

Man

Article III

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

Key Text:

Genesis 1:26-27: “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Genesis 2:18: “And the LORD God said, “*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

Genesis 3:15-16: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain

you shall bring forth children; your desire *shall be* for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

Genesis 9:6: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.”

Psalms 8:4-6: “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angel, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet.”

Psalms 51:5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

Acts 17:26-29: “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.”

Romans 1:19-32

Romans 3:10-18, 23

Romans 5:12-21

Romans 3:11-12: “There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.”

Romans 5:6: “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Romans 5:19: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”

Ephesians 2:1-10

Ephesians 2:1-3: “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among

whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

Theological Observations: A Narrative

The article is surprising in the limited number of scriptural texts attached at the end.

However, this may be instructive in an age that is so anthropocentric, even in the church!

The *BF&M* statement on man highlights two aspects of the human condition that set this species of creation apart from all others; man’s noble status and man’s ignoble state. Genesis 1-2 celebrates the distinctive nobility of man. Genesis 3 records the latter.

In the mind of Moses, the creation of Adam represents the climax of creation: 1) Adam is created last; 2) Adam is presented as the product of divine deliberation; 3) The description of the creation of Adam is more intensive and extensive than any aspect of creation; 4) The account uses a special verb to describe the creation of Adam, which always involves a special creative act of God; 5) Once Adam is on the scene the Lord can pronounce the created world “extremely good” (1:31); 6) Adam is expressly created in “the image of God.”

According to the Scriptures, what separates man from other creatures is his status as the image of God. Man has a worth and dignity not ascribed to the animals. There is a qualitative distinction between the value of animals and the value of human persons.

Theologians today interpret our “image-ness” in terms of human rationality, spirituality, intellectual freedom, relationality (to God, fellow human beings and ourselves) or triunity (body, soul, spirit). There is certainly truth in these perspectives. However, within the biblical literary context, “imageness” had more to do with the role, assignment and function played by man than with an ontological quality about man. The emphasis is on what we do, but not at the exclusion of who we are.

As the image of God, man is divinely authorized to serve as God's representative (not representation) and charged to function as his vice-regent over God's good creation (cf. Gen 1:26-28; Ps 8). According to Genesis 1 and 2, man was endowed with the needed qualities to govern creation on God's behalf as God would were He personally and physically present.

In this regard the Hebrews' view of man differed fundamentally from that of the world in which they lived. Whereas in Babylon the status of "image of divinity" was reserved for kings and priests, the Bible democratizes the notion – the children of Adam as a race in general and individual members of the race in particular, are all invested with this status. This revolutionary idea has extremely significant anthropological and ethical implications.

First, in accordance with the biblical perspective that all humankind originates in a single pair of parents, all human beings inherit equal value and nobility in the sight of God. Therefore, any view of humanity that diminishes the dignity of any member on any grounds (gender, race, intelligence, physical form, circumstances of conception) is to be repudiated.

Second, in accordance with the biblical perspective that Adam as a race was created male and female, any view of the human species that blurs the fundamental distinction between male and female is to be repudiated. God made men to be men. He created women to be women.

Third, in accordance with the biblical perspective that each person is in the image of God, parenthood is elevated from a merely procreative act to a co-creative act – God involving a man and a woman in the creation of new images of Himself. This is an amazing honor and privilege.

As a corollary, willful abortion represents arrogant interference in a divine creative act, and it is to be repudiated. Indeed all human life is sacred from the moment of conception to natural death. A "sanctity of life ethic" is a natural theological commitment derived from the Bible.

Fourth, in accordance with the biblical view that all human beings serve as representatives of God, any act directed at another person, whether for good or evil, is an act ultimately directed at God (Prov 14:31; 17:5; Matt 25:31-46; James 3:8-10). Our disposition toward God is most graphically expressed in our treatment of fellow human beings, especially those deemed socially inferior.

But the Scriptures also present another, sadder and more tragic side to the picture of humanity. If the Bible is clear in portraying humankind as uniquely endowed with special dignity, it is equally clear in emphasizing humankind's unique and utter sinfulness and depravity.

Because of sin, which may be understood fundamentally as idolatry and rebellion against God, we all come under the curse of God. In accordance with the biblical perspective of the entire human race as united in descent from Adam, the guilt of Adam's sin falls on us all, and separation and estrangement from God in whose image we are made extends to all.

But thanks be to God, the biblical story does not end here. Through God's Son, Jesus Christ, the perfect image of God (Col 1:15), the redeemed enjoy the removal of that guilt and are restored to fellowship and communion with their Maker (Adapted from an article by Dan Block).

Theological Observations: A Summation of Biblical Truth

George Carey, the former evangelical Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "Modern man's difficulties with Christianity come not so much from its teaching about God as from its assumed doctrine of man." Naturalistic atheism devalues the significance of humans by ascribing the origin of humans to blind, purposeless forces. We are here by chance. In contrast, pantheistic worldviews elevate humans to the position of divinity with the message, "You are a god." Most worldviews assume that humanity is by nature good, or at least neutral. Amazingly, many Christians have bought into this unbiblical view of human persons.

The *BF&M*, in stark contrast, enunciates a clear biblical testimony concerning the origin, value and nature of humanity. There is a biblical balance that accurately addresses both our value and our unworthiness before our great Creator.

First, the *BF&M* affirms that God created humans. The issue of evolution precipitated the origin of the first edition of the *BF&M* in 1925. In the context of the culture wars over Darwinism fought in every major American Protestant denomination and the famous Tennessee “Scopes Monkey trial,” Baptists denied humans descended from primates with the affirmation that “Man is the special creation of God.” God made humans a little lower than *Elohim* (Ps 8:5), rather than a little higher than other animals. In fact, the Bible presents humans as the crown or apex of God’s creation. God created humans on the last creative day; God assigned to humans the task of dominion over animals; Adam’s act of naming the animals demonstrates humanity’s special status; God uniquely breathed life into man (Gen. 2:7).

Second, the *BF&M* highlights the status of humans as the image bearers of God. The Bible does not define the image of God; rather, the biblical message highlights the results of the image of God. Baptist theologians traditionally have identified the image of God with a cluster of capacities or capabilities. Like God, humans exhibit personhood, that is, humans possess intelligence, volition, and emotion. Since “God is Spirit,” humans are more than mere matter. Humans possess a spiritual nature and a unique capacity to relate to God. Further, God created humans for community. The phrase “let us” suggests the Trinity; therefore, humans reveal truths about God in community.

Third, the *BF&M* celebrates the gift of gender in the context of our unisex culture and confusion. Gender is a gift from God. The image of God in some sense encompasses gender. The biblical record states the God created male and female in His image. The complementary nature of male and female relationships mirrors the nature of God. Within the Trinity, the

Father, Son and Spirit are equal in nature or essence. The Trinity, however, reveals a difference in roles and assignment. The Son, for example, while equal to the Father, subordinates Himself to the Father. Male and female share equality in nature, yet, male and female have different roles.

Fourth, the *BF&M* celebrates the sacredness and dignity of human life. The sacredness of human life entails key ethical commitments. Every individual from the womb to the tomb possesses dignity for three reasons: 1) universally every individual possesses the image of God. 2) Christ died for the human race. 3) All humans descend from a common ancestor. In the presence of Greek philosophers, Paul proclaimed, “From one man (or one blood) He has made every “people group” on the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). In contrast, “the preservation of favored races in the preservation of life” is the subtitle for Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. The biblical teaching decries every form of racism, genderism, and ageism as sin. Further, biblical teachings concerning the sacred dignity of humans convey a pro-life message and a missionary mandate.

Fifth, the *BF&M* affirms that humans experienced corruption because of sin. Originally created in a state of innocence, the first humans transgressed the singular prohibition of God (Gen 3). As a result, all humans universally possess a sinful nature and an environment inclined toward sin. British author, G.K. Chesterton, commented that the Christian doctrine of sin is the one doctrine capable of empirical verification. It can be proven! He was right. Humans sin because we are sinners. Sins are the symptoms; the disease is a sin nature. Corrupted humans cannot heal their disease. Only the grace of God revealed in the true image of God, Jesus Christ, can do this.

The best way to understand the image of God is not to look at the animals and glory in the ways we are superior to them. No, the best way to understand the image of God is to look at

King Jesus and see just how far we have fallen from what God intended when He first made Adam and Eve. Praise God that in Christ the image is being restored. In glorification that wonderful work will be complete! (Adapted from an article by Mark Rathel in the *Florida Baptist Witness*; 3-20-09).

“You are Somebody”

(Made in the Image of God)

Genesis 1:26-31; 3:14-19; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 5-6

I. The Creation of Man In God’s Image: Humans are special 1:26-27

1. Man was created in sacred deliberation 1:26
2. Man was created by special design 1:26-27
3. Man was created with significant dominion 1:26 (cf Psalm 8:4-9)
4. Man was created for a satisfying destiny (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

II. The Character of Man With God’s Image: Humans have (had) sovereignty 1:26-31; 2:18-25

1. Man was created for reproduction 1:28
2. Man was created for rulership 1:28-30
3. Man was created for relationship 1:27; 2:18-25
4. Man was created with resemblance 1:26-27, 31
 - a. Intellectual
 - b. Moral
 - c. Filial
 - d. Spiritual

III. The Corruption of Man and God’s Image: Humans are sinful 3:14-19 (cf Romans 3:9-20)

1. Personally there are consequences 3:14-19
 - a. Man’s will is damaged (Romans 3:11-12)
 - b. Man’s mind is deceived (Romans 3:11)
 - c. Man’s emotions are distorted (Romans 3:13-18)
2. Relationally there are consequences
 - a. With God there is separation (Romans 3:9, 19-20)
 - b. With others there is strife (3:16)

IV. The Correction of Man Back to God’s Image: Humans are savable (Romans 5-6)

1. We are redeemed in Christ (Regeneration restores the content of the image) Romans 5
2. We are restored in Christ (Sanctification reverses the corruption of the image) Romans 6

We may diagram man's threefold state with respect to the problem of sin and the will as follows:

Original State	Fallen State	Redeemed State	
		Present Aspect	Future Aspect
Power not to sin but able to sin	Power only to sin	Power not to sin but able to sin	Not able to sin
Freedom of the will	Bondage of the will (morally not naturally)	Freedom of the will	Freedom to the will
ADAM and EVE	Those in the first Adam	Those in the last Adam	Those in the last Adam

Adamic Sin (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49)