

The Basis And Practice Of Christian Counselling

1. Introduction

What is counselling? It is, simply put, the giving of advice. This is advice which is helpful. It can be instructive (teaching), preventative (prophylactic) and remedial. Counselling can relate to all areas of life, for example in regard to living within a family or community. It can relate to the various stages of human growth and development. It may pertain to relationships, vocation, the effects of the past presently upon a person, and it may relate to the future. In fact it may relate to every area of life. Seen in that light the counsellor would need to be a person of knowledge and wisdom, particularly in the areas which require helpful advice.

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

So far most would agree. What, however, complicates the term 'Christian counselling' is the fact that there is a scientific discipline called psychology. Associated with this are kindred disciplines such as psychiatry, psychotherapy, sociology, and so on. Many Christians study these in order to enhance what wisdom they have. They absorb insights from these disciplines, and utilise them in their Christian counselling. For them it must be an arduous, and often a difficult task to distinguish between what is basically Christian and what is not. In fact in most cases it is an almost impossible task.

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

Still further there are those counsellors which seek to see the truths they know from Scripture in the light of the discipline they have obtained. It may also be that they may seek to see what they have learned from their school of thinking in the light of Scripture. All such counsellors would call their counselling 'Christian'. In this they are surely correct. Recognising the fact that God is Creator and King of all the earth, it must mean that wherever research has examined the true phenomenology of the created world, and tested its conclusions,

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

that such facts must be part of the whole truth of the universe. Of course such research must be holistic and not simply reductionist. In this sense all facts and truth discovered must be utilised by Christian people insofar as their gifts and capacities enable them to do so. The wisdom they would obtain would equip them for counselling, and, we could say, Christian counselling. Having said these things, is there an alternative which might not require such specialisation? To put it simply, is there such a thing as Biblical counselling which can also claim to be Christian counselling?

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

2.Christian Biblical Counselling

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

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

What, then, is Christian Biblical Counselling? The answer is that the Scriptures constitute the revelational wisdom of God. This wisdom does not include all scientific knowledge which can be obtained. However, it is that wisdom which reveals to us the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of creation. In the reductionist sense it does not contain certain elements of knowledge. However, what it does contain is a revelation of man's nature as created, as fallen, as redeemed, as regenerated and sanctified, and as, finally, glorified. It tells us what creation was, why it is in its present state, and what will be its ultimate nature and function. It tells us the telos, the end and goal of history. It takes up the themes of function and purpose, of things which are relevant to truly understanding God, man, and the universe. Thus the discipline of theology² is not only germane to true counselling, but is in fact essential to all who are Christians and who counsel. This goes for the specialist psychiatrist, psychologist, psycho-therapist and sociologist, as well as the social or welfare worker. By rights, then, this paper, to be complete should embrace the entirety of theology. Obviously, this it cannot do. What it can do, nevertheless, is to give those broad lines which can be helpful as pointers to all who are counsellors, especially the ones prepared to do their homework!

² By theology we do not necessarily mean theology in the formal systematical sense. We mean Christian doctrine as a whole and not only one school of theology. Nevertheless, systematic theology as such will prove most beneficial to those prepared to study and acquire it.

Finally, let us observe that Christian Biblical Counselling is not intended

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

Christian Biblical counselling is the obtaining of that wisdom supplied by the Scriptures concerning God, man, and creation, and the consequent useful application of that wisdom to the needs of persons and human situations. Such wisdom may be informative, prophylactic, or remedial in nature. Generally it is aimed at bringing persons to maturation of life, whilst dealing with the personal matters (and problem) of human relationships with God, man, and the universe. In the course of this work such wisdom has to be obtained from God and His Word, especially by the aid of the Holy Spirit, that matters of the love of God, the love of man, human guilt, forgiveness both divine and human, as also the whole scope of relationships (vertical, horizontal, and inward) are embraced. In addition, the eternal verities must be understood such as immediate vocation and its ultimate goal, man's person and dignity in the light of the Kingdom of God, and his own glorification. The obtaining of such wisdom is one thing, and the application or use of it another.

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

3. The Question of Wisdom

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

(i) The Need for Biblical Wisdom

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

of the origins and purpose of the universe in order to understand the purpose of man within that universe, and indeed not only within time but also within eternity. Without the Scripture he cannot obtain this wisdom.

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

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

(ii) The Gaining of Wisdom

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

(a) Wisdom is a Gift, a Charisma.

When Jesus knew the woman at the well (John 4) had had five husbands he was either speaking generally, or knew the exact details. We presume he had a word of wisdom which a person may be given by God, in His love, to meet a particular need. In I Cor. 12:8 we read, 'To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.' This charisma (grace gift) is dependent not upon natural insight, but an appropriate wisdom given at a particular moment, and by the Holy Spirit himself. One could not counsel solely on the expectation of such a charisma, although it would be excessively valuable, should it be given.

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

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

(c) Wisdom is Sometimes a Given Ability.

Wisdom in the O.T. is often represented as a skill. This is so with the artisans who made the priest's clothes (Exodus 28:3) and those who helped to construct the tabernacle, especially its furniture (Exodus 31:1–11). In the latter

case Bezalel is actually anointed with the Spirit, who is proverbially the Spirit of wisdom. The artisans need not only manual skill but understanding of what they are making since it is highly significant. Doubtless counselling is an acquired skill, needing great wisdom, and may well also be a gift given, even without the asking. Asking and receiving is a principle of Scripture. Habituating the skill we have is a matter of will and application.

(d) Wisdom is Gained b Learning and Application.

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

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

(e) The Wisdom of God

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

In the N.T. all of these elements seen in the O.T. are accepted and present. However, the subject widens. The wisdom of God is not only epitomised in Christ. He is, in fact, the whole wisdom of God incarnate. This is quite amazing. We will proceed to see how this is so. In Isaiah 11:1-4 it is seen that Messiah will be anointed with the seven-fold Spirit, including, 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.' Out of this Spirit he will judge, decide with equity for the meek of the earth, and bring judgement where it is necessary. He is, in fact, the Counsellor par excellence (cf. Isaiah 9:6). This helps us to understand his baptism (Acts 10:38). In Luke 2:40 and 52 Jesus is said to be 'filled with wisdom' and to have 'increased in wisdom'. In Mark 6:2 it is asked by the people, 'Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him?' (cf. Matt. 13:54).

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

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

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

(f) The Obtaining of General Biblical Wisdom.

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

At the same time, reading and study of themselves may not necessarily produce the wisdom required. It is clear that Messiah needed ‘the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord’. So do we. Hence Paul’s prayers in Ephesians 1:17–18 and Colossians 1:9 for the ‘spirit of wisdom’. Whenever ‘the spirit of...’ is used in the N.T. it means that through the Holy Spirit one has come to habituate that particular spirit in one’s life and experience. Hence ‘a spirit of faith’, ‘a spirit of sonship’, ‘a spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind.’ So one can habituate ‘a spirit of wisdom’ through the Holy Spirit, that is by the exercise of the will and constant application. It goes without saying (cf. John 3:3f, I Cor. 2:10–14) that spiritual wisdom cannot be understood or obtained apart from the Holy Spirit himself. We conclude then that the Scriptures are understood and wisdom obtained from them by the agency of the Holy Spirit. This is why John says, ‘You have been anointed by the Holy One and you all know (or, you know all things)’, and ‘His anointing teaches you about everything’ (I John 2:20, 27).

Linked with this is of course spiritual maturation. Paul agrees that knowledge may merely puff up, whereas love, in every sense, builds up. In I Cor. 3: 1ff, the apostle complains about failure to grow and develop. In Galatians 3:1–5 he speaks of having begun in the Spirit but then of having failed to go on in maturity by the Spirit. Instead there has been a reversion to the flesh. In Col. 1:28–29 he says all his energies are used to ‘present every man mature in Christ.’

The writer of Hebrews complains of readers who ought to be teachers, but still need to be taught. They cannot eat the foods of the mature. He urges them to leave behind elementary principles and go on to maturity. Spiritual maturation, according to I Cor. 13, is through the action of love, subserved of course by faith and hope. One leaves behind infantile patterns and progresses to maturity, this obviously climaxing in the eschaton. The same principle is expressed in Ephesians 3:14–19. One is filled unto all the fulness of God only when one has come to know the love of God, but this is not possible except ‘together with all saints’. (Cf. Ephes. 4:10–16 – one matures along with, and by the aid of, all members.) One is rooted and grounded in love only in that context – i.e. ‘with all the saints’. Maturation, then, is not merely intellectual endeavour but relational fulness. This of course only obtains out of relational interaction, learned mutuality and so on.

We may sum up, then, by saying that wisdom is needed for true counselling. That wisdom is obtained as a gift for those who genuinely desire it. Counselling in the ultimate is not merely a taught skill based on models or cases, but is an ability acquired through the gift of a power given. This gift is most useful when it is undergirded by true knowledge acquired through patient study, experience, and formulation. In the context of good social growth in relationships and maturation of the person and character by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and enlightenment of the Word, one obtains a useful wisdom which is, however, never wholly complete. At times God is pleased to aid this habituated skill with certain supplementary gifts of wisdom, especially as they are immediately needed in special cases. Nothing, however, can substitute for the truth of the Word, and the revelation of the Spirit.

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

4. The Structure of Biblical Knowledge

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

(i) Knowing God

The knowledge³ of God is a vast subject, yet we must know Who God is, and also know Him personally in order to obtain true wisdom. Not to know God is not to know wisdom. The Scriptures make it clear that to know God is life eternal (John 17:3). This is possible through His Son, Jesus Christ. We come to know God through him (I John 5:20). In the Scriptures men and women are said to have come to know God (cf. I John 1:3, 2:3–6, 4:7–10, etc.).

We can of course learn much about God through theology which is itself the study of God. Of course theology is reflection upon the materials available, namely the Scriptures, by which we may know God. There are various credal statements which have been shaped from the Scriptures. We learn much about God in

³ ‘The Knowledge of God’ - 16 lecture studies N.C.P.I. 1977. ‘Knowing God’ James Packer H. & S. 1973. Articles on ‘God’ in various Bible Dictionaries and Systematic Theologies.

the Scriptures, that is about His qualities or attributes, and again these have been formalised in various systematic theologies. Primarily we learn from what He has done, is doing, and will do (the latter revealed in prophecies and other intimations), that is we learn of God from His acts.

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

- (i) His acts concerning the initiation, preservation, and ultimate renewal of creation.
- (ii) His acts concerning the redemption of fallen mankind, especially those whom He calls His elect.
- (iii) The (yet) future acts of God when He will renew His creation, and glorify it, including His elect people, the true community of God.

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

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

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

All these points of knowledge are obtained from the Scriptures, for they are quite foolish to non-Scriptural ways of thinking. Knowing God is essential to knowing man since man is made in the image of God. Also the entire creation reveals the nature of God and so shows forth His glory in its various aspects. See in this regard Romans 1:20, Psalm 19:1ff, etc.

(ii) Knowing Man

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

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

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

If, for example, we meet a man who is a fallen person, an unredeemed sinner, then we will counsel him in a manner different from that which we use to counsel a redeemed person. In the case of the latter we will take various elements into consideration, e.g. his progress in sanctification, his vocation in Christ, his context of living (such as the church and the world), and his goal of glorification. Understanding glorified man is essential for filling out the doctrine of hope and using its dynamic for certain useful purposes. All this speaks of the value of a Biblical anthropology which is firmly related to a Biblical theology, and is, indeed, part of it.

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

Introduction: Knowing the Creation

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

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

(a) Man as Created.

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

Man of course is not created as a basic viable entity in himself, but is truly man only in contingency upon God. He is so related to God as to correlate with the elements which are God. That is, where God is creator, man is creature.

Where God is King, man is servant (subject). Where God is Father, man is son⁴. If these three elements are understood then we begin to get a view of what creational man truly was.

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

- (1) Everything that God is man is like that, but anything that God is man is none of that.
- (2) God within the unity of the Persons is relational, i.e. there is internal social mutuality whilst no Person loses his unique discreteness.

Man, being in the image of God, must have

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

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

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

One view is that when God created man generically, man constituted the image of God, i.e. ‘in his image created he him’. This accords with Paul’s exposition in I Corinthians 11. The text adds, ‘male and female created he them’. The creational mandate is then given to them to multiply, fill up the earth, subdue and have dominion over it. From this it would be possible to draw one of two conclusions – (a) That man as male is the image of God and the woman is contained within that image, so that when the image is seen it is seen primarily in the man, yet totally in the two as ‘one flesh’. (b) That each constitutes the image of God.

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

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

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

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

(b) Man As Fallen.

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

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

Adam’s sin shifted man out of his true creational perspective and context. Whilst his normal faculties did not really vary, his bias or thrust certainly did. Hence the statement, ‘The image of God in man is irreducible, but reversible.’

The Scripture does not say that the image faded, was defaced, or destroyed. I Cor. 11:7 with Genesis 9:6 insists that man is the image of God. At the same time passages like Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:20–23, and Romans 3:23 speak of a reversal of the true image.

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

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

(c) Man as Redeemed.

Without doubt the redeemed man⁵ is one whose objective guilt has been erased. The death of Christ has dealt with his guilt, effected his cleansing from the pollution of sin, and so brought him to forgiveness and justification. The means by which forgiveness, cleansing and justification are obtained are repentance and faith. Yet repentance and faith are themselves gifts (Acts 5:31, 11:18, Ephes. 2:8–10, Phil. 1:29), though doubtless these gifts have to be exercised. Man has to obey the Gospel. Having done so he is liberated from the penalty and power of sin. He is thus released from the fear of death and the bondage of Satan and his world-system. He is reconciled to God, and now lives to serve God (11 Cor. 5:16–21). This also means he now loves the brethren (1 John 3:14). In simple words:– The bias which he had against God is reversed. He has left his rebellion. He has a new view of God, man, and the universe. The tension and anguish of personal disjunction, dislocation and all functional perversion is now released. Thus he is a new creation.

The counsellor who obtains this knowledge can work wisely. The fallen person has denied his creational creaturehood, servanthood and sonship. The redeemed person is a new creature, a willing slave of God, and truly a son. He is now contingent upon God. The new life he lives is by the enabling grace of God, the dwelling within him of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This being so we might ask the questions, ‘What problems, then, would the redeemed man experience? With this conversion, and with liberation from guilt and its entanglements, is not the redeemed man without basic problems? Seeing he has the Lordship of Christ, the Fatherhood of God, and the enabling moral and spiritual power of the Spirit, does he then need counselling?’

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

⁵ For a wider treatment of the elements contained in this paragraph see Studies LFS. 20, ‘Creation and Reconciliation’, LFS. 21, ‘The New Man in Christ’, and LFS. 3, ‘The Giver: The Gifts: The Giving.’

(d) Man as Glorified.

It is clear from passages such as Ephesians 1:4–14, 1 Cor. 2:6–14, 1 John 3: 1–3 and others, that God had planned man's sonship in terms of Christ and not of Adam. He had planned man's glorification prior to creation, and in this sense man created, whilst perfect as a created being, was not really complete in that he was designed for glorification. Likewise man redeemed is really 'man becoming'. In some sense he is incomplete until he is glorified. This fact must have tremendous effects. On the one hand he has to live in hope, so that whilst hope sustains him he also has to live with the anguish of sinful conflict in a world which is 'subject to vanity', and has to fight, daily, the battle with sin which dwells within him. Romans 8:18–25 depicts his anguish as being not yet glorified, whilst Romans 7:13–25 shows him longing for deliverance from 'this body of death'. Hope, however, is a dynamic of glory and aids him to live in this imperfect world–situation.

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

(e) Conclusion.

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

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

(iii) Knowing Creation and History

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

- (a) The purposes of creation in order to have a rationale to history, and
- (b) We must understand man's part in God's history (salvation history: **heilsgeschichte**) in order to understand the nature of man, and so help him.
- (c) The Kingdom of God which is the rule of God and so

depicts His sovereignty, since that rule is always there, over all history. With this is closely allied

- (d) The people of God, for by knowing the people of God we can truly context redeemed–sanctified–glorified man, and understand the nature of God as the covenant–Head–and–Father of His people, which in turn helps us to understand elect man in his richest context of being.⁶

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

In regard to creation, man's part in it, and the climaxing of the eschaton, we must realise that the initial creation by God was with a view to its end–climax. We must never think of the fall of man and the subjection of the creation to vanity (emptiness, futility) as a regrettable contingency which arose and for which God had an expedient at hand. Rather we must see that creation is dynamic, purposeful, and always moving towards its destined end, which is its true destiny. Hence we must see man also in this movement and understand him as such.

5. Biblical Wisdom and The Counselling of Man

(i) Introduction

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

⁶ Before proceeding with the remainder of this study the reader should seek to study a full treatment of salvation history so that he sees man in his full context of God's plan, and His general dealing with mankind. 'Salvation History' (N.C.P.I. 1977) is available. Articles in Bible Dictionaries are plentiful. For a simple and panoramic view of God's salvation history see Appendix One of this paper. For the Kingdom of God see LFS. 14, and for The People of God, see NTC. 20-25 (notes and cassettes).

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

In the light of these passages man's bondage to Satan (Ephes. 2:1–3, 1 John 5:19, Heb. 2:14–15), the world (Gal. 1:4), sin (Rom. 3:9, John 8:31–36), death (I Cor. 15:55–56, Heb. 2:14–15), as also his oppression through judgement (Rom. 1: 18, 1 Thess. 1:10, Ephes. 5:6, etc.) will give us the knowledge of, and impact of man's rebellion against God. Not to see these elements as primary in the case of a troubled mind is to miss the primary and basic causes of human distress. The attempt to meet needs of man by seeking to treat his symptoms is to miss what is basic in man's predicament. Unless we recognise God's moral law demands upon all human creatures as well as His vocational demands (Gen. 1:28ff) then we do not realise the moral pressure man experiences. Add to this (a) man's moral impotency and (b) his dynamic guilt for failure in both being and doing, and we begin to realise the vast dimensions of his problems as a person.

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

(ii) Counselling Fallen Man

Only by knowing what man is unfallen can we see his loss through the fall. We have noted that he has three relational elements which constitute his true created being. They are

- (a) Creaturehood,
- (b) Servantship, and
- (c) Sonship.

These correlate with (a) God's Creatorhood, (b) God's Kingship, and (c) God's Fatherhood.⁷ Innately then man's deepest need can only be met when he relates to God as a person in the three elements nominated. His is a serious breach of his created being when he denies his creaturehood by assuming independence, when he refuses to obey as the servant of the King, and when he abdicates from his created sonship. Here is his existential anguish. His guilt is primarily for not being what he essentially is by creation. Secondly he has guilts for objective acts of sins.

The enormous dynamic of guilt is probably beyond the ability of any human person to assess. Its subjective effects upon the human structure are also massive. It is in the context of these, and some understanding of their operations that the counsellor must seek to effect the cure of the soul. When to these elements are added the destructive and enslaving powers of personal evil forces (Satan, principalities and powers, demons and disease), then man's situation is seen to be dreadful.

⁷ Note that God's Fatherhood, although referred to in the O.T. rather sparsely, is fully revealed in the N.T. by the coming and ministry of the Son. It is difficult to know how else it could have been revealed. The lateness (in time) of this full revelation, does not mean God became Father in the N.T. period (sic!). He must have created as Father. That He created by a Son (Heb. 1:1-3) means the creation has Fatherly and Filial elements conditioning it. The Spirit of Life (the Holy Spirit) as the creative Spirit is also the Spirit of the Father and the Son, i.e. he is 'the Go-Between God' (John Taylor, SCM 1972).

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

- (i) **The totality of forgiveness.** A half-forgiveness, or a forgiveness-on-the-installment-system, i.e. a dribs and drabs forgiveness' will be disastrous. In this case the love of God will not be experienced in fulness, and deliverance from sin's power will not be realised. A deficient sense and experience of grace will still leave the subject linked to his past in some measure, and cut him off from effecting full forgiveness of others in the present, in which case the relational changes needed will not take place.
- (ii) **The totality of cleansing.** Passages such as I Cor. 6:9–11, Heb. 9:14, cf. Heb. 1:3, Acts 22:16, Titus 3:5 indicate that the cleansing of man from moral pollution is total. Without this man still has the shame of his defilement with him (e.g. Psalm 51:6, 7, 10, Ezekiel 36:24–28). He will be unable to see God (Matt. 5:8) and to relate fully to others.
- (iii) **The totality of reconciliation.** II Cor. 5:19–21 (cf. Col. 1:19–22) indicates that man is totally reconciled to God. The impediment of sin and guilt (Isaiah 59:1–2) is removed. He has access to God. This access (Romans 5:2, Ephes. 2:18, 3:11) is the equivalent to entering the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. It is 'the new and living way' (Hebrews chs. 9 and 10). Such complete reconciliation now allows and motivates the redeemed person to be reconciled with all men.
- (iv) **Man has total relationship with God.** John 17:3, I John 1:3, and I John 5:20 indicate man now relates to God. This is life; it is eternal life. Matthew 28:19 indicates that man is baptised into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This means he is relationally joined to the triune God. The effects of this are far-reaching. The relationship broken at the fall is restored (cf. II Cor. 5:15) with the added 'plus' of the grace of God and His redeeming love.
- (v) **The gift of the Holy Spirit and Love: the new life.** Romans 5:5 and I John 4:7–19 indicate that the gift of the Holy Spirit brings the experience of the gift of love. This means that man's needs in relationships vertical, horizontal and inward are fully met. In other words, man redeemed, although living in the midst of an aeon in which evil is working, is nevertheless at peace, personally, existentially. Many of his 'ills and spills' – the spin-off of his sinful alienation from God and man are now healed in the process of redemption. Their causes have been dealt with when guilt and defilement have been eliminated in the act of repentance faith forgiveness-cleansing-justification-sanctification-conversion.

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

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

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

(iii) Counselling Redeemed Man

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

(a) The Context of the New Life.

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

As we will see, the new man must live in faith, hope and love. When he weakens in regard of these, then he may be visited or re-visited by many troubles. How then do we counsel him?

(b) The New Life and Faith.

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as ‘the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’. Faith then presupposes the need for assurance, the context of not seeing. This is the case. Hence for man to live in faith is to believe what the Word tells him. Hence the new man must go on believing – in the

face of seeming contrary facts and feelings – that he is washed, cleansed, sanctified and justified. The battle of faith is not to get to this place but to realise one is already there. Any suggestion that God's forgiveness is limited, or is conditional upon man's goodness, even redeemed man's goodness, is to cut the nerve of the dynamic of grace. It is grace and love which induce obedience and holiness (11 Cor. 5:14, Titus 2:11f, Romans 6:12–14, etc.).

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

(c) The New Life and Hope.

Hope is a powerful dynamic. Paul expounds it in Romans 8:18–30. He points out that what will be fully complete in the eschaton is not yet fully complete, hence the anguish of even the elect. He also says that in all the contrary things God is working to effect our conformity to the image of the Son. In I Cor. 13:7 love hopes as well as believes. Hence faith, hope and love abide, the former two subserving the latter. Living in hope presupposes belief in the promises of God, and so having meaning, purpose and a goal. The dynamic of these must be understood. For many Christians living a morally good life, and going through the exercises of prayer, Bible–reading, tithing and similar operations constitutes the Christian life. Whilst these are certainly related to such a life they are the accompaniments, and not the whole of it. Obedience to the commands of Christ means witness, evangelism, living in loving community, fighting against evil and moving towards the consummation. Man lives all these in hope.

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

(d) The New Life and Love.

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

This brings us to the crux of counselling. A deficient view or experience of the love of God in a conditioned forgiveness, cleansing from sin, justification and sanctification (i.e. being included in the true people of God) will bring a deficient obedience (cf. John 14:15, II Cor. 5:14, I John 4:19, and 4:10). That is 'he who is forgiven little loves little' and so obeys 'little'. Faith presupposes obedience as obedience–in–action presupposes faith. Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). When then there is a weakness in love, obedience to God, and relationships with God and man, man must suffer. It is in the realm of relationships that man '5 problems obtain and worsen. Normally speaking, the Gospel launches man into the life and experience of love. This, of course, is through the power and operation of the Spirit (Rom. 5:5, 15:30, Gal. 5:22–23, Col. 1:8).

1. The Context of Love.

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

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

2. The Counsellors of Love.

The people of God was a functional community. Known as ‘the household of God’ it saw its being in the saga of the people of faith, stretching back to Abraham and forward to the consummation of unity in the eschaton. It was not individualistic, and knew only spiritual health in the context of the entire community. It was constituted a functional entity, a social unity. It had the gifts of Christ – apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher to bring it to the maturity, but note, the maturity of love (Ephes. 4:10–16, cf. 3:14–19). From the Acts and the pastoral epistles we can see that elder⁸ were of the esse of the true community. The modern concept of counsellors such as we have would have been wholly foreign to the early community. There were elders who lived in the midst of the community and served it. Even their teaching was not as such theology but the practical teaching and application in life of the apostolic doctrine. We mean that it related to where people were, and where their problems were.

It would seem that much current counselling would take on a different nature from that of ‘specialist’ counselling were the eldership oversight renewed and strengthened. The idea of going to a special person away from the locality and living context of the assembly would have been utterly foreign to the N.T. community of faith.

3. The Necessity and Modes of Love.

Christian love⁹ was not, for the early Christians a spiritual optional or an emotional luxury. It was the heart of the matter. By love their relational problems were healed. By love the community lived, and by love it proclaimed the Gospel. Loving was seen and experienced by both subject and object in caring, sharing, giving, forgiving in mutual interpenetration of being. Such is described in Acts 2:44–46, 4:32–35, and the Johannine epistles amongst others. The exhortation, warnings, rebukes and encouragement of the epistles are prolific in the matter of love. We repeat it was in this whole and wholesome context that the

⁸ See LFS. No. 22 for a wider treatment of Eldership.

⁹ See LFS. No. 1 for a wider treatment of love, especially its modes.

problems of troubled minds and hearts were worked out. It did not spring from analysis, techniques, diagnosis and specifics in treatment so much as in the whole context and atmosphere of the corporate loving community. Problems began and multiplied in that community when love receded (see Rev. 2:1–5, cf. I John 2:7ff, 3:10ff, 4:7ff). Love recedes when the love of God in the Gospel and in life is hedged about with conditions and minimised in its operations.

(e) The New Life and Obedience.

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

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

(f) Conclusion.

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

6. The Facts of Authority and Relationships

What we have not examined to date is the actual functional nature of the creation. We have said that in accordance with statements from Gen. 1:31, Eccles. 3:11, I Tim. 4:4, I Cor. 10:26 and other scriptures, the world operates according to certain basic functional laws and principles. Scripture indicates that these laws and principles operate within the context of an hierarchy of authority.¹⁰ It is claimed by some scholars that the whole matter of authority and obedience did not exist prior to the fall, and that divine and human government, as such, were made necessary by the fall and man's rebellion. This is not Biblically viable,

¹⁰ The question of basic creational authority and the rebellion of man is a complicated one. For its treatment see LFS. No. 5 entitled 'The Nature of Authority and Obedience'. Also see articles in Bible Dictionaries.

since such statements as Gen. 1:16–18 speak of ‘greater’ lights and ‘lesser’ lights and of their ‘ruling’ over the day and the night. Nevertheless the fall must have enormously altered man’s attitude to creational authority. It is also clear from Col. 1:15–17 that in the Son all authorities were created. This indicates that the authority–hierarchy was prior to the fall.

(i) The Fact and Principle of Authority

Of Jesus it was said, ‘Never man spoke like this man.’ It was also said ‘For he taught them as one who had authority’ (Matt. 7:28). In Luke 7:8 the centurion says to Jesus, ‘I also¹¹ am a man under authority,’ inferring that Jesus is under authority. In Luke 9:1–2 Jesus gives his authority to the twelve disciples to heal diseases and exorcise demons. He himself, as Son of man claims he has authority to forgive sins and to be lord of the Sabbath. Finally, following his resurrection he says, ‘All authority is given unto me’ (Matt. 28:18–20). In the Book of Acts the apostles and others preach, teach, heal, and give commands in the authority of the name of Jesus, and in practice they are effective.

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

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

The word ‘authority’ derives from ‘author’ and an author is someone who originates, or causes something to proceed forth. God is the Author of creation. Hence He ‘owns’ creation. Paul quotes a Greek poet as saying ‘We are his offspring’. He infers that because we are His then we ought to act accordingly. We belong to Him. This is again inferred in Ephesians 4:6, ‘There is one God and Father of us all who is above all’. ‘Above’ presupposes authority. At the same time God is ‘through all and in all’ presupposing strong relational ties, and indeed deep affectional elements. This is the way authority should be understood. What is created must be cared for by the creator. Whatever goals the originator has for his originated work he must see those goals are reached. Hence in God’s case His authority is directive, corrective, protective, provisory, supportive and maturative, amongst many other things. Likewise authority, wherever it is exercised must, if it operates properly, have these functions.

Because of man’s initial rebellion and his guilt he is alienated from God and

¹¹ Sadly enough the little word also (Gk. kai) is missing from some modern translations. It is, however, in the text. It is also present in Matt. 8:9.

a true acceptance of the proper authorities. The problem is compounded because

- (a) Man, wherever he is in authority, is unable to exercise such authority purely, thereby further confounding the true principle of authority in the eyes of (fallen) man, who is himself innately incapable of accepting authority.
- (b) Satan and his principalities (authorities) have abused their given authority, and again, further confuse the issue of pure authority. It is well nigh impossible for fallen humanity to recognise, and come to terms with, authority.

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

(ii) Authority and Power: Their Functional Operations

In the N.T. two words are translated 'power' in English, i.e. *dynamis* and *exousia*. The first is 'ability' or 'actual power' and the second 'authority'. The two are related although different. The *dynamis* of God creates the universe. He sets authorities over it for its functional working, and with a view to its reaching the destined goal set for it. Hence authority is never set simply for maintaining a static status quo, but rather its direction, correction, protection, are for onward moving action as the created universe (including man) moves to maturation. Salvation history shows that the same authority is not only providential but redemptional, and in the ultimate maturative when the creation is glorified. It is no exaggeration to say that true authority and true love are exactly and utterly the one. Fallen man will fiercely debate this conclusion for he sees his goal as individualistic freedom, and this is actually a contradiction in terms. Individualism is really one over and against and utterly distinct from the rest. Its opposite is authoritarianism.

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

(iii) Authority and Law

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

rationalisations which attempt to speak of equality, and to deny that the Son was in any sense subordinate to the Father.

If the concept of authoritarianism can be eliminated, and if serving can be seen to be the highest order, then the fixation regarding office will be dissolved. The Father serves His creation by bringing it into being, by providing for it, by redeeming it, and by bringing it to its maturative goal (glorification). The Son serves in all of these elements and so does the Spirit. God is the Worker–Serving– God!

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

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

(iv) Love, Authority, and Counselling

God is love. His creation is ordered and structured in love. Only man's rebellion gives it a perverse rationale. Created by Father, Son and Spirit, the imprint' of the Triune God–Creator is set upon all God's works. They clearly tell Him as He is (Rom. 1:19f, Psalm 19:1, etc.). Col. 1:15–17 speaks of celestial authorities, and other Scriptures (e.g. Daniel chs. 10 and 11) speak of the authority of angels over human affairs. In the earthly scene there are authorities (Romans 13:1ff, cf. I Peter 2:13–17). In I Cor. 11 the order is God, Christ, man (husband), woman (wife). In Ephes. 5:20ff it is husband, wife; parents, children; masters, servants, and so on. There are also orders civil and orders ecclesiastical. Apostles have special authority. So do prophets. Presumably this is the case with evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Elders have authority. The N.T. church requires this hierarchy of offices, gifts and workings (cf. I Cor. chs. 12–14 and the Pastoral Epistles). The church is under the authority of its Lord, Jesus Christ. Christ is under the Lordship of the Father (cf. I Cor. 15:24–28, Phil. 2:9–11, etc.). It should be no more difficult for the wife to call her husband 'Lord!' (I Peter 3:6) than for the Church to call her Husband 'Lord!' (I Cor. 12:1–2).

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

- (a) The world is functional. Love is its functional outworking. Authority and relationships are indissolubly linked, and submission is required.
- (b) Any hierarchical order is the result of sin, and man to be truly free must transcend orders and laws. Man and woman are equal. There are no essential authorities which require submission. Submission is enslaving and demeaning. True love transcends such.

(v) The True Orders and Functions

(a)– Creation and Order.

(i) **God is Creator, and Lord over all.** He is love and plans to bring His creation to its ordained destiny. He is Father–Redeemer. He is essentially Father to His Son, but He is also Father to His (elect) family. All Fatherhood or Familyhood in heaven and earth is named (or, derived) from Him. In this regard He is above all, through all, and in all (the family). His is the authority.

(ii) **The Eternal Son is Creator and (so) Lord.** His eternal Sonship, indicated in Hebrews 1:1–2 and other passages must mean he has deity. His participation in the work of creation gives him inherent lordship. All orders which he created as Creator–Mediator must be subject to him. That is, there is nothing which is not subject to him.

(iii) **The Holy Spirit is Creator and Lord.** The Holy Spirit is the Creator– Agent of all things. This is seen from Genesis 1:1–3, Psalm 104:29–30, Job 27:3, 33:4, Ezekiel 37, Isaiah 32:15f, etc. In the N.T. the man Jesus is subject to the Spirit, that is he is led by him in all that he does. This is the norm for human growth, subjection to the Holy Spirit. The whole creation must be subject continually to him for life (Psalm 104:29–30).

(iv) **Within the Creational Order God is Father, the Word is Son, and the Spirit is the ‘Go–Between God’.** We mean that God who is essentially Father does not create merely as Creator, nor does the Son mediate creation without being the Son. Again the Spirit is agent of creation as the personal Spirit. The Godhead then creates so that Father, Son and Spirit set their imprint upon the creation, and relate to it in the true nature of the discrete being of each Member of that Godhead. This means that true authority is personal, and that creation in its constituent parts relates after this manner. We mean that Fatherhood, Sonship and Spirithood are personal and relational in their creative work, hence submission to authority is personal and of the true order of things.

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

Likewise in the human scene earthly powers¹² have their authority from God as

¹² We speak of the order within the family of father, mother, elder brother (etc.), the elders within the community, the ruling authorities such as kings, governors

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

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

(b) Redemption and Orders.

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

The redeemed man has been re-created, and is now the true applicant for obedience. He should know love, joy and peace in obedience, even though evil powers may set themselves against him as never before. He, by revelation, now knows that God is his Father, the Son is his Lord, and the Holy Spirit is his Comforter and Guide. He comes under the loving Lordship of Father, Son, and Spirit. His guilt is erased, and so the impediment to reconciliation – his objective and subjective guilt – is also removed. He is free now to obey, through love. (See John 14:15, II Cor. 5:14, 1 John 5:3.)

The acceptance of the authority of God is in love. Hence acceptance will be extended to all creational orders. That is all civil powers, authorities under which one works, and the authorities which exist in the family and the community. Whilst we do not anticipate total perfection in obedience we are sure it is functional for the new man in Christ to exercise this obedience. We recognise the faultiness¹³ of the persons or authorities under whom he is placed, as also his own imperfection in exercising the authority which is his. Nevertheless a new situation obtains for the child of God within the family of God's community.

(c) Glorification and Orders.

As we have observed, the child of God is a person who is in the process of becoming what he ultimately will be. We have seen that he lives in hope, as also he lives in faith. Primarily he lives in love. He knows that what he will eventually become must determine his present activities. Hence he sees the functional

¹³ See '7. (iii)' below – 'Problems in Regard to Bad or Deficient Authority.'

orders of this world in the light of the age to come. His motivation to obedience is powerful. 'Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord! Lord!' shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of y Father who is in heaven.' We should therefore point out that it is the revelation of the Fatherhood of God which reveals the true Lordship of the Son and the Spirit, and which leads to an understanding of all authority and an acceptance of it. The willingness to obey then follows.

7. Authority and The Counselling of Man

(i) Views False or True in Regard to Authority

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

The subject of authority has always been the problem of man. This is basic to his sinfulness. It has been observed by many that the elements described in I Cor. 6:9–10 relate to rejection of authority. Those who are illicitly sexual, who are idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, greedy persons, drunkards, revilers, and robbers are all those who have (a) an anti-authority bias and are deliberate law-breakers of creational functional laws, and (b) have developed dependencies¹⁴ which are not easily repudiated, and from which they cannot easily escape. Romans 1:20ff makes it clear that they initially reject the authority of God. It follows that they reject basic authorities. In counselling such the basic roots of authority-rejection must be sought. The problem must be healed. How can this be brought about?

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

- (1) Man is in Adam and so rebels. He has accounted guilt (Romans 5:12ff. Not all agree with this dogma but it is difficult to see how they can then accept Christ's accounted obedience implied in the same passage if it is not a parallel.) and he has the guilt of his own

¹⁴ By 'dependencies' we mean those forms of idolatry and attachment which are substitutes for God. These give them pleasure of a sort, being a means of temporary relief from the constant guilt and anguish man knows.

sins, as well as the fact of his being a sinful person. These elements of accounted and actual guilt raise a relational barrier between man and God.

- (2) Since rebellion is against God it is also against the order of His universe. It is to be expected that such rebellion will express itself against the constituted authorities.
- (3) The first authorities the new-born person faces (normally) will be his parents. According to Genesis 1:26–27 the following emerges:
 - (i) Man constitutes the image of God. That means the child will see God through his Father.
 - (ii) Man and woman together constitute the image of God. That is he will derive his view of God from both parents. The (so-called) element of masculinity and femininity of God¹⁵ from which man and woman are derived, will, together, constitute the image of God, and from these the child will form his image of God. Hence if there are deficiencies in either or both parents – as there are bound to be – the child will have a deficient view of God.
 - (iii) It is not father and mother separately who each constitute the image of God, as such, or together form the image of God. It is primarily in their relationships that the nature of God is portrayed, i.e. as love or otherwise, as authoritative or otherwise, as purposive or otherwise, and so on. In other words it is the actions and intimations of the father and mother who should be ‘one-flesh’ (and who often are not) which teach the child his image/s of God. The incalculable element of any given child (which we must take into consideration) is his negativity or positivity or proportionate admixture of both. For example, why does one child emerge as basically negative in attitude and another as basically positive, whilst yet others seem ambivalent? This is a factor which needs to be researched from the Scripture.¹⁶

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

¹⁵ Without doubt the elements of masculinity and femininity derive from God. God is Creator and thus creative. At his highest man is procreative. If then we ascribe masculinity and femininity to God this must be without sexual connotation as such. When God is called ‘He’ there is no sexual inference. Sexuality is a temporary gift and exercise given to created man.

¹⁶ In seeking to understand elements which are affective and effective upon the child in pre-natal, and post-natal states, one needs to research the whole idea of covenant, and of the concept of community. Psalm 58:3 (cf. Psa. 51:5, Isa. 48:8) says, ‘The wicked go astray from the womb’. Genesis 25:19–26 speaks of conflict within the womb, of Jacob and Esau. Gal. 4:21–31 speaks of Isaac being born of the Spirit and Esau being born of the flesh. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from his ;other’s womb, and indeed leapt within the womb when his mother, Elizabeth, met Mary in whose womb was Jesus. How can all this be? What causes attitudes which develop, it would seem, from conception?

which the person views creation, life, others, and indeed, everything.¹⁷

(ii) Counselling in Regard to Parenthood, God, and Authority

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

What we must first recognise is that God is Father. To understand the Son-ship of the second member of the Trinity and the 'go-between' activity of the third member of the Godhead we must come to understand the Fatherhood of God.¹⁸ Whilst we cannot here enter into a theology of the Father (Patrology), yet we may recognise the following from Scripture:—

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

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

Secondly, we must recognise that all fatherhood and familyhood stems from God as Father. This is the thrust of Ephesians 3:14,15.¹⁹ At the same time this earthly fatherhood and familyhood has been greatly marred by the Fall, as is seen in the story of the first family. The N.T. epistles aver that true familyhood is known in practice by relationship with the Father.

Thirdly, we must see that human fatherhood and familyhood relate to the authority of God. The command to honour parents in the Decalogue stemmed from Israel's relationship with God. Honouring parents was linked with the unique promise of longevity. The rejection of the parents is really rejection of God. The rejection of human fatherhood, and so, of family, is also rejection of God as

¹⁷ Reflect, for example on the principle of dualism where some things are good and some not. See how fatalism reflects a depressed view of God and the universe. Esoteric religious rationalisations are man's attempts to explain the universe to himself along certain lines other than those which are Biblical revelations. These rationalisations arising from man in his dilemma then add to his problems, for they influence the way in which he proceeds, further, to live.

¹⁸ This subject is vast in its dimensions, and is demanding considerable research from many modern theologians. The counsellor would do well to study the theme in depth. See LFS. 11 and the writer's two books, 'I Love the Father', and 'Father! My Father!' amongst the many works available.

¹⁹ An exposition of this is given in detail in the Anchor Bible, ad.loc. (Markus Barth. 'Ephesians 1-3' Doubleday and Co. Inc. New York 1974).

Father, and the true meaning of family.²⁰ It is probably more true to say that rejection of God is rejection of the Father in that the human father is representative of the heavenly Father. From this we must not except the mother who together with the father represents the image of God. Hence the balance between father and mother as they exercise their functional roles together will represent the image of God to the children. Thus rejection of one or both parents reflects the child's attitude to God, and so to authority.

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

With these facts in mind the counsellor should seek to bring the counsellee to relate to God as Father, and the Son as Lord (cf. I Cor. 8:6, John 17:3, I John 1:3, etc.). True revelation of God as Father is given by Christ the Son through his life, death and resurrection. However this revelation is experienced in the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31–34, I John 4:10, etc.). It must be seen that God as Father is the one who forgives, and so can be known as the Father who loves. Many Christians do not know God as Father. Knowing Him as Father is the fulness of the Gospel (Gal. 4:4–6).²¹ The way in which the Son knew the Father reveals that true sonship is full obedience to the Father, and full participation in His will and work (cf. John 5:17ff). The effect of receiving forgiveness from the Father will be to love Him, and to be freed from guilt, and so to forgive others. Any lack of fatherhood will now be more than compensated by this divine Fatherhood. Since all familyhood comes from Him (Ephes. 3:14–15, cf. Isaiah 54:5ff) previous deficiencies in relationships will now be solved, so that full relationships may flow. This is the true core to all counselling. Acceptance of God's Fatherhood will be acceptance of earthly fatherhood and so, of earthly familyhood.

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

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

(ii) The proverb 'The fathers have eaten grapes and the children 's teeth are set on edge' is a false proverb (Ezekiel 18:1ff, and Jer. 31:29–30). An examination of Exodus 20:4–6 shows that I 'visiting the sins of

²⁰ This does not at first seem apparent. A thorough study of John's first epistle reveals (i) Redeemed man's fellowship is with the Father and the Son. (ii) The children of God love as brothers. (iii) He who does not love the brother does not love the Father. Not to love the Father's son is not to love the Father. (iv) True love of the Father is in doing His will and commands. In John 15:18–25 Jesus points out that to love the Son is to love the Father. To hate the Son is to hate the Father. Throughout John's Gospel Jesus is saying that rejection of God is rejection of true authority. He demonstrates that true subjection to the Father is subjection to the true authority.

²¹ See 'Knowing God' (J. I. Packer, Hodder & Stoughton 1973) pp.181–208.

the fathers upon the children' relates primarily to idolatry and the subsequent generations who persist in it. It cannot be made the basis for psychological determinism. Heredity, environment and circumstances do not determine the future and personhood of a child. Such things are 'not his fate but his trial'. Certainly he cannot blame his present state on these, but rather should recognise it was his reaction to these or his responses which determined his course of life and his character.

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

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

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

(iii) Problems in Regard to Bad or Deficient Authority

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

Other considerations must be understood. All persons are defective or deficient. Hence they will make, from time to time, faulty directives. Likewise those under them will give faulty obedience. The principle of authority is not thereby lessened. All fathers and mothers are imperfect. Yet the command to honour and obey them is not thereby invalidated. True honour springs from the love of God, i.e. love to God because He loves (I John 4:19ff). The imperfection of a person should not mar the love of another for him. We must love all men, and love them totally, and without partiality. We should hate none, and react to none. Creationally we are in the image of God – i.e., love. Redemptionally that image

is being renewed and enhances the understanding that we should love, and provides the motivation to so do.

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

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

The counsellor had better know that the whole of man’s problems lie in his refusal to accept the hierarchy of the creation, for this is equivalent to refusing the Creator Himself. It is only when man himself begins to serve in love that he discovers a world of incredible delight and meaning.²²

(iv) Authority, Relationships and Love

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

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

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

The counsellor out of this Biblical wisdom will seek to lead the counsellee

²² It has been pointed out by many that an alcoholic (for example) is one who has not submitted to authority. He almost always had problems in parental relationships, i.e. with his parents and his children. He desires to exercise authority but cannot sustain such. When he submits for treatment his very submission is in fact a large part of his treatment or healing itself. He can then attain to the exercise of authority.

to receive the love of God and so love his own father, and consequently his family, and all others. This is the true healing of the mind. Those who have been damaged emotionally²³ are those who have felt unloved. The healing of being unloved is to love, and not to wait to be loved, since true love takes the initiative. Only where forgiveness is received from the Father is love truly known, and then, reflexively, truly given! Following this an acceptance of functional roles should ease the attitude towards the hierarchy and take the unhappy associations from such words as authority, law, and obedience. Being forgiven, and forgiving others now places us in our true roles, giving us purpose and a goal, with the rich expectation of hope.

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

8. The Full Context of Counselling

(i) The Household, or Family of God

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

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

If we could fully understand the archetypes of Father (God), of Son (Jesus), of elder Brother (Jesus), of Bridegroom (Jesus), of Bride (the church), of Mother (Jerusalem above), and so on, then we could particularly understand the healthful way of living. Yet all of this has to be in the context of the true family (the people of God) for it is there, in love, that the community of God grows (Ephes. 4:7–16). Each member of that community, i.e. each person, also grows in his true context. Each derives his personal relational powers from the Father of the family (Ephes. 3:14–15, 4:6), but always within the context of the family, and always for the family.

If we study the early church very carefully we find there were no specialist counsellors. There was an hierarchy of gifts, and an hierarchy of ministries. This is seen from various passages such as I Cor. 12 and 14, Romans 12:3ff, Ephes. 4:7ff, and I Peter 4:10–11. It is to be noted that the use of gifts and ministries was a service, and a service of love. Obedience to leaders is often enjoined, but then leaders are to serve. The pastoral epistles enlarge on the nature of the church and in particular on the functions and operations of deacons

²³ The term 'damaged emotionally' may fit certain cases, no doubt. However, those who 'hug their hurts' may even be said to have self–inflicted wounds since 'love endures all things'.

and elders.²⁴ A most revealing passage is I Timothy 5:1–4. ‘Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity. Honour widows who are true widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents...’ This passage shows that the family principle obtained across the whole of the community of God.

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

What cannot be stressed enough is that each member of the church knew himself to be part of the entire supportive community. There could be no thought of attending a professional counsellor, and then being, as it were, abandoned to one’s own devices, or left to shift for oneself with occasional visits to the professional helper.

(ii) The Community of the Redeemed

(a) The Community of the Cross.

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

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

(b) The Community of Worship.

Worship is the way of true health and wholeness. It is that for which man was created. Personal worship grows within the context of corporate worship, and corporate worship is also the expression of the personal. When man worships God because he knows Him as the God of grace and love, then he not only heals, but finds himself without self-consciousness. Worship and service are in fact the one thing. To worship God is to serve both Him and others. Hence when worship is not stilted, formalistic and stifling it can become the source of daily enrichment and the deepest expression, as well as satisfaction, of the heart.

²⁴ For the whole matter of eldership See LFS. No. 22 ‘Eldership in the Scriptures’

(c) The Community of Purpose.

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

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

(d) Conclusion on the Community.

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

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

9. Conclusion On Counselling

The inadequacy of this study lies in the fact that each reader of it needs a full theology, a filled-out Biblical wisdom, and much of this can only be obtained over years of study and experience. It may serve, nevertheless, as a basis for proceeding towards a true theology and pattern of counselling.

The most earnest of counsellors will not despise the various schools of psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy and sociology from which he may obtain knowledge and insights since ‘the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof’. Nor will he be condescending towards these insights. However, he dare not even approach them, much less seek to integrate them into his working system, without a prior and extensive knowledge of the wisdom we call Biblical. In the light of this he will be able to make his inclusions and adaptations of all available materials.

The sincere counsellor will look, too, to the wider need for the community in

which the needy counsellee may live, be encouraged, healed, supported and stimulated, until in true wholeness he is a man of action, knowing and doing the will of his Father who is in heaven.

....ooOoo....

–APPENDIX ONE –

‘SALVATION HISTORY’

Salvation history simply sees all the events and operations of history as part of God’s redemptive plan. Hence it does not so much ask the question, ‘How is this so?’ as ‘Why is this so?’, or ‘What is this all about?’ For example the ‘how?’ of creation is not so much important as to why creation comes into being. The beginning must be seen in the light of the end, and the end is only intelligible because of the beginning. The following is a very simple outline of salvation history. It is at the same time a wide panorama, yet lacking detail.

A Panoramic View of the Plan of God

1. Pre–Abrahamic History

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------------------|
| (i) | Creation of the world and universe. | Genesis chs. 1 & 2 |
| (ii) | Man the peak of that creation. | Genesis 1:26ff, 2:7ff. |
| (iii) | The fall of man from his creation perfection. | Genesis 3:1–6. |
| (iv) | Man’s universal corruption and violence. | Genesis 4:1–16, 6:1–6. |
| (v) | God’s judgement on man’s evil: the Flood. | Genesis chs. 6 to 8. |
| (vi) | Post–flood sinfulness of man: Noahic Covenant. | Genesis 8:21 –11:9. |

2. The Abrahamic Covenant History

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----------------------|
| (i) | The Abrahamic Covenant. | Genesis chs. 12 – 50. |
| (ii) | Israel and the Mosaic Covenant. | Exodus to Malachi. |
| | Israel and the exodus (Exodus to Deuteronomy). | |
| | The Kingdom (I Sam. 8:1 to Nehemiah 12:30). | |
| | The prophets former (Joshua to Nehemiah). | |
| | The prophets latter (Isaiah to Malachi). (Subjects of the prophets include the people of God, the judgements of God, the day of the Lord, the coming of Messiah, the promise of the Spirit, the eschaton.) | |
| (iii) | The new covenant (fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant). | |

- (a) Coming of Messiah as announced by John the Baptist – The four Gospels.
- (b) The era of the Spirit and the Covenant – Acts to the Revelation. The church and the Lord. The plan outworking in current history. The Kingdom coming. The consummation. The ultimate triumph of Christ and so the fulfilment of the plan. The restitution of all things. The fulness of the people of God. The glorification of all things. God's glory fully revealed and attested.

–APPENDIX TWO –

Counselling and The Theology of The Cross

In our study we have only lightly touched upon the matter of the Cross. In Romans 1:16–17 and I Cor. 1:18 Paul makes it clear that the power for salvation lies in the Cross. Salvation pertains to whole healing, hence the liberation of the Cross must be at the heart of counselling. The finest theology of the Cross is Paul's exposition to the Romans, and this means the entire epistle. A Christian counsellor should, at the least, be an expert on this epistle.

The deepest problem of man is his guilt. His guilt has many aspects:

- (i) Imputed guilt as seen in Romans 5:12ff, the result of which is death. Man lives under the doom of death.
- (ii) Man's objective guilt, i.e. the guilt of the things he has done. Such guilt is ineradicable, by any known method.
- (iii) Man's subjective guilt. The key to man's tensions, fears and troubles lies in conscience. According to the operations of conscience man's subjective levels of guilt (feelings) will rise and fall. Since conscience is no clear guide serious troubles may arise.
- (iv) Man's guilt as a faulty (sinful) existent within creation. Man is guilty for not being what he ought to be. Experiences of shame, anger, resentment and hatred proceed from these various aspects of guilt. They may cause many kinds of illness, physical and mental. That is clear from such Psalms as 31, 32, and 38.

Only the Cross can clear from guilt. Passages concerning the death of Christ should be studied closely. In the Cross Christ bore the actual sins of persons, became that very sin, and took the wrath which falls upon such sin. The constituent nature of sin must therefore be understood, so that the work of the Cross may also be understood. Wrath is actually experienced in the conscience (Romans 1:18–32). The giving up of man, successively, to the evil of his sin and sinfulness is the outworking of God's wrath. For this reason the radical nature of the Cross is bearing the guilt, wrath and pollution of man and effecting the liberation of man from the power, pollution and penalty of sin must be properly understood. Unfortunately many Christians have a concept of graduated and conditional forgiveness, and of a justification which has to be maintained, retained and sustained by works, in which case the conscience is again launched into its tyrannous operations, and tension and fear return.

The truth is that whilst law can bring knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20) only the Holy Spirit can bring conviction of sin (John 16:7–11). Without conviction there is no true repentance (Gk. **metanoia**, ‘change of mind’), hence no true release of forgiveness and cleansing. The conditional forgiveness often preached still leaves many under the tyranny of conscience. The conscience must see by revelation of the Spirit the total work of the Cross so that the heart and mind of the person is fully liberated. This liberation alone will bring full release to the personality, and charge it with the motivation of love. Such a person will then love God, his fellow man, and himself, and will understand the dynamics of forgiveness.

The Cross demands of the counsellor as much as it demands of the counsellee. If the counsellor has not passed through dynamic repentance, faith, and has not received full forgiveness, and come to understand complete justification then it is doubted that he can really counsel since he is deficient in the most powerful elements of the wisdom of God. Related to this is the reationalising of the counsellee. Since the Cross provides total forgiveness, the counsellee must also totally forgive others. He must see forgiveness is needed for his wrong approaches to life, and his ‘self–inflicted wounds’ of non–loving, negative reactions, and so on. Having been forgiven he forgives. It is axiomatic that the levels of our forgiving others are contingent upon the level of experience and understanding we have of having been forgiven. Forgiveness means any person can relate, for his part, in love towards all other persons even though they may not reciprocate. This relating is the most healthful form of living. A counsellor who has retained hurt, resentment, unforgiveness or the like will always be limited in his ability to counsel. He has yet to experience the Cross in all its fulness.