

Because man (Adam and Eve) was created in the image of God, that is, with the ability to know God and serve him with perfect obedience, he could blame no one else for his sin. He alone was responsible for his fallen state. And since Adam was the head of the human race all mankind who were his progeny stand in the same relationship to God as Adam. His kind, the human race, also are enslaved to Satan and in that sense are likewise totally depraved.

The evidence of man's depravity can be seen in his lack of selfless love for his fellow man as well as in his perversions relating to himself. Perhaps, the depths of his depravity can be seen in the manner he worships. He was created to worship God as his Lord and creator. In turn he was to bear the responsibility as lord over the creation and its creatures as well as the inanimate part of creation. The sun, the river, the crocodile, science, material possessions, a fellow man, or the human body are typical objects of depraved man's worship.

But man's enslavement to Satan and the curse upon creation is not absolute. If it were, man would destroy himself in the shortest possible time. Satan is the very essence of death. God had a plan for his creation which required a prescribed period of time to carry out. Therefore, certain restraints were placed on Satan, and on mankind his slaves, so that God's plan could be carried out.

God's plan for this creation was established by God because God loved this creation, and at no time did he relinquish this love even for a moment.

The love of God manifests itself in the warm sunshine, the cool streams and the beautiful sunset. It also manifested itself in the fact that God put the fear and dread of man within the animals and delivered them into his hand. Thus, man would not be destroyed by the lesser creature, and they would provide food for man. It also manifested itself in the fact that God did not remove the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19), or of guilt of his sin from man's being. God allowed man to have a conscience (Rom. 2:15). He left the laws of God's kingdom imprinted upon his heart (Rom. 2:15). This gave him a sense of right and wrong together with a realization that only by attempting to do right could he maintain any decent level of existence.(1) The knowledge of an eventual judgment day that God left within man also served to restrain him from total rebellion. One evidence of this restraint upon man is revealed by the measure of kindness and mercy shown by natural man to his fellow man (Matt. 7:11).

God also restrained Satan in his mastery of man. Satan, therefore, cannot lead his slaves, man, into anymore extensive disregard of God's laws than God will permit.

The knowledge of God and his laws which God has left within man, together with the blessings of nature, of health, of a sense of well being, etc. that God bestows upon all mankind, further condemns man and emphasizes his personal responsibility before God to live in obedience to God. As he continues to refuse to acknowledge or praise God in the face of this knowledge and these

blessings, he further condemns himself.

As part of God's plan for man to perpetuate himself, God established government amongst men. Man was given the responsibility of ruling over his fellow man. This authority manifested itself as parental authority over child, master over servant or slave, and government over its peoples. This authority of man over man is not related in any sense to the Edenic command to Adam to subdue the earth, or to have dominion over its creatures. These latter responsibilities and prerogatives ceased with man's surrender to Satan. Rather this phenomena of government may be found in every level of God's creation. It can

be seen, for example, in the angelic world, (archangels versus angels); amongst humans as we have seen; amongst animals (the bull elk ruling over the herd) (the bull sea lion ruling over the sea lions) (the bird pushing the fledgling from the nest). This rule of man over man enabled the working out of the blessing of God upon man to multiply and fill the earth to be realized.

in line with his rule over his fellow man, he was also given the mandate to make judgment in areas of good and evil and to punish the wrongdoer (Gen. 9:6; Prov. 23:13; Rom. 13:4). This also extends to every level of authority i.e. parent to child, master to servant, etc.

He is used of God to carry out God's plans in the world. Thus the Babylonians were used to bring judgment upon the nation of Judah. Because God is the ultimate Sovereign, this use of man is even paralleled by God's use of Satan and the evil spirits (cf I Kings 22:13) to carry out God's programs.

He is used by God to care for this world, to cultivate it and develop it for food. (Gen. 3:23--"the Lord sent him forth...to till the ground." Again this work of man is unrelated to the pre-fall command to subdue the earth or have dominion over its creatures. Rather the creatures were delivered into his hand. He is to derive his shelter from the earth as intimated by the animal skins provided by God to Adam and Eve (Ge. 3:21).

Natural man is endowed with the desire to discover. He is curious about everything. This is probably a function of the blessing and mandate to fill the earth, as well as the decision of God that every green food and all flesh were given to him for food (Gen. 9:3). Because of these privileges and relationships, man has constantly sought to explore and discover. In this he is again paralleling the lesser creatures. They, too, have natural curiosity, and seek to explore their natural habitat especially discovering that which is edible. (Consider, for example a cat prowling in a house.) Thus, in this endowment man is not relating at all to the command to our first parents to subdue the earth or have dominion over its creatures.

We, therefore, see clearly that natural man, the slave of Satan, whose chief purpose in life is self service, has been given blessings and mandates which he is to carry out even though he has become an enemy of God.

The commands to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, to receive every green thing and animal for food and to till the ground, are foundational within man. These commands and blessings, which were specifically given to fallen man, are the basis for man's desire to know more about this world in which he lives. We shall see later how natural man began to excel in these endeavors.

But are all men, who have ever been born to live on this earth, estranged from God? Certainly not as we shall see.

God's Man, The Believer

A small percentage of the human race who are completely unique must now be considered. While all men are members of the human race as descendants of Adam, not all remain in bondage to Satan. Rather in all generations since the very beginning a remnant of people has been freed from servitude to Satan. Let us look at these, who we will call God's man, (as distinguished from 'natural man' who continues as a slave of Satan), to determine their relationship to God and to this creation.

We might note first of all that God's man is genealogical and anthropologically a member of the human race, even as is natural man. As such, all of the blessings mandates and prerogatives given to natural man are also given to God's man. As a part of the human race he rules over his fellow man, (he is a parent, a master, a government official).

He enjoys all of the blessings of God that are common to all mankind (sunshine, the beauties of nature, health, a sense of well being, the privilege to procreate). He, too, cultivates and cares for the world to derive his food and shelter from it. He too, is curious about this earth with which he is so intimately related and, therefore, searches it out to discover how it might more efficiently produce for him and his peers.

How then does he differ from natural man? If he is no longer a slave of Satan, to whom is he related? The Bible tells us that he has become a son of God. This has changed his whole motivation. Natural man performs with his highest motivation to recognize and glorify self, as revealed by self pride, self orientation, self serving. Some of his more humane actions may be consciously or subconsciously a result of his inherent fear of God and His judgments. Some of his actions may even be a result of God's restraint upon him so that he does show some capacity for mercy and love for his fellow man. But natural man's ultimate drive is one that only recognizes himself as king, because in so doing he is unwittingly showing that Satan is king.

With God's man has been given a new inner being, a new nature, a new heart. He is born again. Whereas natural man's inner being is darkened by his bondage to Satan so that he will not acknowledge God as Lord of his life, God's man's spiritual eyes have been opened so that he sees himself as a sinner hopelessly condemned by God's perfect justice. He accepts in childlike trust the substitutionary atonement of Christ for his sins (the

condemnation of God for his sin was paid for by Christ as his substitute). And God has come into his life in the person of the Holy Spirit and motivates him to live to God's glory. He, therefore, wants to please God in all that he does. He has become a part of a new race of people headed up by the last Adam, Jesus Christ. His citizenship is with Christ as his King. Satan no longer has any claims on him.

Since God's man has become reintroduced into the family of God, we would expect that the commands to subdue the earth, to have dominion over its creatures must somehow again relate to him. Shouldn't he now bring this earth and its creatures into submission to God's glory? Shouldn't he now have dominion in the earth as Adam was commanded?

The answers to these questions are in the negative. Let us consider why this is the case.

Let us recall that Adam was made king (given dominion) of a perfect creation. He had to claim his kingship by subduing the enemy who threatened, Satan. Because he failed to subdue Satan, he lost his dominion over the creatures. He was reduced to a slave of Satan.

Christ, the last Adam, was eminently successful in subduing this earth by conquering Satan. He, therefore, has become Lord of this creation not only by virtue of being the creator but also because He is the Redeemer. Christ, therefore, is preeminent in every sense (Col. 1:18). We saw, however, that the subjugation of Satan would not be finalized until judgment day when the new heaven and earth are reality. By the same token Christ's dominion over this creation will also be finalized at that same time. We read very significantly that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2:10). But this will not occur until judgment day.

The dominion over the earth by the believer, who has become a citizen of God's kingdom, cannot occur until Christ's dominion is seen. Christ said very significantly; "My kingdom is not of this world." This is the same world (cosmos) that God loved so much that He gave his only begotten son to die for it (John 3:16). But this cosmos remains under the curse of sin until judgment day, even though in principle it has been freed from the effects of Satan's reign. Jesus declared that when the signs indicate Jesus' return is imminent, "the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31).(2) The realm of the kingdom is not this cosmos. It is related only to the new heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells.

But Jesus repeatedly used the phrase "kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God" as if the kingdom is a present reality. John, the Baptist, stated it was at hand (Matt. 3:2). It was at hand because the head of this kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ, was about to appear. It was also at hand because Jesus was ready to make provision for the kingdom. He began to claim His Lordship over this kingdom by his perfect obedience in the face of Satan's temptations in the wilderness. He completed his claim of Lordship over this kingdom by His victory on the cross.

He told the 70 who were sent out to declare, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you', to the people they visited (Luke 10:9). It was near these people because the 70 missionaries were citizens of the kingdom. Their presence near the people to whom they witnessed brought the kingdom near. It was also near in the sense that they had only to believe to become citizens of the kingdom.

For there is one place in this present world where it can be seen. It is the same place where the victory of the cross can be seen. And this is as it should be, for the victory of the cross was to usher in the kingdom of God. It cannot be seen in the physical world. The earth and its creatures exclusive of God's man remained unchanged because of the cross. Objectively speaking, the rose is no more beautiful, peaches no more tasty or music is no more harmonious after the cross than before the cross. Creation continues to groan and travail awaiting the revealing of the sons of glory, awaiting judgment day when the new heaven and earth will be ushered in.

The redemption evidence of Christ's victory on the cross can only be found in one place--in God's man. Only in him does the first evidence of the kingdom of God appear. Only in him has a transformation occurred. He in his inner being, in his soul, has passed from darkness into light, has been made free from Satan's dominion. That is the reason that wherever a believer is, the kingdom of God has come near all others who meet him. That is the reason Jesus said the kingdom is within you. John, the Baptist, declared the kingdom was at hand because Christ was about to go to the cross to defeat Satan, and to provide for Christ's Lordship over the Kingdom.

Christ himself is the head of this kingdom, and his appearance at the Jordan River was the primary evidence of the kingdom at that time.

Christ gave other evidences of the immanence of the kingdom. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, and cast out demons. Do you recall that this is the evidence which he showed to John the Baptist to prove the genuineness of His Messiahship (Matt. 11:5). This, also, was the evidence that He gave to his disciples and the seventy who were sent out. Those who were offered the Gospel could know it was the true Gospel by these miraculous acts as the ravages of Satan's dominion (sickness, death, blindness, demons) were removed from man. These evidences of the victory of Christ on the cross could be shown because He had obtained authority over Satan at the cross. We saw how this further restraint of Satan, this binding of Satan, made it possible that his house could more effectively be plundered of the souls of men. The miracles of healing, casting out demons, etc. were but preliminary evidences of the miracle of salvation that resulted because of Christ's victory.

Beginning with the temptation in the wilderness, when Jesus began deliberately to follow the footsteps of the first Adam, Christ showed himself as the genuine Lord of creation by His perfect obedience. Throughout His ministry the evidences of His

victory over Satan multiplied. At the cross His work was completed, and Pentecost revealed in final form on this side of Judgment day the reality of this victory. Christ's second coming will reveal in a much greater degree the extent and degree of Christ's victory over Satan.

In the Old Testament Christ's victory was anticipated. One leper was healed (Naaman, the Syrian), one lad was raised from the dead, Hezekiah was give 15 years of added life. And in the area of salvation a remnant of Israel was saved, a few individuals became believers, one city repented (Nineveh). The atonement of Christ was so certain and sure that its redeeming effects reached backward all the way to Adam.

And then Christ himself came on the scene. The atonement was now to happen momentarily. The shadow of the cross brought greater and greater evidence of Christ's coming victory. The King himself was present. Numerous persons (but mostly Jews) were being freed from the ravages of sin. Many believed and followed Jesus.

And then the cross was occupied by Christ. Satan was conquered. Now in the New Testament dispensation the impact of this victory reached forth into every nation, every tongue, every people. And as believers multiplied, the kingdom of heaven was brought and is being brought into the eyesight and hearing of every people. At the cross the kingdom of God became a reality. The believers, the invisible church, are the citizens over whom Christ reigns. Satan's claim of Lordship over the cosmos has been shattered, even though he is allowed to continue as prince until all those who are to believe are saved.

Christ continues to reign over the cosmos as Creator even as He has throughout all history. But after the cross Christ as Lord of the heavens and earth is shown to be seated at the right hand of the Father. He has thoroughly subdued Satan and reigns over him and over all creation as the Redeemer. But only after He returns will the cosmos be shown to be in subjection to him.

As king he continues to bring all his enemies into subjection (I Cor. 15:25). This cannot be a reference to Satan being brought into subjection for he has already been overcome. But as the world continues since the cross countless thousands of new slaves of Satan are created as people multiply. Each is an enemy of Christ unless he is transferred into the kingdom of God. As an enemy, a slave of Satan, he, too, is subject to Christ's victory. He is under God's wrath.

Then comes the end when all that is under the curse of sin is judged and removed from the earth. This includes Satan and his demons, unregenerate man, the cosmos itself (it will be burned with fire, II Peter 3:10-12). Christ will bring in the realm of the kingdom (the new heaven and earth) and the reign of the king in its fullest sense. Death itself, the most dramatic evidence of

the work of Satan, will be abolished.

Does The Believer Exercise Judgment?

But the question still persists. If Christ is the head of this new race of God's men, and if he has been victorious over Satan, shouldn't the believer begin to exercise dominion over the creatures in some sense. Doesn't he somehow have some responsibility to bring this creation under the dominion of Christ. Again, the answer must be repeated in the negative. Christ has done all this and the fruition of his efforts must await His return. This in no sense is the born again believers task or responsibility.

The truth can be shown in another way. Noah was told that the animals would be in fear and dread of him (Gen. 9:2). This is a result of his loss of the prerogative to have dominion over them. This was an accommodation by God to prevent the animals from turning on man and destroying him. Now if redeemed man was again to have dominion over the creatures in any sense, this would be a good place to show that he has dominion. The fact is, however, that saved man relates to the animals in identical fashion to that of the unsaved. The animals have identical fear and dread of both kinds of men.

Likewise, the Christian farmer cannot grow bigger tomatoes or finer cattle than the unbeliever. He has just as much trouble with blight and thistles and harmful insects as the non-Christian farmer. The carpenter who is a Christian is not necessarily any finer craftsman than the natural man who is a carpenter.

What then is the man of God's task in this world? Is it to do all the things the unsaved man does--care for the earth, provide food, and shelter, show mercy, govern his fellow man--with a higher motivation than his unsaved friend? Yes, that could be expected. The Bible says that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do we are to do it to the Glory of God.

But the Bible also says that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink but righteousness and peace. In other words, when we do the things natural man does--seek a living, find food and shelter, etc.--we are to do these things to God's glory. But this is not the kingdom. There is something else that is of far greater consequence. It is citizenship in the kingdom of Christ. This cosmos is the environment in which the Christian is to show the evidence of his heavenly citizenship. His efforts therefore, are to be especially directed in those areas that relate to the Kingdom of God.

A very interesting phenomena is revealed in the Scriptures. Let us look at the activities of the two lines in early Biblical history. Natural man was going forth with all zeal to conquer this world--for himself. The descendants of Cain--he, who was especially cursed by God--built the first cities, became the first musicians, and the first ironworkers. They were the mighty men, the men of renown. Surely, God's man should have been doing likewise--only with a motivation to do it to God's glory. But

what does the Bible record? God's man, the descendants of Seth "walked with God (Enoch)," looked for "relief from our work and from the toil of our hands (Lamech)," and built an ark to escape God's judgment on the world. For some reason the development of arts and crafts, of shelter for mankind, was not very important to God's man.

Let us pursue this thought a bit further. The next Biblical report of the two lines of men is that of the sons of Noah. Significantly, the descendants of Ham, whose son Canaan was especially cursed, were the great builders. It was Nimrod, the descendant of Ham, who founded the first great civilization of the world on the plains of Shinar. It was a descendant of Ham who founded the second great civilization of antiquity. This was Egypt. But of the descendants of Shem, the brother who was in the line of God's men, we read of no accomplishments.

That is, except for a brother of Abraham. God had narrowed the Messianic line through Terah. Terah was the father of three sons, Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. Haran died in Ur of the Chaldees. But Nahor built a city (Gen. 24:10). What do we read of God's man, Abram? He was promised the world (Rom. 4:13) but he dwelt in a tent as a stranger and a sojourner. The only land he owned was the cave of Machpelah (Hebron), which he purchased as a burial ploy for his wife, Sarah.

Surely, the Biblical record indicates that the believer's task is not only completely different in motivation from natural man's, but also different in kind. God's man is human and a resident of this world and, therefore, is concerned about the same tasks confronting natural man. But he has a far greater and more glorious task that takes precedent in his life. He has become a follower of Christ. Christ is his King, and he wishes to follow him in perfect obedience. Only in this way can he relate to the kingdom of God of which he is a citizen.

But if he is a follower of Christ, his king, he must do what Christ does. Let us see how he can do this. We shall thereby discover how through the believer the kingdom of God is extended to all the peoples of the world.

What was the task of Christ? We have seen that Jesus' primary task was especially twofold. He must defeat Satan by his perfect obedience and thus claim Lordship over this creation. In this endeavor He was the last Adam and He became the head of a race of people who are the believers.

Secondly, he must redeem this world from the ravages of 11,000 years of sin. The most important aspect of this is the redemption of mankind.

The only way they could be redeemed was to provide a substitute to bear the penalty for their sins in order that God's perfect justice could be satisfied. This Jesus provided by going to the cross and suffering the equivalent of an eternity in Hell, as God poured out His wrath upon Him for man's sins. Because the weal or woe of the rest of creation is parallel to that of mankind, the rest of the cosmos which was redeemed at the cross

will also be made free from the bondage of sin when Christ comes again to finalize the salvation of mankind. This, of course, is the time when God's men will receive their resurrected bodies. They will then live eternally with Christ as their King in a new heaven and new earth from which all that is sinful has been banished.

But the believer cannot follow Christ by becoming the last Adam. He cannot atone for his sins or for the sins of the world. He cannot destroy Satan for Satan's doom was already made certain by Christ at the cross. He cannot become the last Adam for Christ is the last Adam. He and He only is Lord of this creation.

The Believer's Task

But there is an area of Christ's work in which the Christian can and is, in fact, mandated to follow Jesus. He is our example, our leader, our King, and His wish is our command. We, therefore, as citizens of His Kingdom wish to be entirely obedient to him. And there is a glorious area of Christ's ministry where we can follow and are indeed mandated to follow.

Christ preached the Gospel. During his ministry He declared to the multitudes that the Kingdom of God was at hand. And this is the mandate He gives to God's man, the believer.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In II Corinthians 5:20 the command is a bit differently given:

So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

And in I Peter 2:9 the same truth is enunciated:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The born again Christian, who has been adopted into the family of God and who has become citizen of the kingdom headed up by Christ, declares to the world what Christ has done at the cross.

This is why he is called an ambassador of Christ. The Christian himself is the evidence of Christ's victory on the cross. This is the only area of the cosmos where the effect of Christ's work on the cross can be seen on this side of judgment day. The redeemed soul of the Christian is the only portion of the cosmos that is changed because of the cross. The creatures and the earth must await judgment day before the evidence of

Christ's victory will be seen in them.

But even in God's man the victory of the cross is not manifested as a total victory. While his soul has been transformed--it needs no further changing to enter heaven--his body, his old nature, has not been changed at all as a result of the cross.

But because man is an integrated personality consisting of both body and soul, it is in his body that he can first demonstrate the power of Christ in his life. When he became a citizen of Christ's kingdom, he was freed from bondage of Satan, in both body and soul. While his soul was renewed by the Holy Spirit (he was born-again), his body was unchanged. It still bears all the desires of the natural man. It still lusts after the world. But it was freed from Satan's power. This is the reason the Christian longs for the resurrection of the body. The resurrected body is the hope of the Christian.

He Must Reign Over His Body

Therefore, this becomes the arena where the victory of the cross is shown to the unsaved world and to principalities and powers. A man's soul, his inner essence, cannot be seen, but his body can. He is, therefore, told by Christ to reign over his body. He is to crucify the flesh, put to death the old nature. He is to show in his body, as he exercises control over it, that Christ's victory on the cross is what the Bible says it is. He, of course, has infinite God in the person of the Holy Spirit indwelling him to give him the strength. He has Christ to call upon for aid. He has the Word of God to guide him. He has the love of the Father as an ever present source of comfort. His body, thus, is the testing arena where he gains victories over Satan. Because he is attempting to bring an unchanged natural body under control, he never totally succeeds. His successes strengthen him in Christ and his failures repeatedly bring him to the cross as he confesses his sins and experiences anew the pardon of Christ.

Thus, as the Christian shows the fruit of the Spirit in his life, (love, joy, peace, long suffering, etc., Gal. 5:22,23), and this can only be shown as he crucifies the flesh and its desires, he shows to his unsaved peers the power of a transformed life.

He Is A Prophet

The believer's task to witness goes beyond showing to the world the redeeming work of Christ as he reigns over his body. Christ, as our King, preached the Gospel. And he expects us also to preach the Gospel. Christ has provided the salvation. He, as the head of all believers, set the example for his followers as he preached to the multitudes. In God's mysterious divine economy He gave to his believers the task of sharing the news of the victory on the cross to all men. In the Old Testament this was done in a limited fashion (Noah to the citizens of his day, the spies to Rahab, Naomi to Ruth and Orpah, Jonah to Nineveh, Solomon to the Queen of Sheba, the prophets to the Israelites, and the heathen

nations).

But then came the cross and Pentecost. Satan was bound so that his house could be plundered of captives from every nation. The promise was given that the gates of Hell could not prevail. (The gates of Satan's prison that keep men from entering heaven could not keep out the powerful Gospel that would free men.) The church was given the key to these prison gates of Hell. That key was the Gospel. The Holy Spirit was poured out to give power to those who would witness and to provide the power that would unlock the prison gates (the hearts of men). God's man was to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. He and he only is the one that holds within his hands and heart the knowledge that can set men free.

As parents, he preaches as he witnesses to his children. The housewife presents the Gospel by her testimony to her neighbors, the business man to his associates. The concern to preach the Gospel is manifested in the Christian's support of missionaries and mission ventures. The believer engages in tract and Bible distribution programs. The methods and means of bringing the Gospel are as manifold as and as varied as there are believers. When one of God's men or one organization lies down on the task, God raises others up to carry the Gospel in other ways. For the Gospel will go out.

He Is A Priest

But the Christian must follow Christ in another dynamic way. Christ prayed for his people. He interceded on their behalf. This task, too, is given the believer. He is given an open channel to the throne room of God to bring his petitions and thanks. Natural man has no possibility of audience with the King because he is not a citizen. Nor does he want such an audience for Satan is his master, and he believes that he, himself, is the King of his life. But God's man realizes every gift is from above. And he comes to God on behalf of those who are in spiritual bondage. He prays for the salvation of his friends, of his fellowman.

He also prays for the needs of this world for in its welfare he finds his welfare. This is the environment in which he is to live and work as God's man. He, therefore, prays for those who govern (I Tim. 2:1-3). He prays for the temporal needs of his fellow man. He does, indeed, belong to a kingdom of priests and has great concern for the needs of this world. He knows that God loves this world and, therefore, the believer's requests are well received by God.

But there is another dynamic way in which God's man shows his tremendous concern for this world. In this he is also showing Christ as his example.

In his priesthood he completes the suffering of Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:24 the Bible declares:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

This suffering is not the suffering of the atonement. No man can take part in that. But Christ also suffered in bringing the Gospel. He suffered as men reviled him, as he endured physical hardship in preaching the Gospel., as he was slandered, beaten, and cursed. The bringing of the Gospel caused great suffering for Christ completely apart from the redemption suffering caused by his perfect obedience to God in bearing the wrath of God for our sins.

And the church, the society of God's men, is the body of Christ. It is as it were Christ himself, continuing to present the Gospel. Christ ascended to heaven but he left his citizens here to complete his suffering--to be his ambassadors, his representatives, his body, his presence. The Christian is to endure hardship, persecution, revilings, and deprivation in order that he might bring the Gospel as Christ brought it.

The focal point of the Christian's life is obedience to Christ as his King, as his Savior. His task is not in any sense to bring the world into subjection, or to have dominion of this world. This was accomplished by Christ, but will not be revealed until judgment day. Geehardus Vos (3) as well as others would include much more within the kingdom than we are setting forth in this discussion. He does say:

The kingdom remains to all intents a supernatural kingdom (p.44).

and he further declares:

It would not be in harmony with Jesus' view so to conceive of it, as if by gradual extension of the divine power operating internally, by the growth of the church by the everwidening influence of the truth, the kingdom which now is will become all-comprehensive and universal and so pass over into the final kingdom. This would eliminate all true eschatology and obliterate the distinction between the two aspects of Jesus' teachings on the subject (p. 45).

But he also states;

There is a sphere of science, a sphere of art, a sphere of the family and of the state, a sphere of commerce and industry. Whenever one of these spheres comes under the controlling influence of the principle of the divine supremacy and glory, and this outwardly reveals itself, there we can truly say that the kingdom of God has become manifest...we may safely affirm two things. On the one hand, his doctrine of the kingdom was founded on such a profound and broad conviction of the absolute supremacy of God in all things, that he could not look upon every normal and legitimate province of human life as intended to form part of God's kingdom.

Vos is unable to provide any direct Biblical basis for this latter conclusion. In fact, he himself declares in reference to the question of including these spheres as a part of the kingdom:

Now our Lord in his teaching seldom makes explicit reference to these things (p. 89).

He also comments:

As already stated, this is a subject on which our Lord's teaching does not bring any explicit disclosures and which can only be treated by way of inference (89).

We might add that philosophically this extension of the kingdom as suggested by Vos and others appears very logical, even though there is no direct Biblical warrant for it. But when such statements as God's command to subdue the earth and have dominion over its creatures are studied in the light of the whole Word of God, we have seen that this idea will not accord with Biblical revelation. It appears, unfortunately, that Vos did not explore the Biblical revelation from the aspect of these direct commands.

Rather he is to be content with his lot in life because his citizenship is in heaven. He, with Abraham, is a stranger and a pilgrim here. The city he is looking for is the heavenly city. But he is living here as in a foreign land with a glorious task. In the carrying out of this task, he utilizes the products that man (both natural and God's man) has produced, even as Jesus used a boat when he preached. The all important aspect of Jesus' ministry, however, was not the boat, but the Gospel message. Likewise, the all important aspect of the Christian's task is not the production of means of communication but communication itself--communication of the Gospel.

The Christian shows mercy, the Christian loves and the Christian provides food and the cup of cold water for the same reasons that Jesus healed the sick, wept over Jerusalem and fed the five thousand. In these programs he is obeying Christ and showing the love of God. And as he manifests his love in these endeavors, he is providing the context and contact for presenting the Gospel that will set men free. He is truly the aroma of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian realizes that he is heir to this earth. Jesus promised this when he said "the meek shall inherit the earth." But he knows that his inheritance will become a reality when Christ gives it to him as a new earth following judgment day. Then the enemy, Satan and all his followers, both demons and men, will be removed, will be destroyed from this earth. Today they claim possession of this earth. They appear to be very successful. But victory for God's man is certain. He will be the possessor, the heir of this earth, because Christ has been entirely successful in his subjugation of Satan. God's timetable calls for the final evidence of Christ's victory to be shown at His return when only God's man and the angels will be eternally present with God in the new heaven and new earth, wherein

righteousness dwells.

How glorious is the salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ to whosoever will believe on Him. How glorious is the task of the disciple of Christ as he follows his Lord and Savior.

(Notes to numbered passages in Chapter 3)

(1) The 12 rules of Alcoholics Anonymous are a good example of this fact. If these rules, which are derived from Biblical truth, are followed, the members of this organization are able to stay sober. This in itself can never bring salvation, but it does permit alcoholics to live decent lives.

(2) In the same context Jesus indicated that when it is time for Christ's return, "your redemption is near" (Luke 21:28). The kingdom of God is exactly parallel to salvation. At conversion man's eternal salvation in all of its fullness is guaranteed--at the cross the eternal kingdom of God was assured in all its fulness of the new heaven and new earth. At conversion salvation can only be seen in the soul of man and in his body as he reigns over it with his new soul. This side of judgment day the kingdom of God can only be seen in the redeemed souls of men as believers reign over their bodies. At Christ's return redemption will be totally completed--both of man's body as well as the cosmos. The kingdom will come to full fruition.

(3) Vos, The Kingdom and the Church, Erdmans 1951.

CHAPTER 4

FEED MY SHEEP

In this volume we have explored many avenues of truth. We have begun with creation and have concluded with the Christian's task today. We discovered that the believer, God's man, has a glorious mandate and opportunity of bringing the Gospel to this sin cursed world. Christ, the last Adam, has provided redemption for this cosmos. The good news of this tremendous historical event is to be shared with all men. Thus, each is provided the opportunity to forsake his sin and to enter the kingdom of God.

One might wonder if there is other information in these opening chapters of Genesis that might lead us to the believer's mandate or task today. Surprisingly, there is, as we shall see.

Let us turn back to Genesis 3:23. There we read of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden following their terrible defeat by the hand of Satan. We read:

...therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

In this passage we want to focus our attention upon the word "till" which in Hebrew is abad. As we reflect on the Bible's use of this word we shall discover very significant truth for man today.

The word "till" was first used in the garden before the fall of man into sin. In Genesis 2:15 we read:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Adam and Eve, in their perfect pristine relationship to God and the cosmos, were told to "till" or "dress" the garden. It would appear as "till" is used in this context that they were to cultivate it. They were to care for it and maintain that which was already good. In this way the ground would supply the needs of man.

In Genesis 3:23 we are told man was driven from the garden and told to "till" (abad) the ground from which he was taken. At this point in history the implication of this command should have been identical to that of Genesis 2:15, except that the "tilling" of the ground was to be far more difficult and unrewarding. Whereas in the garden there was perfect harmony between man and the ground, so that the ground as a subordinate to man responded willingly and loyally to man's care, sin brought rebellion in the ground. Man must now work by the sweat of his face (Gen. 3:19) and thorns and thistles would come forth as a reward for his efforts (Gen. 3:18). Whereas in the garden "tilling" the garden was a joyful, God-glorifying activity, after the fall it became a painful difficult pursuit in which he must engage if he was to eat and have shelter.

In its Biblical use in the first three chapters of Genesis there is no suggestion or intimation that "tilling the soil" should in any sense make a man a servant of the soil. In the garden he clearly was lord over the ground and all creation. After the fall man was no longer lord of creation, and the ground had become an adversary. But he had not become a subordinate of the ground. Even as man was cursed, so was the ground. If man alone were cursed and not the ground, a very difficult situation would have developed. In a real sense the ground would have become superior to man, for it would have continued in a perfect relationship to God the Creator, while man had become estranged from God, as a slave of Satan. Thus by cursing the ground (Gen. 3:17) God assured that the creation order was continued. Before the fall this creation order was a glorious thing with man reigning as king (dominion), as God's vice gerund. There was perfect obedience and loyalty of subordinates to those above. After the fall the creation order continued, but man had lost his kingship and Satan had become his master and prince of the world. Because the creatures of the world continued in a subordinate relationship to man, he was to use them for food and clothing. But his kingship over them had ceased. They had become rebellious toward man and would destroy man if possible. To safeguard man and to maintain the proper creation order, God put the fear and dread of man within the animals and actually had to deliver them into his hand (Gen. 9:2). This phrase, "deliver them into his hand," is an evidence of the total loss of dominion sustained by man by the fall. The situation required special intervention by God to maintain any semblance of order in the sin-cursed world.

Similarly, the ground which was to supply the needs of man, also, continued as a subordinate of man. But man was no longer king over it. This loss of kingship was manifested by the rebellion and resistance of the ground to man's efforts.

We have introduced into this discussion the phrase "creation order." Let us look a bit at this term. By this we mean that the Creator in His wisdom created various levels of existence, which we will call "creation orders." The rocks and inanimate parts of creation would probably be classed as the very lowest order in that there is no life of any kind in them. They are used by all higher levels of creation to accomplish the desires of the higher levels of creation.

Broadly speaking the next higher level would be plants and vegetation. They are a living part of creation. They are used by the higher "creation orders" for food. They utilize the inanimate creation which is a lower order to provide environment in which to exist.

The next major creation order on an ascending level is that of animals. They are higher than the plants because they have the Holy Spirit's "breath of life" within them. They use the lowest order, the inanimate, as a habitat in which to live. They use the plant order for food. They have no claim on the highest "order", man.

Man, the highest "creation order", is such because he is created in the image of God. He uses all the lower "creation orders" to accomplish the purpose for which he was created as God's image bearer.

It is important to note however, that a higher creation order does not necessarily exercise dominion or kingship over a lower one. A plant does not rule over a rock or over water. An animal does not rule over plants. And neither does man necessarily rule over animals, plants, or rocks. He uses them for his needs simply because he is of a higher "creation order." (It is true that God did originally give man dominion or kingship over these lower orders, the cosmos itself. But as we have seen, this dominion was taken away because of his surrendering to Satan.) Thus, to till the ground in its original intent could never imply that man was to regard the ground or the animals as a higher order than himself. He would never "serve" the ground or "worship" the ground. Rather he would care for it so that it would produce as a lower "creation order" those things necessary for animals and man. He would also care for animals in order that they would produce on behalf of the higher "creation order," which is man. But let us return to the word *abad*.

A strange phenomena becomes apparent in the Bible. When we study this word "*abad*" we discover that it is used in a distinctly different manner in most instances in the Bible from that of Genesis 1 to 3. We have seen that the creation order of things was that of the ground being subordinate to man or of man being superior to the ground. Thus man tilled (*abad*) the ground with

the ground subordinate to him in every sense. But lo and behold, "abad" normally means to "serve" when used in the Bible. Some 214 times it is translated "serve" in the K. J. V. of the Bible. And this use of abad to indicate "service" is not that of serving an equal or someone of a lower order in a helpful considerate way. Instead it is used to indicate the serving of a superior. It is used to indicate service to God, for example:

Exodus 3:12: you shall serve (abad) God upon this mountain.

Exodus 10:7: that they man serve (abad) the Lord their God.

Deut. 6:13: you shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve (abad) him.

Judges 2:7: And the people served (abad) the Lord all the days of Joshua.

It is used to indicate service to false gods. In fact it is even translated as worshipper.

I Sam. 12:10: we have forsaken the Lord, and have served (abad) the Baals.

I Kings 16:31: and served (abad) Baal, and worshipped him.

II Kings 10:21: and all the worshippers (abad) of Baal came.

Now this is a startling development. "Till" (abad) in the first three chapters of Genesis could not in any sense have related to an inferior serving or worshipping a superior. Rather the creation order was that of a superior caring for an inferior. Something had happened in man's reaction to mandate of Genesis 3:23 to till the ground.

Romans 1:18-25 states very clearly what happened. There we read "men...became vain in their reasonings...changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things,...and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Tilling the ground became an act of serving or worshipping. That which was to be an act of caring for a subordinate became an act of worshipping a superior. Man of his own volition had reversed the creation order.

When did this drastic reversal take place? The account of Genesis 4 gives us a clue. We read that Cain was a "tiller of the ground" (Gen. 4:2). This word "tiller" is the identical word abad which we are presently considering. The simple phrase "tiller of the ground" does not tell us whether to understand "tiller" in the sense of Genesis 2 and 3 where man's total desire was to care for the earth in accordance with God's command, or whether there is any implication of serving or worshipping. But when we read on, we begin to sense that there is the implication of "serving" or "worshipping" in "tiller of the ground." We read in Genesis 4:3-5 "that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord," but the Lord had no respect or regard for Cain's offering.

In fact, Cain was so decisively rebuffed that the Bible says Cain was very angry (Gen. 4:5). This anger was so severe that he murdered his brother Abel, who had also sacrificed and whose sacrifice was acceptable to God.

Why had God rejected Cain's offering? We don't know for certain, but we know that if Cain had been faithfully obeying the mandate to care for the ground; had maintained a proper relationship to the ground with the ground in a completely subordinate relationship to himself; and, if he now brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord as an effort to show his praise and adoration of God, there is no Biblical reason why his offering should not have been acceptable to God. But if we recall the ten commandments, we remember that the first is, "You shall have no other gods before me." (1) If Cain had already begun to look at the ground, and the products to be derived from it, as something of great value, as something to be respected and honored, as something superior to man himself, as something to be served, as something which he had already subconsciously begun to worship, then he was already guilty of breaking this first command, as well as the mandate of Genesis 3:23 to till, "care for," the ground. That Cain had lost his respect for the creation order, for the superiority of mankind, is shown by the fact that he could murder his brother Abel in the premeditated fashion in which he did.

It is easy to see how Cain had fallen into this sin. He quickly recognized the hidden treasures in this wonderful earth that God had created with all of its potential to bring creature comforts and pleasures. Soon he discovered the building possibilities of products of the earth, so he built the first city. It was his descendants who discovered in the earth copper and iron. It was his descendants who found that products taken from the earth could be fashioned into musical instruments that were pleasant to the ear. This earth was indeed marvelous in its possibilities and Cain gave it a high rating. He had begun to serve it as a superior.

That the ground and its products were the root of Cain's problem is also suggested by the curse pronounced by God following Cain's sin. Genesis 4:12 states, "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength." It was his love of the ground that had tempted Cain to fall into grievous sin. Hopefully, the ground would no longer be as tempting to him.

We see, thus, that already with Cain man had begun to reverse the creation order. The ground, the lowest echelon in the creation order, had been raised to a position even above man himself. In the products of the ground he hoped to find his joy, security, and hope. He must indeed explore the ground with utmost diligence and dispatch. This gave him tremendous motivation to explore the earth to discover its secrets--its wonderful potential.

Abel Keeps Sheep

When we turn to Abel we see quite a different situation. We

read that he was a "keeper" of sheep. The word "keeper" or (raah) is translated "to feed" or "shepherd" or "pastor" in the Bible. He was a feeder of sheep, a shepherd who cared for them. As a shepherd he was following in careful obedience the command of Genesis 3:23 to "till the ground." There is no indication that in his shepherding of sheep he was serving the sheep as a higher order than man, or that he was worshipping animals in any sense. Rather he cared for them, viewing them as a subordinate part of creation. As a shepherd, he must of necessity have also cared for the ground, for in this way he would provide feed for the sheep. He was truly obeying the command to "till the ground." But in no sense had he begun to look at the ground and the animals as a superior to man himself. He realized that God only was to be worshipped. His sacrifice of a lamb, the finest of the lambs--the firstling, their fat portions--indicated his high regard for God. He brought of the very highest order of that which was under his care, an animal; and he brought the very best of these animals to God as a sacrifice. That his relationship to God, and His mandates, was wholesome is clearly demonstrated by the fact that God had regard for Abel and his offering (Gen. 4:4). In bringing this sacrifice he probably unwittingly had begun to anticipate the sacrifice of the one who would atone for his sins.

Cain--A Type Of Modern Man

In Cain and Abel we can see modern man. We can see his problem and we can see what ought to be. Modern man, the slave of Satan, has reversed the creation order. He has discovered the virtually infinite number of products that can be produced from this creation. He has found that through technology he can produce goods and services undreamed of by former generations. Science, technology, business education are all focussed to produce a better world based on mans' ingenuity, as he wrests from the earth, from the atom, from the universe, its secrets. He believes that from this earth he can reconstruct the history of the earth and man. He believes that somehow by making more leisure time available, or more education, or more creature comforts, he can solve the moral problems of the world. He even speaks of the "Bible" of nature, putting the natural record on a level with the Word of God.(2)

Ecology: A Desperate Question

He is deeply interested in the question of ecology. Ecology, the biological relationship of organisms to their environment, is increasingly in the forefront of his thinking. Is this merely a fad that will eventually go the way of the hula hoops? Or is it simply a diversion created to take our minds away from more traumatic subjects, such as, the threat of nuclear war?

A bit of reflection will show that this is a subject of gravest concern to man. As we have seen from time immemorial, man has derived his happiness, his security and his hope for the future from the earth and its products. From it he receives such vital necessities as food, shelter, recreation, musical instruments, and medicines.

Hopefully, since man had lived on this earth for a million or more years (so he believes), this earth should sustain man for the next million years. But to his utmost dismay and consternation he is discovering that maybe mother earth isn't as dependable as he thought. Species of wild life are facing extinction, rivers are getting polluted, the air is getting loaded with impurities which won't go away. Even the oceans, which to former generations seemed so limitless, are no longer trustworthy as they for example, produce tuna and swordfish tainted with mercury. Mother earth, which man has worshipped since the days of Cain, isn't the boundless bountiful god man has subconsciously thought it was.

In man's judgment, one of the most grievous sins would well be this desecration, this polluting of the earth's atmosphere and biosphere. Thus, we can well expect that the subject of ecology which deals with conservation and pollution is not an incidental subject. It could well become a most important object of new laws, research grants, and general conversation in the coming years. And with each new discovery of pollution, the agitation of man will increase until it could easily reach hysterical proportions. Such is the concern of natural man to the subject of ecology.

How does the believer relate to this grave subject? The Bible gives us a forthsight answer. Did you know, God predicted in His Word that the earth would reach a condition when it would no longer be the limitless source of blessing and comfort it appears to have been for thousands of years? In Hebrews 1:10,11 we read, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainst; they will grow old like a garment."

The phenomenon we are experiencing in our generation as we see the earth becoming increasingly polluted surely appears to be the fulfillment of this prophecy. This is especially true in the light of all of the other signs which suggest the early return of our Lord. In other words, God is telling man that this earth is to grow old. It will increasingly deteriorate. It will gradually serve man with less efficiency and brightness than it did in earlier years. Like a garment it will wear out (Ps. 102:26).

This earth, after all, is not a god to be served, to provide security and hope for man. It is under the curse of sin and has been subjected to futility by God himself (Rom. 8:20). It, too, will experience the victory of the atonement when it becomes a new earth. This, of course, is to be realized after this earth has been destroyed by fire at Christ's coming (II Pet. 3).

The Christian, then, is not to view the rapidly advancing old age of the earth with alarm. While he doesn't waste its resources or unnecessarily pollute it, he realizes this sin-cursed earth is not the earth he is promised as an inheritance. That promise will be fulfilled when God has brought into being the new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells.

He knows that the sin of man is not the pollution of the earth, but the rejection of God. This is so clearly set forth in

Romans 1:18-32. Romans 1:25 records "they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator."

The believer is aware that natural man will recruit the finest scientists and spare no expense to arrest pollution. For the life of the god he serves is at stake. If his god perishes so will he. How right he is! He will indeed be destroyed from this earth and spend eternity in Hell.

The believer, therefore, saves his energies, his effort, and his concern not to save this earth which is twice doomed (it will wear out, it will be destroyed) but to save mankind from God's wrath. This is the problem that is of critical and eternal importance to man.

Natural man (almost 3 1/2 billion strong) can and will offer abundant answers to questions related to ecology. The believer's contribution at very best can only be quite incidental. His numbers, as compared with the billions of unbelievers, are so small. His motivation toward this question can never approach the dedication and intensity of that of the unbeliever, who looks to this earth for his security and hope.

But the wrath of God is another question. This certain catastrophe of God's judgment is infinitely more important than any aspect of ecology. And only the believers, that tiny band of citizens of Christ's kingdom, have an answer for this dread problem. It is the wonderful answer of salvation in Christ Jesus. This is why he is called an ambassador of Christ (II Cor. 5:20), the fragrance of Christ (II Cor. 2:15). This is why the Bible says, "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). He doesn't dare get sidetracked into any lesser issues when he has such a tremendously important mandate and privilege.

Population Control

One aspect of the ecological question that natural man is troubled about is that of population control. Because he is frightened concerning the future of this earth he feels that mankind must be limited in his growth. Therefore, today the subject of population control is openly discussed and welcomed to a greater or lesser degree by people in every walk of life. Even many Christian theologians have put their stamp of approval on birth control. Thus far such extreme measures of population control, as abortion, have escaped general theological approval. Unfortunately, once a pill is perfected which will permit the aborting of early pregnancies, we can even expect some theological approval for this act.

It is rather easy to see unsaved man's acceptance and promotion of these concepts. He is deeply concerned with this earth and its ability to provide everything that is desirable for man. Because he has no regard for God or His providential care of the universe, he is convinced that he alone is the master of his

fate, the captain of his soul. He is, therefore, even willing to commit mass murder (abortion) to realize what he believes are legitimate goals.

He argues that the earth is rapidly becoming over-populated. While one can see the reason for the fright that is producing this idea, the error of this concept can be shown very easily by a very simple computation.

The state of Texas contains 263,513 square miles of land area. This is equal to 7,300 billion square feet. The population of the world is approximately 3.5 billion. If this population was divided into families averaging four people (parents plus two children), there would be about 875 million families. If each family was given a plot of ground 6,000 square feet in area, which is the size of many of our suburban lots, a total of 5,250 million square feet would be required. Since the state of Texas contains 2,050 billion square feet more than this, there would be sufficient area in this one state for all the families of the earth today, with land the size of the state of Iowa left over for streets and parks. The rest of North America, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia would be available for factories, food production and recreation. Truly man has only begun to fill the earth. Those who advocate population control really do make completely unrealistic claims.

The Christian, on the other hand, realizes that the Bible has something to say about this question of population control. God told Adam to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..." (Gen. 1:28). This command was repeated to Noah after all mankind was destroyed by the flood of his day (Gen. 9:1). And it has never been abrogated. It is still a command that must be obeyed if we wish to be pleasing to God. For it is a part of the Word of God and, thus, it becomes one of the rules for God's people to follow.

God does not give this command in a vacuum, that is without supporting promises. His promises of blessings for those who trust and obey Him are legion. Isn't it a fact that God is perfectly true and faithful to all of these promises?

Even unsaved man experiences the hand of God in caring for him. God loves this earth and does not abandon it just because man gets more plentiful. "The eyes of all look to thee, and thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest thy hand, thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing (Ps. 145:15,16).

Moreover, God specifically indicates that children are a blessing of God. Psalms 127:3 records, "sons are a heritage of the Lord." Psalms 128:3 and 4 declares, "your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord."

We thus find irrefutable consistency in the Word concerning the question of children.

That God is true to His promises to supply the needs of mankind is seen today. While only a few years ago millions faced the specter of starvation, today the situation is rapidly changing. Thanks to the development and introduction of rice and wheat strains with far greater yields, many of the poorest nations of the world are now experiencing surpluses. Only by God's sovereign mercy are the minds of men enlightened, so these agricultural advances can be made at this critical time. One wonders what tremendous food resources would be available under God's blessing if man would give as much attention to solving the problems of food distribution, and the overcoming of pagan prejudices which waste food resources (i.e., the sacred cows of India) as he spends on population control.

For the believers a number of truths are worth suggesting:

1. The rearing of children is not only an evidence and source of great blessing from the Lord, but it is also a great opportunity to provide additional men and women who can manifest the love of the Savior to the world. How desperately they are needed. Can a father or mother experience a greater challenge than this?

2. The believer realizes that the maintenance of a standard of living on a level with his neighbor, or of providing a certain level of education (by the world's standards) runs a poor second to educating children in the fear and nurture of the Lord. (How many christian parents still teach their children Bible)? Seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness is the first priority of His life.

3. The believer recognizes that the intent of birth control devices is to remove any possibility of pregnancy. Use of such means effectively removes God from the picture (under God's permissive will these devices are produced. God often allows the sinful activities of man to be successful.)

The Christian knows that the creation of life is God's province. "When thou sendest forth thy Spirit they are created (Ps. 104:30). "The spirit of God has made me"(Job 33:4). No child is ever conceived without the activity of God. One who serves God, therefore, takes extra precautions that he and his children will not be "brain-washed" by the thinking of the world in these areas of their lives. That this is a serious problem is readily seen by the feelings of guilt already experienced by some believers when they become pregnant for the third or more times.

4. God has provided a means by which married love can be enjoyed without certain pregnancy. This is afforded by the fact that usually conception can take place only one day a month. But this is untrustworthy as a means of birth control. Abstinence during that period of time may minimize the possibility of conception, but it does not prevent God from intervening and causing conception another day. Conception is recognized as a blessing of God even if the

world looks at it entirely differently.

5. The believer has faith that if men faithfully obey God, even if such obedience would result in a population many times greater than that on the earth today, God will provide every necessary physical blessing. He understands, moreover, that God has a very precise timetable for this earth's existence. Christ will surely return long before the earth approaches a "standing room only" condition.

It is surely not at all coincidental that today we find occurring simultaneously, the desire for population control, the easing of abortion laws, and the extreme decline in sexual morality. These sins surely appear to be completely related to each other and could well be in the forefront of those which will bring God's judgments upon our nation and upon the world.

Man And Animals On The Same Level

As another evidence of man's reversal of the creation order, unsaved man strips man of his place in the creation order. Not only does he not recognize man as being completely unique in that he is created in the image of God, but he would place man on the same level with animals. He states this in his evolutionary theories and he shows it in his concepts of population control, and his moral perversions. He of course, has little or no regard for God. He is too busy worshipping the creature.

God's man on the other hand, follows Abel as his pattern. He cares for this creation but he never believes that the products of this earth will solve man's problems. He knows that these products may make man a bit more comfortable. He knows that God as infinite Creator has provided a fascinating earth filled with potential. But he never places the earth or its products between himself and God. Rather he realizes that he is to feed and protect its creatures. He is to be a shepherd, a pastor to this earth. He realizes that this earth belongs to man but because of the sin which has come into the world he will not inherit it until the new heaven and new earth has become a reality.

Abel--A Type Of The Believer

In God's revelation the shepherding of sheep is the type that sets forth God man's task. Abel, the first priest, is such a type. So was Abraham, who is called the father of all believers. And so was Moses, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He tended sheep for forty years before God gave him a similar but higher calling. The nation of Israel, the type of the church, was dominantly a nation of shepherds, and so was David, who is the great kingly type of the Lord Jesus Himself.

This brings us to our Savior. He identifies with all of these Old Testament types by calling himself the "good shepherd." He brings to God's man a far higher relationship to creation than that seen in the Old Testament. Moses was a forerunner. He went from the sheepfolds to leading people, caring for them as the most

important part of God's creation. Jesus Christ, as man, performed in superlative fashion the will of God in caring for this world and its creatures. He gave his life that fellow humans might have life. He never got the creation order out of sequence. Man was never to be worshipped. The animals and inanimate creation were always to be subordinate to man. And God was above all.

Christ in his teaching and in his atonement showed that the task of God's man of the New Testament is not to be a shepherd of physical sheep, as demonstrated by the Old Testament types, but God's man is to be a shepherd of a spiritual sheep, which is man himself. And even as the Old Testament shepherds cared for these sheep by using the products of this world to feed and shelter his sheep, so the Christian uses the products of the world to care for the needs of his fellow human. He therefore should be an example of mercy, of sharing, of concern. He is concerned about the physical needs of man even as Jesus was. But the primary focus of his concern is not that which will be supplied by physical food, but by spiritual food. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." Jesus told Peter, "feed my sheep." The Christian, as a follower of Christ, fulfills the mandate of God's Word to their highest degree by supplying the Spiritual food--the Gospel. He feeds the sheep of Christ with the good news of salvation, with the knowledge that Christ gave himself as a ransom for many.

Abel sacrificed to God the best of the creatures, a lamb. This was his spiritual worship. The believer also sacrifices to God as his spiritual worship, a lamb. It is not a physical lamb. It is one of Christ's lambs. It is himself. Paul puts the goal of the Christian very well:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Rom. 12:1).

Abel, himself, was a forerunner of this. He was murdered for his pains. The Christian is also to suffer, to endure privation, persecution and physical death itself as he offers himself as a sacrifice.

The Christian realizes with Abel, with Abraham, with all the other Old Testament types, that the development of the physical earth only brings temptation, only brings the possibility of shifting the focal point of his life from God to the creature. He senses the truth of Christ's statement when he indicated the difficulty of the rich becoming believers. He, therefore, is content with his lot in life. The creature comforts and all that is involved in their production is not the Kingdom of God. As he eats and drinks and earns a living, he glorifies God; but he knows these are not the vehicles to be used in his pursuit of a far higher goal, that of feeding the sheep, that of bringing men into the Kingdom.

The Wisdom Of The World Versus The Foolishness Of Preaching

This truth that natural man has reversed the creation order is

clearly demonstrated by Paul in I Corinthians 1 and 2. There we discover that Paul is setting up two viewpoints for consideration. The one is the wisdom of the world, and the other is the foolishness of preaching. What is the wisdom of the world? It is surely unrelated to the seeking of a Redeemer or a desire to be reconciled with God. It must be that which the philosopher and the scientist of the world might discover, as he attempts to find an objective viewpoint of man's relationship to this world, and as he attempts to discover answers from this world which will give hope to man. Romans 1 indicates he became a worshipper of the creature. His problem is, therefore, that he has completely reversed the creation order. Therefore, the wisdom of the world will be destroyed. Obviously, it will be destroyed, for natural man's desire to find his hope for security and the more abundant life from the creation rather than from God, is a repudiation of God as the only one who is to give man a hope. No wonder Paul emphasized on Mars Hill that "in Him we live and move and have our being." Natural man is, therefore, guilty of the grossest sin, not because he is exploring the atom, but because he is consciously or subconsciously trusting that such exploration will give him a "hope."

It appears quite significant to me that Paul's answer to the futility of the wisdom of the world is not an attempt on his part to realign the thinking of natural man, as he philosophies about his situation is the world, or as he attempts to find his hope in creation. Rather, he comes right to the core of the Christian's answer to man's need, and talks about the "word of the cross," "to preach the gospel," "the foolishness of preaching," "we preach Christ crucified," and "for I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." He surely indicates that the wisdom of God which the Christian is to proclaim, which is a wisdom that had already been determined before creation, is not the same kind in any sense that the world seeks but instead is an altogether different variety. It is to "feed the sheep," and the highest manifestation of this is in bringing the Gospel.

It seems to me that the exploration of God's creation which should have been a wonderful, God glorifying task given to man as he followed out God's mandate to "till the ground," as he derived food and shelter from the lower creation orders, and in so doing as he glorified and worshipped God and his Lord, has been set aside by the results of man's sin. The fact that the creation came under a curse, and that man became a slave of Satan as the prince of the world, has changed the focal point of man's relationship to the world. Thus, while natural man answers to the mandate to "till the ground" by serving and worshipping the creation and deriving his hope from it. God's man fulfills this mandate by being a pastor or shepherd to the world. This was first shown by Abel and was powerfully reemphasized by Paul in I Corinthians 1 and 2.

Thus, the exploration of the world (science, business, etc.) is actually removed from the picture of man's prime responsibility. The exploration of the world in itself is not sinful but because of sin new goals are established. It has become sinful for natural man because of his reason for doing so.

It has become unimportant for God's man because he has a task that is far more important and necessary--that of feeding the sheep. He engages in the exploration of the world only as a means of livelihood--that is, he derives food and shelter from it, but

there is nothing about this effort that should be a goal for his life. He does these things to God's glory simply because he as a citizen of God's kingdom does everything to God's glory. But doing these things is not the "kingdom." The kingdom consists of "feeding the sheep." This is his goal. In so doing, he uses the products natural man has produced because these products in themselves are not sinful. And by using these products in his task of "feeding the sheep" he has corrected the creation order, so that the lower "orders" are used to serve the higher. By using these products, he is showing that all things can ultimately be used to praise God (even the wrath of men shall praise God).

Only in the new heaven and earth from which sin and the curse of sin have been removed, will man again reign over or have dominion over the lower orders as he originally did in Genesis 1 and 2. There he can do so because all sin will have been removed, and because there the victory of the cross will be manifested in its fullest degree, as we will again see everything in subjection.

In witnessing to the unbeliever in the realm of science and in bringing Christ's claim to the field of science, I think the Bible says this;

1. The pursuit of science by natural man should have resulted in the scientist recognizing God as creator and his need of a Redeemer.
2. Instead, he believes that in science he will find his hope. He has rejected God. He has reversed the creation order. He is under God's wrath even to a greater degree than before.
3. Only by humbling himself, acknowledging his bankruptcy, recognizing that the creation is to serve man and can never produce a "hope" for man, and worshipping God as his only Savior and "hope" can he be extricated from his problem.
4. Once he is saved he has a new goal that far transcends that of being a scientist. He may continue to be a scientist because this employment provides for his physical needs. But his new goal is to be a shepherd to the world, and the highest manifestation of this is by bringing the Gospel. He does this by reigning over his own body, by witnessing, by making his income and physical possessions available to others who witness, and strive to alleviate suffering in the world, and by exercising his priestly office of intercession.
5. The pursuit of science thus is set aside as any kind of a primary goal for God's man. He might pursue a scientific goal if in so doing he will enhance his ability to bring the Gospel. He might work on communications, for example, in

order that a better vehicle might be provided to bring the Gospel. He might work in areas of food production to help develop the amount of food available to feed the needy of the world in the name of Christ. Normally, however, natural man has so abundantly progressed in these areas that God's man can get on with the primary task of bringing the Gospel. He can pick and choose those products produced by the vast efforts of natural man which will most efficiently and effectively help him as he cares for the world.

Man's Rebellion Against God Is Escalating

In the light of this discussion it is easy to understand the unrest in the world today. The world, including its inhabitants is rushing pell-mell to its rendezvous with Christ when He comes to end this age. Natural man, the slave of Satan, will more and more attempt to find in the creatures, in the inanimate world, in computers and in the atom, his hope for utopia. And so he will worship more and more the creature and ever less the Creator. He is becoming ready for judgment day. For a long time man has been worshipping the creature. He has been looking to the pursuits of the scientist, the educator and the business man to provide him with the more abundant life. This has failed and has left him frustrated, incomplete, fearful and uneasy. In his upsetting of the creation order he has placed man on a level with the animals. But this has only added to his frustration, for he knows deep in his heart that man is more than an animal.

He now has two alternates from which to choose. He can confess to God or he can blame God. He can confess his total bankruptcy and his vital need of a Savior, his desperate need for someone who can extricate him from this morass of misery and reconcile him with God. Because he is a slave of Satan, because of the pride of his heart, this alternative is unacceptable to most people. He thus has one alternative left. Whereas his conscious attitude toward God may have been rather neutral, now he begins to lash out at God. He feels that somehow God is responsible for man's failures and miseries. Cain took this alternative in the face of God's express warning that "sin was couching at his door" (Gen. 4:7). Cain murdered his brother Abel as an overt act of rebellion against God.

Modern man too, as never before, is following this second alternative. He is in rebellion against God, is striking out against God. He tries to put God on trial and show that He has failed. This rebellion takes many forms but it is always directed consciously or subconsciously against God. It may show itself as rebellion against authority, child against parent, student against teacher, teacher against administration, citizen against government. It may be demonstrated by efforts to change the basic Biblical laws. In this category we find "situation ethics" where each law is to be tailored to the particular situation. This rebellion may be evidenced by declarations condemning God and His church. "Christianity has failed," "God is dead," and "the church must bear its responsibility for contributing to the enslavement of men," are common themes.

The degree of man's rebellion varies greatly. It may begin as a peaceful demonstration to right a wrong. At this point the Christian can easily be blinded as to the true state of affairs. He sees some truth, perhaps much truth, in the cause of the demonstrator. He is conscious of the cries insisting that Christianity has failed. He may fail to realize that this peaceful demonstration is reflecting a rebellious attitude toward God, that it is but the beginning of more and more serious rebellion which will be taken up by others and could end up with anarchy. He should realize that God's man must be the shepherd of this world. But his fellow shepherds cannot be leaders from Satan's kingdom. He must realize that as a priest he has full access to God's throne room. It is here he can bring the needs of the sheep. He, as God's man, realizes that only by careful obedience to God's commands can solutions be found. He, therefore, works from a totally different set of rules, relationships, and motivations than others, who appear to be concerned about the needs of this world. He realizes that Satan goes about as an "angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14), with all of the insidious deceitfulness that term implies. He, therefore, is extra careful to live close to God's Word so that he might not be deceived.

God's man, the born-again Christian, sees the whole reversal of the creation order that man has perpetrated. He realizes that he is here to "care for" this world. Because he is filled with the Holy Spirit, he wants to follow Christ as Abel followed God. He therefore, is a shepherd as Abel was. With the work on the cross accomplished by Christ, he realizes the import of Christ's words to "feed my sheep." He has corrected the creation order by becoming available to bring the cup of cold water, the mercy of God, and especially the good news of the redemption of the world.

We, thus, see clearly that the Christian's marching orders are not in any sense to be those which indicate he is to have dominion over this earth as he had had in Eden. This dominion is Christ's area of responsibility. He accomplished it on the cross and assures us we will see it as an accomplished fact in the new heaven and new earth. Instead the foundational command would rightly be the phrase "till the ground." But whereas natural man of his own volition has turned this command into dust by serving and worshipping the creature, the believer recognizes the "creation order" of things. God's man is the only one who can objectively view every part of creation in a proper perspective.

The Old Testament believer type followed through with this mandate by becoming a shepherd of sheep. He realized that the abiding city he looked forward to was a heavenly city (Heb. 11:16). As a shepherd of sheep he was also looking forward to the great task of the New Testament Christian. Jesus said in Matthew 28:

"Go ye into all the world...making disciples..."

A disciple of Jesus is a follower, a student of Him. As a

disciple he is a steward of all that Christ has given him. He wants to use his possessions and time as efficiently and as effectively as possible for caring especially for the spiritual needs of the world. He, therefore, gives generously of his time and money to those ministries which advance the Gospel. And even after death he may continue to provide for Christ's work because of a carefully prepared will or by means of other thoughtful deferred giving programs which help to settle his estate as wisely as possible. Jesus cared for the sheep to the point where He died for them. He wants God's man to feed the sheep, to shepherd the sheep. This is the glorious mandate and opportunity God gives to us.

(Notes to numbered passages in Chapter 4)

1) The ten commandments, of course, were declared thousands of years later than Cain. The sense of this commandment, however, was surely given to Adam and all men since him. This is the thrust of Romans 2:15 where we read that God's laws are written on men's hearts.

2) True, the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1); and "for what can be known about God--has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made (Rom. 1:19,20). But this does not make creation a Bible that is on the same level with the Word of God, the Bible.

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