of all creatures —to reflect the entire glory of God. In the light of many things we

have said in this autobiography, it is a glorious thing to be in the image of God. Some indication of that is given when it is said that Christ as man was 'the visible image of the invisible God'. Also it was said of him that, 'He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature'. In one way this is what should be said of me —Man—but not until ultimate glorification will that be wholly so.

I want now to speak of being in the glory. I might have said, 'Living in the glory'. What was it for me to be a creature of glory? This you will partly know. Wordsworth once said:

'In trailing clouds of glory do we come'.

He meant that man is not merely a sinner, not merely a transitory creature. His origins lie in glory, and sometimes—in his most wonderful moments—he senses that. Man is a proud creature, even when that pride is inverted. He knows he has great origins. The most debased of human creatures knows—somewhere in his being—his innate nobility. He may despise and regret himself for the sinfulness that is his, but he knows he should be better and do better. His very glory causes him to have a sense and feelings of shame.

Now I need to tell you how I lost my glory. I must amend that statement, for I both lost my glory and did not lose my glory. Saint Paul once said, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God'. Paul knew something of that glory because he was soaked in the Hebrew Scriptures. He knew the great ascriptions of glory to God by his people- Israel—and he knew that

creation also ascribed that glory to God:

'The heavens are telling the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims His handiwork'.

He also said, 'To Israel belonged ... the glory'. He knew the glory inhabited Israel; in the wilderness as the column of smoke by day and the pillar of fire by night. The glory came down upon men like Moses, and it came upon, and into, the tabernacle, and later into the temple. The glory of God was most substantial to Israel. therefore for man to fall short of the glory was a most tragic thing.

To fall short of the glory of God is to fall short of the glory of man. Man, because of sin, is not his true self. He cannot wholly lose the image of God, nor His great moral glory, yet man as sinful—seeks to renounce that image and live to himself. But then, 'The way of a man is not in himself'.

When I, Man, sought glory for myself in the temptation that took place in Eden, I coveted God's glory for myself. In the most dreadful of all acts, and in the most presumptuous pride, I sought to have glory equal with that of God, not merely reflecting His glory but wishing to possess it! That was when I became most inglorious. Dread came to me, holiness departed from me. I became a craven creature, fearful of God, conscious of my nakedness. Wild panic gripped me, and I tried to cover my inglorious state by cosmetic measures.

I can never describe to you the horror of losing true life and glory, and yet being doomed to carry with me elements of Godly image and splendour. You, being part of Man, will understand this: you, too, know the sad state of unglory.

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Only one thing determines that I am now, and will be, the man of glory. It is God's decision before time began. Paul said, 'We impart a hidden and secret wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; but as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived God has prepared for those who love him"'. Again Paul said that God ordained that both Jews and Gentiles should be to the praise of His glory. The term 'praise of His glory' means they will be glorified, ie. become anew the reflection of the great glory of God. John the apostle put it simply, 'We shall be like Him [God], for we shall see Him as He is'. Again Paul speaks of 'the glory which shall be revealed to us', and he is thinking of us being unveiled, in glory, as the sons of God.

There are other terms which are used for this glory. One of them is 'inheritance'. Paul talks about 'our inheritance' and 'the riches of His inheritance of glory', and so on. Peter uses the term also, and speaks of 'an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you', whilst God says that 'he who conquers I will grant to him to inherit all things'.

This incredibly beautiful goal for man was planned by God for time, to be executed in time, and to be operative for all eternity. In the book of the Revelation, the inheritance is framed in terms of our becoming priestly kings, or royal priests, saying 'and we shall reign on the earth'. As I said, the wonderfully heartening and fortifying thing is that God planned it before time, with time in view.

Peter has an intriguing saying, 'You exult with joy

unutterable and *full of glory*'. He means that now we experience the joy which we will know in the future, joy that is filled with glory, ie. glorious joy. We saw that 'those whom He justified He also glorified', as if this were one act. In fact this decision of God gives us proleptic glory, ie. what will be future is accounted to us in the present for it will inevitably come to us. From this we conclude that we live in faith and hope concerning glory.

I realise as I am writing this that it can all be so many words to a reader, so I pause and ask you to contemplate what glory really means *in the present*. It must mean that the shame, loneliness and burden of life are not present, not, anyway, as they are for one who is alienated from God. We talk a lot in these days of a person having 'low self-esteem' or 'a poor self-image'. This is probably true of all of us, but it is not merely a psychological shortcoming or maladjustment. It is because 'we have fallen short of the glory of God', ie. we have fallen short of our own (created) glory as human persons. To have *the promise* of that glory and *its proleptic possession* is a wonderfully warming thing. Even Christians miss much of the joy and serenity that is theirs because they do not contemplate enough what God has done.

Now it seems good to think about possessing glory now in some measure, whilst at the same time looking to its coming. Anything a Christian has, he/she has in faith. God has given us all things we need, but we do not possess them apart from faith. Faith does not make these things to be so: they have their objective reality from God, but faith means they become present possessions to us so that we can live in them. Paul says, 'Through him [Christ] we have obtained access to this

grace in which we stand and rejoice in the hope of sharing the glory of God'. He must mean that hope is a present dynamic in our experience, thinking and anticipation. He tells us that hope is based upon the love of God.

Does it mean, then, that glory is tenuous only a matter of faith and hope? Well, neither faith nor hope is tenuous, but it must also be true that we experience glory now. Paul says, 'And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord are being changed into his likeness from one stage of glory to another: for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit'. What Paul describes for us is important for he means that we are experiencing glory and growth in glory right now, ie. here in this life. We are increasing and advancing in glory. What, in fact, does this mean?

It means that ultimately we will be perfected in glory, but this perfecting is a process which needs to go on and on before it culminates in the fulness of glory. In terms of daily human living it means we advance in the life and practice of the great moral things, the things which reflect God, such as practical love, holiness, truth, righteousness and goodness. These seem to be abstract as we describe them, but in action they are most powerful. It means that our wills are gladly being brought into line with God's will and purpose. We become people more trained and habituated in reflecting God Himself. We serve the church, local community, and even the world, and at the same time, have the rich satisfaction of knowing His glory is more and more possessing us. As Man, then, I can claim that in spite of all outward appearances, I am living in some measure of glory and being matured and perfected in it.

This Paul whom I so often quote and who is also part of me as Man—once said, 'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us'. In the same context he speaks of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God', ie. 'the liberty of glory' which God's sons shall know. As we saw, hope of this glory is powerful to motivate man to exploits. Unless he sees the glory ahead he will not understand suffering. Suffering is a gift. '... it has been granted to you to suffer for his sake' yet most of us think of it as an infliction, and a burden. There were years when, on meeting suffering, I had the thought that God was punishing me.

Now I know differently. I know that suffering is the way to glory. 'If we suffer with him [Christ], we shall also be glorified with him.' I have come to understand that suffering with Christ has many elements, but that it is not *the cost* of glory, but rather *the way* to glory, and in one sense *is glory itself*. Let me explain what I mean by these statements.

The way in which I came to understand the love of God was to see the suffering of Christ, His Son. Rightly understood, there never was suffering that man knew that was like the suffering of the Son, there, on the Cross. 'The ransom of a man's soul is very costly' (Psalm 49:7-8), does not overstate the situation of his suffering. It was not just the nails, the gashed limbs, the torn and bleeding back and the piercing of the crown of thorns. It was the weight of the world's sins upon him. It was the horrible pollution of all humanity which he encircled within himself, and suffered its impurity, working it to extinction in his holy love.

I do not wish here to describe that *suffering* is beyond human description, for into its dimensions, but as large as are its dimensions of sufferings, exactly are its measurements of love. How, then, may I escape suffering in regard to glory? God's glory is that He suffers as man for men's sins, in order to bring them to ultimate glorification.

Peter, the apostle, was faced with vast suffering in the people of God in his own time. He wrote a special letter to give some sort of a rationale for the matter of Christian suffering. He set forth the sufferings of Christ as a paradigm, or example, for us. Christ suffered without becoming vindictive or demanding justice. The sum of his letter is caught up in the following extract from it:

'Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you '... if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be shamed, but under that name let him glorify God'.

In this passage, we can see the connection between suffering and glory.

Perhaps a particular statement of Paul is the best of all. Having just spoken about 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ', he proceeds, 'So we do not lose heart. Though our outward nature [the body] is wasting away, our inner nature [the inner person] is being renewed every day. This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison'. He is really saying that suffering is an

investment in glory, and is a way to glory. Undoubtedly true suffering is never wasted. However it must be true suffering, and not self-pity, or suffering from foolishness or reaction to the wrongness of others.

I told you before that I love Christ whom I have not seen and rejoice, now, 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory'. I must tell you also that I glorify God in my body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. I can now realise that creation all around me is glorifying God. It is good to be in this. I myself am growing from 'one stage of glory to another', and this is doubtless by both personal suffering and the Spirit of God who is the Spirit of glory.

Again, Christ is living in me 'the hope of glory'. That is, his work in me is among other things glorifying me, and assuring me that I will rise, receive my inheritance and be glorified. So I go on rejoicing in 'the hope of sharing the glory of God'. Meantime my life is not a mere waiting for a future event. I get great joy in doing good works and so 'glorifying my Father who is in heaven'. I have learned that 'whatever I do, whether I eat or drink it all can [and should] be to the glory of God'. 'Along with others I glorify God for creation, redemption, and the coming renewal of all things.' My chief end is to 'glorify God and enjoy Him forever'.

The coming of Christ to his people has always been thought of in terms of glory. He is coming in glory. The clouds on which he will come are 'glory-clouds', ie. 'clouds of glory', the shekinah glory. On these he went, and on these he will come. When he does, then 'every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord. *to the glory of the Father*' Then it will be *his Father's*

glory which will be shown. He will come *'in the glory of the Father'*. He will deliver *the Kingdom 'to the Father'*. He, Christ, has been 'received up into glory', and this because of his sufferings which enabled him to 'enter into his glory', ie. 'the subsequent glory'. His return to glory was what he had prayed for on the night of his betrayal: 'Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world began'. At his transfiguration 'he received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory'. Then he was gone to that Glory, and from that Glory he will come again in glory. This is the history of glory and its future as portrayed, lived and accomplished in Christ.

What, then, is the end of glory'? 'The presentation and fullness of glory will be seen in the new heavens and the new earth. I, Man, will be there, both to see this great event, and to be part of it. I, Man, will be to the praise of the glory of His grace (which is part of His glory), and then 'to the praise of His glory'. The glory which He gave to me, Man, when first He created me, when He crowned me with glory and honour, will now be seen in the build-up of all things, the filling up of all things and the harmonising of all things - namely the glory to the sons revealed of God and the whole creation, ie. 'the liberty of the glory of the children of God'. Then, as the prophet Habakkuk prophesies:

'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea'.

What, then, shall be this glory'? Firstly it will be the glory of the Lord, the nature of God made manifest to all creation, especially in His triumph of accomplishing the

unity of all creation. With Him will be His Son 'the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'. The new heavens and the new earth will be the fullness of the glory of God, and in them and with them will be the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, 'having the glory of God'. The radiance and beauty of this Bride will be the radiance of the Holy City, 'and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it... they bring into it the glory and honour of the nations'.

I, the Man, shall also be part of that glory. I represent the elect, the people of God, the true Israel of God, the sons of the Kingdom of Glory. It is difficult for me to describe my part in it, for we the true Humanity will reflect God, being His image and likeness, being the glory of God, being to the praise of His glory. We shall be this as we minister to God a 'Kingdom of priests', and 'we shall reign on the earth'. As I speak to you, I do not know the full import of all I have uttered, especially in regard to the glory of the last time, and the glory of the new age. I know so little, yet my heart is bursting with the wonder of it all: so much so that I fall on my face before the eternal Father, and the noble Son and I cry with all the celestial creatures:

*'Worthy art thou. our Lord and God.
to receive glory and honour and power';*

and

*'To him who sits upon the throne
and to the Lamb be blessing and honour
and glory and might forever and ever!'*

FOURTEEN

I, THE ESCHATOLOGICAL MAN

I am the Man of the future: I am the eschatological man. I am man who is bound for eternity, and for eternal vocation. Part of me—the solidary Man, the Man from the beginning of time to the end—has no future of glory, for this part has rejected the living God, but then only they who are in God are truly Man, for they are in the New Man—the True Humanity Christ Jesus, Lord of time and Lord in eternity.

If what I say here is puzzling, do not leave it at that. My history—as Man—is your history, and you must be interested. I exhort you to trace our history as mankind, and to see that we all move, whether we wish it or not—to the last era, the final epoch, the eschaton. In that epoch all things shall be drawn together and the great plan of God fulfilled.

That there is God's plan cannot be in doubt. His counsel is pure wisdom: He planned all things within the counsel of Himself. I wonder how much—as Primal Man—I understood this matter of His eternal grace. Did I know that I was deliberately rejecting this perfect

plan when I sought to become free-standing and 'go it alone'? The Scriptures reveal in so many places that God does everything 'according to the counsel of His will'. He determines and nothing deters Him from that. The fulfilment of His plan must be in conformity with His glory, and indeed it is the very revelation of that glory, for it is the glory in operation. God is the God who acts: He is incessant and purposeful action. The glory of His glory is that He glorifies man, and all His creation.

When—as Man, corporate and yet personally single—I rebelled against God, the germinal thought in that act was that I could henceforth act alone, forgetting the principle that 'the way of a man is not in himself: a man cannot direct his own footsteps'. Foolishly I thought I would be as God, knowing good and evil myself, from myself, independently of God. The truth is that whilst I often think I know from myself—what is good and evil, I do not know at all! My steps, therefore, have been in wrong ways, and on foolish paths. Of myself I have no real goal. Any goals I create spring from my own ego and are to my own glory, if indeed such were possible.

Wonderfully, I have discovered that my footsteps are hastening towards the Great Day, the Day of the Lord. All history is in His hands, and that history is salvation history. Every detail of every action is somehow comprehended within this march of time, shaping up to the fulfilment of God's will. I can see now—though I mention it with trembling—that even my fall away from God arid my true humanity has its intended part within that wise and beautiful plan. Of course I cannot explain how this is, but then that is not my function. I bow

gladly -indeed with great relief of spirit to the wisdom of God.

I must resume my discourse: I must tell you the terror that comes into a human spirit when it has lost its way. The Fall was a frightening event and it has spread its sense of dread into every human heart that ever lived. The separation sin brings to man—separation from the living God—is no small thing. The races and tribes of our corporate Humanity have tried their innumerable ways of coming to inner joy and serenity by religions, philosophies, patterns of culture and—above all—the idols, the surrogate gods. Whilst admiring the intellectual brilliance and the astute invention of God-substitutes, I see the sad emptiness of it all. Man plays with gleaming ‘and colourful baubles, but his heart is left empty. Art, literature and technology are wonderfully fascinating but within the best of them there can only be emptiness without God.

You will know by now—even by reading the essays of this book—that to be truly himself, Man -and a man must have both vocation and goal. He must be living his true life, serving both God and man, and he must be moving towards God’s pre-planned goal. Only then will he have purpose, and only then will he keep his integrity as a person, and as a (the) man of destiny, for it is destiny—above all—which draws us on to the end. The person who is without hope is hopeless: the person without purpose is rudderless. Man without direction finds himself drained of energy as he seeks to make his own decisions. Decision-making (for certain reasons) is one of man’s most demanding exercises.

I have told you the miracle—as I see it, of course—of my humanity becoming a deadened and empty thing when I launched out into attempted autonomy. Living on the human resources given to me by God, I wildly imagined I was independent of Him. Writers of Holy Writ call my actions ‘dead works’. But then the great happening took place, called ‘the new birth’. The Spirit of God worked in my mind and spirit, bringing to me the truth of Christ, the Christ who was the eternal Son of God, being God before time, but entering into time to save me from the terrible consequences of my sin by lifting me out of paralysing and lethal guilt. Please believe that these strong words I use here are no exaggeration of the facts.

The transformation was beautiful, radical, strong and lasting. I became a new man, a new creation, and discovered that my goal had been set by God: I was to be a new creation within God’s vast New Creation—the new heavens and the new earth. What was most powerful was the discovery that from first to last everything has been, is and will be—Christ! With the Father he was Co-Creator, Co-Redeemer, and is and will be Co-Restorer of all things. God’s plan in Christ means that there is nothing outside of the Son. The meaning of history is Christ: he is Lord of history. His incarnation his becoming man—has altered our understanding of Man, for he was the New Man, the True Man. His humanity encompasses all who are in him. In Adam, the Old Humanity withers and dies, it is evil and doomed. In Christ alone shall all be made alive. Only through Christ is Eschatological Man born. All human beings of faith now have life through Christ. They have hope out of love. In faith they see their goal set by Christ

and obtainable in him.

What is this goal, what is this endtime? What will happen? These are the questions we ask. Man is always asking about the future. He will gladly resort to the occult to find out. He is so insecure that he will try the portents, and listen to the false prophets and the sects, but all he needs to do is to listen to the word of God, especially the prophetic word, the 'Thus says the Lord' of the prophets. God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, and we need to read continually what he spoke to them for it obtains for the 'Now' and the coming 'Then', as it obtained for the 'Then' of the past. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy', and prophecy has always been about Christ. Ever so much of that prophecy has already been fulfilled in Christ, and what remains to be fulfilled will yet happen in Christ. 'In these last days He has spoken unto us by a Son' Christ. In him the endtime will happen.

This is what will happen. God will be vindicated. The presence of evil in God's creation has always been a puzzle to man. It is no great puzzle, really. Creatures of God—angels and humans—have been given the will and right to make their own choices and what is holy and good turns to evil when it sets itself against the Most High God, and seeks to gain for itself the worship which alone belongs to God. Why God allows this to continue is hidden within the wisdom of Himself. What to us is practical is that He will eventually destroy all evil.

Evil is rampant in His holy creation. Satan—that once beautiful and brilliant celestial being—has corrupted himself and seeks to corrupt all God's creation.

He is, however, held within bounds, and even his wrath will turn to God's praise. Likewise the manifestations of this evil Devil—the great red Dragon, the Beast, and the Second Beast and the False Prophet (of whom the Seer, John, speaks in his 'Revelation')—will come to their doom and destruction. With these evil creaturely manifestations is the gaudy harlot known as 'Babylon'. She, too, is set for judgement and destruction. She symbolises—and actualises—all that pleasure-seeking and power-seeking man holds dear. She is the ultimate in idolatry, the beautifier of moral putrefaction, and hideous power. The whole world is at power-play, and the last evil is even found to fight against evil. The Dragon turns upon the Harlot, but it is God who destroys both.

When I speak of these matters there is horror in my heart for the dreadful thing I did in the Fall—listening to the voice of my beguiled wife, instead of the words of the Most High, and daring to equal His splendour and grandeur in my pitiful striving for autonomous power and authority.

When I look at the retribution of God, the judgement of these evil powers and the hearts of men and women in the Great Judgement, then great relief comes to me. If He had been a God who just ignored us and crushed us underfoot, then He would not have been the wonderful God of grace. I never cease to marvel that before time He wrote the names of His elect in the Book of Life. When, then, I watch the Great Judgement which will come in the endtime, I am filled with joy that all men will be judged according to their works, whether they be written in the Lamb's Book of Life or not. God is the God of holiness, for He is the God of justice. So there will be requital, and this is a good and necessary thing.

We do not understand the mystery of judgement and the execution of punishment on unholy and impenitent men. We do not even understand the losses and rewards which will come to the justified saints, but we know they have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and serve Him day and night in His temple. Because their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they will never come under the doom of eternal death—whatever form that may take. They can only have the gift of eternal life and live forever in His presence.

Nor is this all. At the endtime, when Christ will come in the glory of the Father, when every knee will bow and every tongue confess, 'Jesus is Lord!' to the glory of the Father, then the Great Transformation will take place. The 'old' heavens and earth will be renewed. All creation will be re-crested. All things will shine with the glory of God. Indeed that glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Christ's work down through the centuries will then be unveiled. Man will be a testimony to his saving and transforming power. Man will burst from the grave, from the heavens, resurrected from death unto life, from unglory to high glory. Man will stand in this high glory—the object and fulfilment of the transforming grace of God. He will be pure, noble, a royal priest(hood) unto his God. All things (once created through Christ) will now be unified in Christ: they will be 'filled up' from their emptiness, 'reconciled' from their shattered and confused state, and 'harmonised' by his love.

All creation will break out into perpetual praise and adoration to God the Father who is 'the faithful Creator'. All will see that His nature as Creator is fully

expressed in his Being as Redeemer. Creation then will adore the Father and the Lamb because they did not abandon man, angels and creation, but have transformed them into the functions and worship of the 'age to come', the new heavens and the new earth, the New Humanity, the new eternal glory.

There is much more I could speak about, things which fascinate and intrigue the mind of man, such as the state of the dead, the question of souls sleeping in death, whether or not there is a purgatory, and the vivid question of hell. Man has long speculated on these things, and with little profit, I believe. More to the point is the profitable question of heaven. It is there I seek to fix my gaze, my attention and my contemplation. The man who has his eyes on things above is better able to live with 'things below'. Much is revealed to us about heaven but even more lies under veils, too rich for us yet to comprehend.

What grips me about the eschaton is its significance. It tells me afresh that God is holy, God is righteous, that His justice flows down to all His creation. The ultimate destruction of evil vindicates God in every way—His righteousness, holiness, truth, goodness and love. He is the faithful Creator. Nothing is left incomplete, and no injustice is unrequited.

What thrills me no less is what He has done for me, and with me, Man! I am glad to be 'to the praise of the glory of His grace'. I am thrilled to be 'to the praise of His glory'. My anticipation of being like Him—'For we shall see Him face to face' keeps me fresh and

alert in human living. Seeing, too, that I am Man-Corporate as also man-personal, there is no end to my joy when the prophetic word tells me that at the endtime there will be multitudes 'that no man can number, out of every kindred and people and tribe and tongue' who will constitute the ultimate elect-humanity. This will be the new humanity born out of Christ as the New Man. They will be a kingdom of priests, a royal nation, and they will reign upon the earth and be kings and priests unto their God, whom they even now serve 'day and night in the spirit'.

The glory of all this is yet to come in time, but 'we have access into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of sharing the glory of God'. Rightly understood this is 'the way of man', this is the goal reached when the Lord directs man's footsteps, and man in humility follows His way.

'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and
knowledge of God !
How unsearchable are His judgements and how
inscrutable His ways!
For from Him and through Him and to Him
are all thing.
To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'