

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
HUMANITY

CHARLES SHERLOCK

CONTOURS *of*
CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGY

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InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois

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Introduction

Given the sparkling variety of people in our world, can any single answer be formed to the question of what it means to be human? The Bible's unique testimony is that to be human means to be made 'in the image of God'. This visionary, enigmatic answer is explicated in Christian understanding by pointing to Jesus Christ, who is both 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15) and the image of perfect humanity (Heb. 2:14-18). In his life, death and resurrection we see what being human means at its deepest and fullest, but even then we find ourselves lost for words.¹ A simple formula cannot do justice to the wonderful mystery of human life.

Exploring human nature entails an unending journey of living, a journey unique to each person, yet also undertaken in the company of others. This book seeks to present the perspectives of mainstream Christian faith upon human living, as revealed to us in the Christian Scriptures, centred in Jesus Christ. It is designed particularly as a textbook for theological

PREFACE

I would like to express my thanks to the many human beings who have shaped my reflection and learning in the writing of this book. My parents passed on to me the immeasurable treasure of the grace of Jesus Christ, Emily living out what it means, through much suffering, to hold to an uncluttered passion for truth, and Charles showing the meaning of care for people in all their complexities, potential and need. Jonathan and Peter have pushed me to take with full seriousness the boundaries of faith, society and life, in the bonds of affection. Peta has helped me begin to learn the task of doing theology in the bonds of love between woman and man.

Thank you to Lorri and Bruce Ellis for giving time hospitably to the discussion of the issues of this book; to Mark Burton, Jonathan Bright, and Fay and Greg Magee for reminding me of the importance of humour; to Cathy Laufer for willingness to read, mark, and return manuscripts swiftly; and to Hayden Robson and Colin Lee for patient friendship without strings.

I am grateful for the patience and guidance of David Kingdon, who did much more than arrange for a book to be commissioned and published.