

[1973. In *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Carl F.H. Henry, ed. Washington D.C.: Canon Press.]

**IMAGE OF GOD.** See also *Fall of Man; Imitation of Christ*. The image of God in man is asserted but not precisely explained in Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; I Cor. 11:7, and James 3:9. Something of an explanation comes in Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24, where one may infer that the image consists of knowledge or rationality and righteousness or holiness, from which proceeds dominion over the creatures. Romans 8:29 confirms this by describing salvation as a process of conforming the predestined saint to the image of Christ.

Other passages also, such as Heb. 2:6-8 with its appeal to Ps. 8, and Acts 17:26-29, are examples and contribute at least implicitly to the doctrine. When, too, empirical philosophers deny innate ideas, inherited corruption, and a priori forms of the mind, Rom. 2:15 and Ps. 51:5 give the Biblical reply.

To avoid error, one must note that the image does not consist in man's body. First, animals have bodies but were not created in God's image. Second, God is spirit and has no body; for which reason idolatry is sin (Rom. 1:23).

Man is not two images, as a fanciful exegesis would interpret *image* and *likeness* in Gen. 1:26. Note that *likeness* is not repeated in Gen. 1:27. Nor can the single image be divided into parts. Dominion over the creatures is not an extra part, but one of the functions of unitary rationality. Not even morality is a second part, as if knowledge and righteousness are two components. Righteous action is a function of the unitary image. In fact, the unitary image is not something man has: the image *is* man. "Man is the image and glory of God" (I Cor. 11:7).

The reason some theologians have asserted a duality in the image, rather than the unity of the person and the plurality of his functions, is the occurrence of sin. Since Adam remained Adam after the fall, these theologians thought that some part of the image had been lost. Unfortunately this view allows the remaining part of man to be untouched by sin and so conflicts with the doctrine of total depravity.

Although sinful men, especially very sinful men, do not seem to be God's image, these men could not sin unless they were. Sin presupposes rationality and voluntary decision. Sinning always starts in thought. Adam thought, incorrectly, but nevertheless

thought that it would be better to join Eve in disobedience than to obey God and be separated from her. Sin has interfered with but does not prevent thought. It does not eradicate the image but causes it to malfunction. Responsibility (q.v.) depends on knowledge. Animals cannot sin and are not morally responsible because they are not rational or intellectual creatures. Therefore man remains the image of God even after the fall.

The image must be reason or intellect. Christ is the image of God because he is God's Logos or Wisdom. This Logos enlightens every man that comes into the world. Man must be rational to have fellowship with God. II Peter 1:2-8; 2:20; 3:18 emphasize knowledge and state that the means through which God grants us all things that pertain to life and godliness is theology- our knowledge of him. This idea is important for the late twentieth century when the dialectical theologians deny the image of God in man, calling God *Totally Other*, or define image ridiculously as the sexual distinction between man and woman (Karl Barth), and insist that God cannot put his "truth" into language, thus denying that the Scriptures are revelation and even reducing them to false pointers to something unknowable.

Secular objections to the image of God in man can be based only on a general non-theistic philosophy. Evolution views man as a natural development from neutrons and protons, through plants and animals, until in Africa, Asia, and the East Indies human being emerged. Therefore evolution cannot insist on the unity of the human race as Christianity does in Acts 17:26.

Evolution as an explanatory principle must apply to the mind as well as to the body. There can then be no divine image, no eternal principles, no fixed truth or logic. The mind operates only with the practical results of biological adaptation. Reason is simply a human method of handling things. Earlier man had and future man will have other forms of logic. The syllogism called Barbara is valid now but will become a fallacy after a while.

If this be so, that is, if evolutionists have used evolutionary logic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to sustain their theory, then their arguments will prove fallacious in the next evolutionary advance and evolution will then be a fallacy.

The Biblical doctrine alone makes eternal truth possible (and “truth” that is not eternal is not truth). Reason makes possible both sin and fellowship with God. Sin has caused a malfunctioning of man’s mind, but redemption will renew men in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, so that in heaven we shall no longer make mistakes even in arithmetic.

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