

What Kind of Being is Man? Part 1

By Paris Reidhead*

For about 25 years I've been saying that the next area of conflict polemic was going to be other than where it's been for about 100 years, namely, in the matter of inspiration or systemology. Those of us that have fought through that battle and arrived at the position that the Word of God is the inspired Word of God, and so accept it. I'm not interested in dialogue on the subject. I closed my mind on that subject about 25 years ago. I reached a position and accepted it and I've stood there. And I just don't; you can talk all you want but I'm not getting interested in discussing the matter. I believe that is the Word of God, the inspired Word of God, and the authoritative Word of God and so on. That's where we stand.

Now, I don't think that it's any surprise to you to realize that many of the great historical delineations or divisions of the Church have not been as much on the matter of theology or the nature of God as they had been on anthropology, the nature of man. What kind of a being is man? What is man? What kind of a creature is he? And I believe that is going to be the arena of conflict for the next 15, 20 or 25 years. Now I may be wrong. Prophets did not run in our family, spelled either with an e or an i, generally speaking. I therefore have no real authority to be dogmatic on this. It's just the feelings I have that you're going to see in the next 5 to 10 years, a great many books written, articles written, and sermons preached on the nature of man. What kind of a being is he? And remember you heard it at that the Discerners Class first. That's where we got started with it.

I'll ask you to turn to Psalms 8. We're going to read the entire Psalm:

"Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast that Thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that Thou visiteth him? For Thou hath made him a little lower than the angels and hath crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest Him to have dominion over thy works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet: All sheep and oxen, ye and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth."

Now during the week to come in preparation for next Sunday, I wish you'd do some reading. I'm going to give you a few verses. You might like to write them down and you might like to look at them and ponder them in the days to come. I find that there are several verses that indicate the apparent insignificance of man. Job in the 4th chapter, the 19th verse and the 7th chapter and the 17th verse spoke of man as being a tenant in a house of plague. This doesn't sound particular dignity does it? Then in Job 25 and verse 6 he is called a worm.

Now we're getting down to our own opinion of ourselves generally. And in Psalms 8 and 4, the 8th chapter and 4th verse, we found that he was just an atom, as it were, in the natural universe. And then in Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 22 we find that he's a grasshopper when he's compared to God. But there are some other things that need to be, need to be brought in mind, so I'm going to give you a few that indicate that man is made in the image of God and you can read these and ponder these. And if you have a concordance it would be a helpful thing for you to do some studying.

In Genesis the 1st chapter and the 27th verse, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." And in Genesis the 5th chapter and the 1st verse, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." And in 1st Corinthians 11 verse 7, chapter 11 verse 7, "For man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." James 3 and verse 9, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father and therewith curse men, which are made after the similitude of God."

You need to study these Scriptures and think about them. Then we want to just look a little more at this matter of the dominion that God gave man that we saw in the 8th chapter, and I'll call it to your attention again. In Genesis, the 1st chapter and the 26th verse, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish

of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." And in Genesis 9 and 2, and all you need to do is write down the 'Ge 9:2' and you have it. "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered." And then James 3 and verse 7, that little incite: "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things of the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind."

Well, now you go on with this study. And use your concordance and other books that you have and try to find out what the Word of God teaches about man. What kind of a being is he? What should we see? What's the view we should have of him? After all, there's a lot of us on deck aren't there? What, something like three billion, four hundred million today and there will be about seven billion, five hundred million in the year 2000, and about 15 billion in the year 2030. And if you've got to go once more you'll see it doubled every 32 years. So if you want to take another step up when your grandchildren will be our age, or some of us at least, there would be in the year 2060, and it's not unthinkable with some grandchildren now might live to that age, the ones that are expected, before the summers over. There will be about 30 billion people. I'm not even going to ask you to take it one more turn there because that would be stretching your mind. So we, as many of us as there are, we ought to find out a little bit about us and have some insight as to what kind of beings we are.

Years ago when I was a student at the University of Minnesota I was sitting in the student's lounge between classes and was reading my New Testament. At the other end of this four seat leather lounge was another student. And he noticed I had a pile of books beside me and I was reading out of this little weird shaped black covered book. And he'd look over once in a while and after a while his curiosity got the better of him and he said, "What are you reading? Is that a book of poems?" Well, I said, "It's got some poems in it." And I started to talk to him and I began to answer his questions and share my faith with him. And after a while he stopped and he said "Let me ask you a question before you go any further. Do you think that book you've got, the Bible, teaches that God knew everything before it happened? That He really knew what was going to take place." Now this was back in 1941, 40 and 41 when I referred to. And he said "Do you think that God knew that, what Hitler was going to do to the Jews in Germany?" And I had to say, "Yes." I don't think there are any surprises with God. The God of the Bible lives in the eternal now and (we've been saving these for you, come right up. We're just holding them, now we wouldn't let a soul take them till you got here. I know it was. Come early and get a back seat. Isn't that lovely.) He then said to me "Look, why did God make Man? If God knew that man was going to turn out to be such a wicked, cruel monster as he's shown himself to be? Why did He ever make man in the first place?" I was chewing on my gums a little bit there and muttering to myself. I gave him an answer, the best I could. And I wasn't satisfied with it and he wasn't satisfied with it. I wanted to do something about it. I went to work and I started to study the Scripture.

And to answer the question why did God make man in the first place if He knew that he would sin, making him capable of sinning. Why did God ever make man? Because unless you could answer that, the rest of it didn't make too, wasn't too important. That was pretty basic. Why did God make man in the first place? Make him so that he could sin if he knew that he was going to sin.

Well, someone once heard me speak on this years ago and he said "I've now heard the metaphysics of Paris Reidhead." And maybe that's what you'll say. And I have, don't want to make what I'm about to give you, the test of fellowship by any means, but I would like to have you think about it. And I would suggest that God made man. Now, we realize that God is infinite and perfect in all His being in all His attributes, that He's self-existed One who needs nothing to complete Himself. And yet at the same time, we're told in the Bible that God is a Father not only of the second person of the trinity, son, but He is the Father of mankind. Then we are told that the Son is the Bridegroom and this goes back to the nature of God.

Now what is, what characterizes God? What are some things you can say about God? Well I think we could pick out three or four statements in the Scriptures that have something to say about God. God is ... Now you can think of one immediately can't you. God is light, correct. And then "when Christ who is our life shall appear" (Col. 3:4). God is life. "I am the way, the truth" (Joh. 14:6). God is truth. And then we have the third statement, God is love.

Well, there may be many more but this suffices to illustrate what I want to say. Let's take four shall we. God is light, God is life, God is truth and God is love. And let's dwell on the last one for a moment. God is love. From eternity past the triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. Not three Gods, God, manifest as Father, Son and Spirit. God who is love. In a sense, has loved with an everlasting love an object of His love. You see love is incomplete without an object.

Now, obviously the Father loves the Son and He's the beloved of the Father indeed. But we're talking now about outside of God in His triunity, some being. Love is incomplete, I'm saying, without an object. And so in a sense, if God was to ever have the perfect fulfillment of His own being then there would be the necessity for someone that He could love, that needed His love and could, incomplete without His love and was capable of returning His love in such a way as to satisfy God's heart. Are you with me? Therefore, if God was to have a being He could only love that which was like Himself.

Now, we use the word love very lightly don't we. Have you ever heard anybody say "Oh we love our new home"? Or have you heard anybody say, "I love that shade of blue"? Or again, where I spent some years of my life, "I love southern fried chicken." Now, this is a matter of speaking but neither chicken nor colors nor cars nor houses are fit objects of love because they don't need love. They're not completed by love. They can't return love. Love can only be directed towards that which is in need of it, that understands it, that is completed by it, and can return it. We can only love that which is like ourselves.

I saw a cartoon years ago. A lady you know the kind, she wore her glasses on the end of a stick and looked down her nose and she had a little poodle in her arms. And underneath it said "Oh how I love my poodicome." And then I read how much money was spent on dog food and how many children there were without enough, and how much was spent on grooming, and all these other things. Which I have no arguments. The point was that the dog was incapable of understanding all the nuances of meaning of a human's love and returning it in such a way as to satisfy the need.

Now, I'm not for a moment belittling the relationship, the place pets will play in the home, I'm merely saying that there's a vast gulf fixed between the brightest dog and the dullest human and we're going to have to recognize it. So if God wants to love someone in this fashion, if it was to be Bride to the Bridegroom and child to the Father, so that the eternal longing in the heart of the Father for someone that, to whom He could be Father. And the eternal longing in the heart of the Son, the Bridegroom, for someone who could be to Him bride, then that creature would have to be like Him. Like Him.

Now, I do not know where in angels differ from man or God. But I do know that as much as, as little as the Scripture says about other beings and certainly it identifies them. We do have cherubim and we have seraphim and then there are the other intelligent beings, the wicked spirits, the angels that fell and were cast down with Satan. Another order of beings in the world. Now I do not know wherein they differ from people. I only know the Scripture says that he made man in His image and likeness. And nothing else. No other being that's made has ever been described as being made in the image and in the likeness of God.

Now, I think there is a very precise and important reason for this. Because man is the only being that God says He loves. Now, He doesn't say that He loves angels. He doesn't say that He loves cherubim or seraphim. But He says that He loves man, and He loves him with an everlasting love. And I think it's because man is made in His image. Man is the microcosm of God if you please. What God is infinitely, we are finitely. We have been given the same (I must be terribly careful at this point) - we have been given the *carmade over the last*, using the image of a shoe. Stretched over a last, if you please, when God made us. He carved into us. He molded into us an empty place so enormous that only God can fill it. Nothing in the universe can fill the great emptiness of the human heart, but God. We were made for God. Now He was very careful about that.

Now when He made us, He gave us certain appetites and urges and drives and propensities because we were microcosms. We were little and small, tiny miniatures, but in His image and in His likeness. And consequently He gave to us whatever was necessary to prolong our existence and to increase our kind. We'll talk more about that in a moment.

So He then had to make us with the same, the same capacities that He has. The ability to think because God thinks. The ability to see with the mind, because God saw the world before He spoke and brought it into being. And the ability to choose,

because God chose. In other words, God gave to us in His finite level in the realm where He put us, the ability to do the things that He does infinitely. Now, if we understand this, then we understand some other things.

Now, let's go back. Where did sin begin? I'm going to just bring you up to this point and then I'm going to go back again. When did sin become a reality in the universe? When did it actually have its beginning? Now this may be the point where my friends say I get into my metaphysics. And I'm not going to defend this adamantly. I'm going to suggest it for your contemplation and your consideration and to search the Scriptures. But we do know that the beings he made including Lucifer who was apparently endowed with superior abilities. The way he's described is the sun of the morning, would imply that this being was made kind of as the prime minister for God in the administration of the hierarchy of angelic beings. And he was given superior intelligence and superior ability and capacity. This is an assumption that we would make from the brief statements that are in the Scripture.

Now, if he is intelligent, what is intelligence? I would define it as the ability to see with the mind that which isn't but which might be and then to develop the appropriate meaning to bring what might be into actual existence. In other words, the ability to imagine and then to implement the imagination. I think this would be my definition of intelligence. And Lucifer is intelligent.

Now, we have a little record of what happened. Here is a being, beyond the other angelic beings, over which he presides. And he's beginning to think. And we hear this soliloquy going on sort of like you know "I think God's making a mistake. If I were God, if I were God I'd do it this way." Now that's innocent enough. There's no great crime in that. But then something else happens. There comes a moment when the innocent imaginations of this is what might be done changes to this is what I am going to do. There's a volitional element, there's a choice.

Now, you'll see the importance of that in just a moment. I will set my throne above the throne of the Most High. I believe that when an intelligent being made that decision, that was the moment that sin became reality in the universe. It was the supreme choice to please himself without regard for the will of God or the rights of God and the well-being and happiness and JOY of God. Now, I believe that's the moment that sin became a reality in the universe. When an intelligent being set his will against the will of God.

Now, remember we've established that there were at least four things we could say about God. God is light, God is life, God is truth and God is love. Now, an intelligent being, especially if he's had freshman logic, knows that every thesis has an antithesis. For every positive has a negative. Or if you want to change it and go down to my level, every front has a back. And if you see what looks like the front of the hand and you quickly run around and there's no back there, you didn't see a hand, because a front has to have a back. And a positive has to have a negative. And a thesis has to have an antithesis. And light has to be opposite to something. And life has to be opposite to something or it doesn't exist. And truth has its meaning in its contrast. And love has its meaning in contrast.

Now, if an intelligent being sets his will against the will of God, he knew that he couldn't be more light than God is light because God is infinitely light. He couldn't be more life than God is life because God is infinitely life. He couldn't be more truth than God is truth because He is infinitely true. And he couldn't be more love than God is love because God is infinite love. But as an intelligent being he would know that the negative would have to have almost equivalent power as the positive if it was to be a true negative. So if there is light there had to be something almost as powerful as light and he knew about that. And there was darkness. And that life to be anything had to have an opposite that it wasn't and that would be death. And truth if it was anything would have to be the opposite to something it wasn't, the lie. And that love to have meaning or value had to have the antithesis which would be hate.

So here is an intelligent being that has found a way by which he can put his throne above the throne of the most High. First he makes a decision, "I will" that's when sin becomes full blown into the universe. "I will set my throne above the throne of the Most High, and I will do it because I will take the antithesis to what God is and I will become darkness." And he was described by our Lord as the prince of darkness, and I will take death, and I will take the lie, and I will take hate.

Now, here is God in His triunity preparing the universe for this beloved that He yearned for Eternity past and now conflict arises. So suppose God said, "Look what that rascal is doing, I hate that!" And He had taken hatred, what would He have done? He would have destroyed Himself, wouldn't He? He had to use the weapons consistent with His own nature and His strength was in His character, and so we find the record talking about a battle, correct? A BATTLE!

We don't know much about it. The Scripture silence is only one thing that is said to the Lord Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall as lightning from Heaven" (Luk. 10:18). And where did he fall to? Now here again you're touching my metaphysics. I think this is what happened between the first and the second verses of Genesis 1. And the earth was *bohuw* made out of nothing and "God created the heavens and the earth" made it out of nothing, and the verse two says, "And the earth became," not *made* isn't the same Hebrew word. "BECAME without form and void; and darkness covers the face of the deep." And every living thing died a cataclysm hit the planet. And he was called by Christ the god of this world. Now, I think personally, and you don't need to agree to this. It is certainly not going to get you to heaven, if you agree or disagree. It is my feeling that there is some possibility, maybe, and I hope this is being recorded properly because someone is going to set me up, that just what happened, when Satan was cast out of Heaven down to earth and darkness covered the face of the deep and the whole earth was without form and void. What is it? Why it is this god's arrived and he's over spreading it with his nature and what's his nature, death and darkness.

Now is this astounding that when God the full length of time decides that the hour has come to make this beloved for which He has yearned from eternity past, this bride for which He has longed, this eternal bridegroom, that He should decide to come to the very place, the prison where He has confined the arch foe. Isn't astounding? It's not astounding, but look what happens. And we are told, and "the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). God brooded over that world of darkness that universe of chaos and what's the first thing He says in this recreated process? LIGHT, Oh there's the battle cry isn't it, LIGHT BE and Light is. And then He says light holder and He divides the water which has been dead and He separates it and He comes right down into the terrain of the god of this world. Then He exerts His power, to bring LIFE to where there has been death and chaos.

And then He makes Man in His image and in His likeness and what does He do? He gives to him this marvelous thing of a mind; He breathes into him this breath of life. Man became a living soul. Job says; "There is a spirit in man and the breath of the Lord, the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding" (Job 32:8). And so he makes man out of the clay of the ground gives to him a body and then He breathes into Him this breath of life and man becomes a living soul made in the image and in the likeness of God.

In what respect; his physical form? Well certainly when God became flesh and dwelt among us, He took form like to ours. Perhaps we took form like to His; that's His decision, but the important thing is He gave to us the capacity on this finite level that He had infinitely.

And He there establishes a rule and He says as long as you love Me, as long as that wedding ring I'm put on your finger remains unbroken, and your love goes out to Me, My love will continue to flow into you and there will be a unbroken circle of love and continued life, and light and truth. And He's done this right in the very place where His arch foe and enemy has been confined.

Now, isn't it astounding that three days or two days after the serpent beguiled Eve and the federal head Adam sinned as had Eve, that He put a flaming Angel at the garden, He could have done that three days earlier couldn't He? Hah, couldn't He? and kept the serpent out. He defeated him; he could have said, "Now, that's my beloved don't you get in there and mess around. Don't you go tearing this all up. I've been waiting a long time, you stay out!" No, no.

Now, we're coming to the question this student asked; why did God make man so man could sin? What is sin? Sin, let's go back to how He made man, what did He do? He gave to him a body didn't He. He gave to him appetites and urges and drives and propensities; well let's look at them for a moment.

We're finite, we're microcosms of God, God knows everything infinitely and we have to learn in sequence. We learn one day $2 + 2 = 4$, we go back to school the next day and she messes it all up by telling us $2 + 3 = 5$, and from that time on it is just

confusion compounded. But that's how we learn, item by item, not God He knows the eternal now. So He gave to us an urge to know, a hunger for knowledge, and then God depends on nothing for His existence but He made us dependent on the grass of the fields. Where all flesh is grass and by this we live and therefore He gave to us an appetite for food. For knowledge, for food and then He made a man and woman and from that pair was to come this beloved and so He gave an appetite and urge for sex and then He'd been so thoughtful in provision and providing everything He gave to us an appetite for pleasure so that we could enjoy all of these things.

We had a watermelon the other day and I sat and looked at that beautiful thing and I said thank you, Father, that's so thoughtful of you, we don't need it to get along you know. But He made it such a beautiful color and fragrance and taste and crispness and your mouth watering right now as well. Wasn't it thoughtful of your Father to give us a watermelon, if He'd never given it we wouldn't have ever missed it, we wouldn't have needed it.

But just gave us that appetite for pleasure and the things too. To show us that He is a thoughtful, tender, loving Father. He gave us an appetite for pleasure, and then because He was one that protects and provides, He gave to us an appetite for security. Oh, and then He looked at the man that He had made with the appetite for knowledge and the appetite for food and the appetite for sex and the appetite for pleasure and the appetite for security and the appetite for creation.

Because He said, "Now look we're going into this as a partnership. I make the tree you make the table. I make the iron you make the tool," and Bacon honored us by saying, Francis Bacon, "that God dignified man by giving to him the second degree of casualty. Allowing us to become co-creators with Him, He made the raw material, and we make it into useful objects." He gave to us an appetite to create and He looked at the one He had made and what did He say? Bad. Is that what He said? No, He said it is good.

Now, if anyone ever talks to you about the appetite for knowledge or the appetite for food or for sex or for pleasure or for security being bad, will you go back and read what the Scripture says. He says it's good, it's GOOD.

Now look what happens, (when do I quit, in about 5 minutes, 10 minutes? Warn, when I'm supposed to stop that's the only way you'll get me to shut up. I do know where I want to quit, I hope I get there.) So here is the situation, you could either ball all of the truth but not one, because this has a function. And I left it there for a purpose and if you, don't eat of that. And so into this situation comes this ancient foe. Now, he's coming as what? As light, an angel of light, but he's actually in darkness, he says, "I got some news for you, and you think God loves you. God doesn't love you. He knows that when you eat that you're going to be like Him." WE WERE LIKE HIM! "You're going to be like Him and He doesn't want you to be like Him. So He said don't eat of it, but it's good to eat, ah, you'll be sorry, it taste good." And I can see him just crunching. "Ah, it's great ah, you just ought to eat it and it will make you wise. And you should, you think God's your friend, you think God loves you. He doesn't love you. He hates you." Who is talking? The god of lies, the god of darkness, the god of death.

And so Eve looks at it and she says it is pleasant to look at and it would taste good and it would make me wise. So something happens she imagines what would happen, she imagines, and then there's no longer how did Satan get in trouble, his imagination and then what was it, a decision.

So what does he say, go ahead, go ahead and she says I will, and that moment that she said I will and reached out her hand, the decision, and she had not even tasted it yet, but the committal of her will to the principle of pleasing herself outside the will of God, that's sin. Now, what's temptation? Temptation is proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Now, I want you to get that, because some folks have thought temptation was the proposition to present to satisfy a bad appetite in a bad way. The appetites aren't bad. Temptation is the proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. And sin is the decision to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way, I didn't say the completing of it, it's the decision, He that looketh, he that heedeth, the act isn't completed. The crime is committed with the decision. Temptation is the proposition to the intellect; sin is the committal of the will to the purpose.

So, what happens, she comes back and she says Adam, you've got a choice to make, I have eaten of that fruit. Now, you're either gonna stick with me or stick with this God who we thought was our friend and He isn't. Because I know, eating that fruit

opened my eyes and He's not our friend. And so, Adam chooses to stay with the women and he eats deliberately. She is beguiled, he sins deliberately. And the consequence is now that God comes in the cool of the evening as He wants to do to speak to them and Adam is where? Following the expressive nature of his new god, darkness. And he's gotten where scrubs are the thickest and deepest. And he is saying shh, Eve lay down; if you're quiet He won't find you. Expecting Him to come beating through but He doesn't. He doesn't, with broken heart the eternal bridegroom, eternal Father, "Adam, where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9) Oh, He knew where Adam was, but you see Adam had to find out where he was. He had to find out, he had to find himself.

You see no one can be saved until they are lost. Oh, they're lost enough but they have to know it, that's why more people are not being saved we're not using the Word in such a way to get them lost. They're lost but they don't know it.

You see, Christ came seeking that which was lost and one of our responsibilities is to apply the Word to the consciousness of men that they discover they are lost just because the law is the school master to bring them to Christ and we pretty well cut the law out of the proper proclamation. If I had my way I declare a moratorium and no one from public utterance by way of radio, television or pulpit could preach the plan of salvation for two years. And they would only preach the holiness of God and the righteousness of God and enormity of the crime of sin, until people began to cry out the way the Philippian jailer did, "What must I do to be saved?" (Act. 16:30) But we've Gospel hardened a generation of sinners by telling them *how*, before they ever knew why. Thinking that *how* is going to help, but *how* doesn't help. "Adam where art thou," he finally comes out "what is this thou hast done?" (Gen. 3:13)

Now listen, watch how he now reflects the character of his new god, "The women you gave me she made me eat it." If you're going to kill somebody kill her but don't touch a hair on my head. What's happened? Darkness and death and malign and hate has now become the manifest character of this fallen man who reflects now the nature, the image, if you please, of this one to who he's committed himself.

And so watch, what's the Lord Jesus do? He takes a Lamb and He slays the Lamb and He lets the blood pump from the little lamb's heart out upon the ground and He takes the skin, now you can take the wool and not hurt the lamb but when you take the skin the lamb dies. And He makes coats of skins and He thus points His finger down across the centuries to the day one will see Him and say of Him "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" (Joh. 1:29)

Now, suppose God had made man in such a way that man could not sin what would we have had? What is sin? Temptation was the proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way and sin was the decision. Now suppose God had made man so he couldn't imagine and he couldn't choice, what would he have been? He'd never been in the image of God would he? He'd be an automaton, machine programed.

When I would be away my wife, would have the responsibility of raising our family and has done a very wonderful job in my estimation. They used to say "so where do you live?" I said, "Well, I live in my car, but my wife is running an orphanage for our children. Where ever it was." And suppose I came home and there were my children, pretty well grown, but little tikes. When I came in I knew that they had no interest in me so to get some expression of love I'd have to hypnotize my own little children. When my mind and my will controlled them I would sit down and I would say, "Sonny, Jimmy, Sarah, walk over, stand in line put your arms around my neck, kiss my cheek, say I love you." Do you think that that cold mechanical clamping of little feet and grasping an uttering of words that have been programmed into the mind would satisfy the heart of a lonely father? Oh, I'd rather my children say, "No daddy, I won't." So when they did it meant something. God has waited from eternity past, rather than the one He'd made be able to say, "No, I don't love you." So when he said, "Yes, I do," that "yes" had meaning to it.

If God made man so he couldn't have sinned, man would have been a mere automaton, a mere machine. He never could have met the need of the heart of God. Well, we just got started, we'll stop. Thinking of What Kind of Being is Man, what kind of a relationship did he have to God?

Father, we thank you for your grace, we thank you for your love. We can't understand it Father, we know ourselves, we know we are monsters of iniquity no sin anyone ever committed of which every one of us were not capable of. The seeds of every sin

sprouted and started to grow in our hearts. If we were restrained, it was by grace and circumstance not capacity. We've seen ourselves our God, we would agree with thee that "none righteous, no not one" that we were wounds and bruises and putrefying sores of this terrible crime of turning to our own way, and truly corrupted every emotion and purpose of our lives (Rom. 3:10). We can't understand it we see your picture of us, the leper. Leprosy is your picture of us as sinners. The enormous crime of defrauding Thee rightful place in our life and then to find out that You loved us, and that You loved us with an everlasting love. And You loved us even to death and that the death of the cross. Then to hear Your Son pray in His high priestly prayer "that the world may know that Thou hast loved them even, as Thou hast loved Me" (Joh. 17:23).

We stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how He could love us, the sinner condemned, unclean. Oh how marvelous. Oh how wonderful is Thy love to me. Father, we thank you, we worship you, we adore you, we want to learn who we are, we want to learn why we are as we are, we want to discover what you want us to be and how you want to glorify your son, and what it means that whom "the Son makes free is free indeed" (Joh. 8:36).

So to that end Lord we ask Thee to seal the thinking of our hearts this morning move upon us in the days and weeks until we share together again our next Lord's day, in Jesus name, Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The 4th Presbyterian Church, Discerners Class, Bethesda, MD on Sunday, July 13, 1980 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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