

The Image of God

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It is true beyond cavil or dispute that the focus of interest today is upon man, his life, his actions, his feelings, his struggles, and his potentialities.¹ In fact, some theologians have so occupied themselves with the study of man, that they have left little or no time for a discussion of supernatural themes, an interesting reversal of the emphasis manifest in theological realms in the Middle Ages. Zabriskie has correctly stated: "At no time in the history of theology has the doctrine of the *imago Dei* had a more challenging pastoral relevance or more provocative theological implications than it does within the current of contemporary theology."² Carl F. H. Henry acquiesces in the significance of the subject. After asking in what way man reflects God, since he is the resemblance of God, he presses the questions: "What of the vitiating effects of his fall into sin? Is the NT concept of the *imago* in conflict with the OT conception? Is it in conflict with itself? These questions are among those most energetically debated by contemporary theology."³ The heated discussions and debates which have gone on relative to the image of God reveal somewhat the weighty character of the subject.⁴ One has only to delve into the almost interminable battle on the doctrine of the *imago Dei* to realize before long

1 G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids, 1962), p. 12.

2 Stewart C. Zabriskie, "A Critical View of Karl Barth's Approach to the Christian Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*," *Anglican Theological Review*, XLVII (October, 1965), 359.

3 Carl F. H. Henry, "Man," *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by Everett F. Harrison and Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, 1960), p. 339.

4 Berkouwer, p. 35.

how complex and at times abstruse the factors are. Moreover, the biblical doctrine has wide ramifications that touch every area of theology with the possible exceptions of bibliology and ecclesiology. The doctrines of God, angels, man (the fall, sin), salvation (atonement, sanctification), and future things (glorification, resurrection) are directly involved.⁵ The concept of the image of God, implied or expressed, underlies all revelation.⁶ Thus it is not too much to maintain that a correct understanding of the image of God in man can hardly be overemphasized. The position taken here determines every area of doctrinal declaration. Not only is theology involved, but reason, law, and civilization as a whole, whether it views regenerate or unsaved humanity from its origin to eternity.⁷

Any treatment of this vital theme must address itself to three basic questions: (1) In what specifically does the image of God consist? (2) What effect did sin and the fall of man have on this image? (3) What results accrued to the image of sinful man because of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ?⁸

Relevant passages on man as the image of God are Genesis 1:26-27 (the creation account); 5:1, 3 (the transmission of the image from Adam to his posterity); 9:6 (the doctrine of the image relative to homicide); 1 Corinthians 11:7 (discussion of headship in the family); Colossians 3:10 (exhortations to the believer to put on the new man); and James 3:9 (treatment of the proper use of the tongue). Psalm 8 does not contain the words "image of God," but the passage deals in poetic form with the creation of man and the area of his dominion.⁹ Cf. also Heb. 2:6-8. The only method for arriving at a correct solution of the problems related to the image of God is to carry through a careful and accurate exegesis of the Scripture passages involved.

Exegesis is possible only by beginning at the lexical gate of

5 Gordon H. Clark, "The Image of God in Man," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, XII (Fall, 1969), 215. Wrote James Orr, "It is not too much to say that every crucial question in theology, almost, is already settled in principle in any thorough-going discussion of the divine attributes" (cf. James Orr, *God's Image in Man* [New York, 1906], p. 7).

6 James Orr, "God, Image of," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed by James Orr, et al., II (1929), 1264.

7 Henry, p. 339.

8 Berkouwer, p. 66.

9 Cf. also Heb. 2:6-8, which is based on Ps. 8; 1:3 (underscoring the deity of Christ); Acts 17:26-29 (Paul's address to the Athenians on Mar's Hill). Psalm 51:6; Rom. 1:23; and 2:15 have important implications for the doctrine now considered.

the words used. Genesis 1:26, 27 employs the Hebrew words *tselem* and *demuth* (lit. image and likeness). The New Testament equivalents are *eikon* and *homoiosis*. Words, in addition to these, are *apaugasma* and *charakter* (both in Heb. 1:3). The words of Genesis 1:26 appear in the Vulgate as *imago* and *similitudo*. The use of two words in the original passage has occasioned a strange spate of interpretations in the history of theology. The employment of two nouns has been seen as teaching two aspects of the image of God. One is said to denote man's essence, which is unchangeable, whereas the other is held to teach the changing part of man. Thus the first use of image relates to the very essence of man, while the likeness is that which may be lost. This distinction came to be a continuous element in theological anthropology.¹⁰ A careful study of Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1, 3; and 9:6 will show beyond question that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the two Hebrew terms are not referring to two different entities. In short, use reveals the words are used interchangeably. The Greek and Latin Fathers distinguished between *tselem* and *demuth*, the first referring to the physical and the latter to the ethical part of the divine image. The words, however, are used synonymously, the second emphasizing the first. Irenaeus (A.D. 130 - ca. 200) made a distinction between "image" and "likeness." The first was said to refer to man's freedom and reason and the last to the gift of supernatural communion with God (still the official view of the Roman Church). Genesis 5:1 and 9:6 will not support such a difference in meaning.¹¹

What is the reason for the wide differences on the subject? Laidlaw's explanation is correct: "Although thus definite and significant, however, the phrase [image of God] is not explicit. . . . This

10 Berkouwer, p. 43. Today this distinction is held to, be invalid. A naturalistic view holds that man was created only in God's image, but gradually evolved into God's likeness. Many have affirmed that the image was basic, to which was added the likeness, called *donum superadditum*. Origen held that Genesis speaks of man's creation in the image, but can obtain the likeness by works. The Church Fathers made a distinction between image and likeness, but Luther and Calvin refused to follow this tradition. Consensus today rejects a differentiation on both exegetical and theological grounds.

11 Cf. R. G. Crawford, "The Image of God," *Expository Times*, LXXVII (May, 1966), 233-36. See the position of the Eastern Church, Edo Osterloh, "Anthropology," *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, ed. by Julius Bodensieck, 1 (1965), 83. For the view that the image speaks of the physical and the likeness to the ethical part of man, see J. I. Marais, "Anthropology," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. by James Orr, et al., 1 (1929), 145.

is why the doctrine of the Divine Image in man has been a topic so fruitful of differences in theology."¹² Many have expressed their desire that the Scriptures had given a clear definition of the image and what it denotes. After all, what is the image of God? The biblical data furnish no systematic theory of the subject, no clue as to what is implied.¹³

Much light may be shed on the doctrine of the image of God if attention is directed to the unique setting of the creation of man in the Genesis account. All exegetes are agreed that the climax of creation is reached in Genesis 1:26. Even evolutionary theories must agree with the truth of Scripture that man is the apex of all creation. Man's creation by God comes as the last and highest phase of God's creative activity. To highlight this event the wording is entirely altered. To this point the simple, forceful statement was "God said, Let there be . . ." Now there is counsel or deliberation in the Godhead. No others can be included here, such as angels, for none has been even intimated thus far in the narrative. Thus the creation of man took place, not by a word alone, but as the result of a divine decree.

Another distinguishing feature in the creation of man is his special nature. Although man is related on the physical side of his existence with material nature, so that physiologically he shares with lower organisms, yet he is far superior to all natural creatures, combining in himself certain immaterial elements never duplicated in the lower creation. Orr states it succinctly: "The true uniqueness in man's formation, however, is expressed by the act of the divine inbreathing, answering somewhat to the *bara* of the previous account. This is an act peculiar to the creation of man; no similar statement is made about the animals. The breath of Jehovah imparts to man the life which is his own, and awakens him to conscious possession of it."¹⁴

A third distinctive factor in man's creation is his special dominion. None of the lower animals had power or dominion delegated to it. Man on earth was meant in a measure to reflect the dominion of his Creator over lower creatures. Concerning this dominion more will be discussed below. In sum, the creation of man is clearly separated and delineated by a special counsel and decision in the

12 J. Laidlaw, "Image," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. by James Hastings, II (1899), 452.

13 Berkouwer, p. 69.

14 Orr, *God's Image in Man*, pp. 41, 46.

Godhead, marked off by a special nature (in the likeness and image of God), and characterized by a special dominion and sovereignty.

Coming to the heart of the matter, one is still faced with the perplexing questions: In what does the image consist? What is included? What is excluded? What factors may have a detrimental or beneficial influence on the image? How is Christ Himself related to this whole question, since the New Testament designates Him as the Image of God also? Is any viable option possible in a field so thoroughly traversed and so warmly debated for centuries by both Jews and Christians, theologians and naturalists, humanists and believers? The mind of the reader must, first of all, be disabused of the illusion that there has been unanimity in any camp, or that there has been an unbroken continuum of view in any school. Actually, Jewish authorities have differed widely on the subject; the rabbis of the Talmud, the medieval philosophers in Judaism, the later Jewish mystics, and modern liberal Jewish opinion span a wide spectrum of views. Christian interpreters have been no less diverse in their positions. Scientists, humanists, sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists of all shades of belief and unbelief have espoused varying viewpoints according to their reasoning and predilection.¹⁵

Many have seen the meaning of the image in man's dominion over nature with the corollary concepts of endowment with reason and upright stature. They point out that Genesis 1:26 unmistakably affirms man's dominion in the immediate context where image is found. Thus it is reasoned, the image consists in man's lordship over lower creation about him, which is meant by God to be subject to man. It is more correct to declare that the image is the basis or foundation for the dominion. Psalm 8:6-7 does not substantiate the view that image equals dominion. Man as a free being, regardless of how he uses this freedom, is said to reflect the sovereignty residing in God.¹⁶

Could the image consist in man's immortality? Jamieson answers in the negative: "And in what did this image of God consist? Not in the erect form or features of man; not in his intellect--for the devil and his angels are in this respect far superior; not in his im-

15 A. Altmann, "*Homo Imago Dei* in Jewish and Christian Theology," *Journal of Religion*, XLVIII (July, 1968), 235.

16 Erdman Harris, *God's Image and Man's Imagination* (New York, 1959), p. 199. Of course, this is not meant to remove the distinction between God and man, but rather to assert the unique status of man in comparison with all other creatures; cf. Berkouwer, p. 70.

mortality--for he has not, like God, a past as well as a future eternity of being; but in the moral dispositions of his soul, commonly called original righteousness"17

Some have espoused the view that the image of God in man consists in his corporeality. It would appear that this position is not difficult of refutation, for God is Spirit and has no human form and man's form has no divine likeness.¹⁸ Smith, on the other hand, feels man's body is after God's image insofar as it is the means whereby man exercises his dominion, and surely dominion is an attribute of God, seeing He is the absolute and final Lord. For this reason man's body is erect, being endowed as well with speech in order to issue words of command.¹⁹

If corporeality has had its advocates as an explanation of the meaning of the image of God, non-corporeality has an even greater number of protagonists. Gordon H. Clark shows how the image and likeness cannot be man's body, for (1) God is spirit and has no body, and (2) animals have bodies but are not in the image of God.²⁰ Adam Clarke, the noted commentator among the Metho-

17 Robert Jamieson, *Genesis - Deuteronomy*, Vol. I of *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*, by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown (London and Glasgow, n.d.), p. 8. It is interesting that Calvin (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* i. 15. 4), expounding Ephesians and Colossians, stresses the righteousness of the new creation, thus interpreting the Old Testament by the New.

18 Gerhard Kittel, "**εικων**," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Gerhard Kittel and trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, II (Grand Rapids, 1964), 394.

19 R. Payne Smith, "Genesis," *A Bible Commentary for Bible Students*, ed. by Charles John Ellicott (London and Edinburgh, n.d.), I, 17 Skinner is surely more correct when, admitting that the image qualifies man for dominion, he affirms that such rule is a consequence, and not the essence of the image of God (John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, *The International Critical Commentary*, ed. by Samuel Rolles Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles Augustus Briggs [Edinburgh, 1910], p. 32). Mauser has recently presented a rather novel approach to the question, when, discussing the position of Hempel, he speaks of an anthropomorphic God answering to a theomorphic man. His article may be summarized thus: "In the book of Hosea the prophet of Israel is depicted in a remarkably ably theomorphic fashion in that his life story as a man becomes, at least partially a representation of God by participation in God's condition. Human life is consequently understood as an image of God which in turn presupposes a concept of the divine in which Yahweh is so essentially God for and with Israel that the human is lodged in Him" (Ulrich Mauser, "Image of God and Incarnation," *Interpretation*, XXIV [July, 1970], 336-56, esp. 336 and 342). The introduction into the discussion of so many *tertium quids* can only serve to confuse the issue.

20 Clark, p. 216.

dists, holds that the image must be the intellect and the mind, not a corporeal image. The mind and soul were certainly, according to Clarke's reasoning, created after the perfections of God. His emphasis is: "God was now producing a spirit, and a spirit, too, formed after the perfections of his [that is, God's] nature."²¹ Keil and Delitzsch find the image of God in the spiritual or self-conscious personality of man. Therein exists a creature copy of the holiness of the life of God.²² Since God is incorporeal, reasons Chafer, the likeness of man to God must be limited to the immaterial part of man. Man's personality and self-consciousness, then, are the vantage point from which the personality of God is to be studied.²³ Calvin forthrightly affirms that ". . . there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul." The image of God is explicable only on the basis of the spiritual. The view that man is the image corporeally is "repugnant to reason," because it would have Christ speaking in Genesis 1:26 of Himself as the image of Himself.²⁴

At this point it may be well to ascertain how the image concept fared through successive centuries and among Jews and Christians to the present time. The rabbis manifested a reluctance to define precisely the phrase "image of God." This is unmistakable in the Aramaic translations of the Pentateuch. Radical anti-anthropomorphism is seen in numerous ways.²⁵ The rabbis of the Mishnah embraced the image of God concept in the Philonic and Platonic sense, and utilized the idea for rabbinical enactments. For instance, the image was to remind men of the dignity of each person; it argued against celibacy; it underscored man's beauty and original androgynous nature; and it led to much speculation concerning the *Adam Qadmon* (The Primordial Man or Urmensch).²⁶ The rabbis made

21 Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York, n.d.), I, 38.

22 C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, Vol. I of *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. by James Martin (Edinburgh, 1866), pp. 63-64.

23 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, 1947), I, 181, 184.

24 Calvin Institutes i. 15. 3. He concludes: "I retain the principle ... that the image of God includes all the excellence in which the nature of man surpasses all the other species of animals" (*ibid.*). Zenos concurs in understanding the image to be that which relates man to God, namely, his personality (cf. Andrew C. Zenos, "Man, Doctrine of," *A Standard Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Melancthon W. Jacobus, et al. (1909), pp. 512-13.

25 Altmann, pp. 235-39. In vivid contrast to the Aramaic versions are the Greek, which, apart from Symmachus, translated the text literally (cf. *ibid.*, p. 240).

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 243-44.

much of man's ability to think, create, and be aware of God. He is capable, not only of communing with God, but in later rabbinic literature he is designated as a "partner" of God the Creator.²⁷ Medieval Jewish theologians generally followed Philo's view, replacing his Logos with Plotinus' Intellect (*Nous*) or Aristotle's Active Intellect. Man's superiority over lower creation resided in his rational soul or intellect. The *summum bonum* for man was to achieve through the exercise of reason a union of his intellect with God or with the Active Intellect. Maimonides subscribed to this interpretation of the biblical terms, and it became standard for Jewish exegesis and philosophy.²⁸

Early in Christian interpretation the Pauline concept of Christ as the image of God (Col. 1:15; see also Phil. 2:6 for the form of God) was made determinative for an understanding of the full import of man in the image of God. The appellation of Jesus Christ as the image of God related to a number of concepts, namely, the eschatological idea of "Son of man," the Pauline phrase, "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), and the exhortation to put on the "new man" (Col. 3:9, 10).²⁹ Before entering into a fuller consideration of Christ as the image of God, it may be helpful to continue the historical observations on the doctrine of the image through the Reformation era. Luther attacked Augustine's view that the image consists of memory, understanding, and will. In this case even Satan could be said to exhibit the image of God. Luther understood the image as essentially man's response to God by loving and glorifying Him.³⁰ Calvin, who has been referred to above, claimed man could be like or resemble God only in the area of spiritual and rational attributes.³¹ Reformed theologians as a school subscribed to the position that the image was knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.³²

When one views the theological scene at the early twentieth century, he is aware that religious liberalism is in its heyday. How have liberals dealt with the problem under discussion? Enamored

27 Israel Adler, "Man, The Nature of," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. by Cecil Roth, XI (1971), 842-46, esp. 843.

28 Altmann, p. 254. The Jewish writer of Egypt, Saadya Gaon (892-942), however, held that the image referred to man's rule as lord of the earth--Gen. 1:28-30--reasoning from *Elohim* as "rulers," "judges" (*ibid.*, p. 255).

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45.

30 Berkouwer, p. 57.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 88. See also Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York, 1871), II, 96 ff.

of the Wellhausen approach to the religion of Israel, they saw the entire concept of the image of God as probably dependent on Babylonian mythology. It was the intention of God, according to this view, to make a man who looked like Him and the divine beings in His retinue. Included were spiritual powers like power of thought, communication, and self-transcendence, couched in concrete, rather than abstract beings.³³ Because this school was reluctant to take the Genesis narrative in the literal sense, it felt itself comfortable in the relational view, that is, the image consisted in man's relation to God.³⁴ This shifts the emphasis in the consideration from the creation account to the redemption account of the New Testament.

Emil Brunner saw a double aspect of the image, the formal phase which is unchangeable and cannot be affected by sin, and the material image which was lost through the fall.³⁵ Karl Barth stressed the "I-thou" or "face-to-face" relation as in the divine life. He originally denied that God had created man in His own image, since He was "totally Other," but in later writings he admitted a divine image in man.³⁶ However, the central thrust of the image of God for Barth is relationship. Man is God's partner in the covenant of grace and a counterpart to God in creation.³⁷ Carrying the concept of the image to its eschatological conclusion, Barth places it in the body of the resurrection. It is the oft quoted dictum of Irenaeus: "His becoming what we are enables us to become what he is." Thus the imago resides in the present hope of the resurrection of the body through Christ.³⁸

The discussion must now turn to the consideration of Christ as the image of God. Prominent passages are 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15-17; and Hebrews 1:2, 3. When these citations are carefully scrutinized, it will be seen from the context in each case

33 Walter Russell Bowie, "Exposition, The Book of Genesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. by George Arthur Buttrick, et al. (Nashville and New York, 1952), 1, 484-85.

34 Crawford, p. 234.

35 Berkouwer, pp. 51-52.

36 Clark, p. 221. When Barth unfolds his exposition, he makes the image the sexual distinction between man and woman. Clark is to the point when he observes: "Since this distinction occurs in animals also, one wonders how it can be the image that sets man apart from the lower creation. And since there are no sexual distinctions in the Godhead, one wonders how this can be an image of God at all" (*ibid.*).

37 Zabriskie, pp. 360-61. Barth, along with other Christian exegetes, is guilty of reading New Testament doctrine into Old Testament citations, which is an unhappy exegetical procedure.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 376.

that the phraseology is dealing with Christ not so much as the incarnate Savior as the eternal Son. Reference is made to the specific teaching of Christ's essential deity.³⁹ A word of caution is in order here: when the Scriptures represent man in the image of God, it is of the Godhead, not of Christ exclusively. Because man, even when redeemed and glorified, cannot be equated with God, his image of God must necessarily be imperfect. Says Chereso: "This is because man can never achieve equality or identity of nature with God. Only the Son is so perfect an image of His Father as to be equal to, and identical in nature with, Him. Hence it is that the Word is called the image of God, while man is said to be created to that image."⁴⁰

That the New Testament clearly designates Jesus Christ to be the image of God *par excellence* has been the point of greatest tension between the Jewish and Christian viewpoints on the image of God. Altmann meets the issue squarely: "The difference between Jewish and Christian exegesis in the area of the *homo imago Dei* motif concerned not so much the philosophical concept of man's dignity as a rational creature--this remained, in fact, common ground throughout medieval Christian scholasticism--as the theological equation of Logos and Christ."⁴¹

What effect did the fall of man have upon the image of God in man? The discussion of the image of God should not and cannot be restricted to the original creation. What of man after the fall? Can one still regard him as in the image of God? In what sense is this true? The matter of sin's effect on man was debated in controversies with Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, with synergists and Arminians. How can man fallen and corrupt (Rom. 1:21, 23) and rebellious against God still be viewed as the image of God? If he is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3), does he still bear the image of his Creator? Man's deeds show that he is not essentially good. And if he is not *essentially* good, then how can he reasonably be expected to mirror the nature of God?⁴² Has man lost the image partially or entirely?

39 Laidlaw, pp. 452-53. Along with John 1:1-3 the passages cited speak of creation and the upholding of the universe as the work of Christ as Word, Image, and Son respectively.

40 C. J. Chereso, "Image of God," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by William J. McDonald, et al., VII (1967), 369. For the same emphasis, see Orr, *God's Image in Man*, pp. 267, 271.

41 Altmann, p. 254.

42 Harris, p. 201.

Lutheran theologians have been positive that man through the fall lost the image of God completely: "Lutheran thinking assumes that this 'image of God' as well as the 'righteousness given with creation' were lost through the Fall. It is not considered to be part of man's creaturely structure which indestructibly survives also in the sinner. This interpretation sees man, at one and the same moment, as creature and sinner, but as the bearer of the image of God only in the state of original integrity and again after the resurrection from the dead."⁴³ Reformed theologians held that the image included man's rational faculties and his moral conformity to God. They spoke of the essential image of God (the very nature of the soul) and the accidental image (what could be lost without the loss of humanity itself).

Nowhere does the Old Testament indicate that the divine image and likeness are lost. For this reason some theologians who held first that the image was lost, have reversed themselves and have spoken of "remnants" of the image in man as fallen. When one contemplates Genesis 9:6; James 3:9; and 1 Corinthians 11:7, it can be seen that it is incorrect to say unqualifiedly that the image of God was lost through sin. There are references where man's nature after the fall "is still the 'work and creature of God' (see Deut. 32:6; Isa. 45:11; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:25; Rev. 4:11; Job 10:8-12; Ps. 139:14-16)."⁴⁴ The insurmountable obstacle to the position that the image of God is entirely lost through the fall is the fact that even fallen man is man and is not shorn of his humanity. In short, if the divine image speaks of an inalienable part of man's constitution, such as reason, freedom, will, and the like, it remains. But it is in a marred, corrupted, and impaired state. When moral likeness to God is in question, then this must be seen as largely defaced in man, who cannot naturally claim holiness with love and fear of God.⁴⁵ However, that which relates to rationality, conscience, and self-consciousness cannot be less, for then man would cease to be man. In spite of the fall man did not become a beast or a demon, but retained his humanity. He did lose, however, his communion with God, his righteousness, his conformity to the will of God. And he became mortal.

When the New Testament refers to the new creation, it is speaking of the restoration of the image (cf. 1 Cor. 15:49). Christ is the

43 Osterloh, pp. 83-84.

44 Berkouwer, p. 133.

45 Orr, *God's Image in Man*, p. 59.

pattern of the redeemed humanity. The principle emphasis in Pauline anthropology is the restoration of the image (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). See Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:24; and Colossians 3:10. A caution is here in order. To project back from the renewed image to the original image can lead to confusion, because here there would be an evaluation of the original image in terms of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1: 15). Regeneration and sanctification serve to renew the believer after the image of his Creator. In redemption the divine image is restored and perfected in man. God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Certain concluding observations are in order here. The image of God constitutes all that differentiates man from the lower creation. It does not refer to corporeality or immortality. It has in mind the will, freedom of choice, self-consciousness, self-transcendence, self-determination, rationality, morality, and spirituality of man.⁴⁶ The ability to know and love God must stand forth prominently in any attempt to ascertain precisely what the image of God is.

Thus the treatment of the image of God in man is eminently vital for proper views of creation, sin, redemption, Christology, and the future life. Only in theology--not in the natural or social sciences--can the true meaning of man's existence and destiny be correctly discerned.

46 There is no need to restrict the image too narrowly to mind, reason, or logic. Man is far too complex for this alone. When the image is too delimited to reason, the conclusion may be: "Then in heaven we will not make mistakes even in arithmetic" (cf. Clark, pp. 218, 222).

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