

The BEACON

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LIFE IS A GIFT - Author Unknown

There was a blind girl who hated herself because she was blind. She hated everyone, except her loving boyfriend. He was always there for her. She told her boyfriend, 'If I could only see the world, I will marry you...'

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her. When the bandages came off, she was able to see everything, including her boyfriend... He asked her, 'Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?' The girl looked at her boyfriend and saw that he was blind. The sight of his closed eyelids shocked her. She hadn't expected that. The thought of looking at them the rest of her life led her to refuse to marry him.

Her boyfriend left in tears and days later wrote a note to her saying: 'Take good care of your eyes, my dear; for before they were yours, they were mine.'

This is how the human brain often works when our status changes. Only a very few remember what life was like before, and who was always by their side in the most painful situations. Life Is a Gift

- a. Today before you say an unkind word - Think of someone who can't speak.
- b. Before you complain about the taste of your food - Think of someone who has nothing to eat.
- c. Before you complain about your husband or wife - Think of someone who's crying out to GOD for a companion.
- d. Today before you complain about life - Think of someone who died too early on this earth.
- e. Before you complain about your children - Think of someone who desires children but they're barren.
- f. Before you argue about your dirty house someone didn't clean or sweep - Think of the people who are living in the streets.
- g. Before whining about the distance you drive - Think of someone who walks the same distance with their feet.
- h. And when you are tired and complain about your job - Think of the unemployed, the disabled, and those who wish they had your job.
- i. But before you think of pointing the finger or condemning another -

Remember that not one of us is without sin.

- j. And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down - Put a smile on your face and think: you're alive and still around.

The Nature of Man

by **Ron Halbrook** - West Columbia, Texas -

Genesis 1-3 provides the basis for our study on man's nature and the sin problem. His positive makeup and constitution can be better focused

and understood when contrasted with false theories which have arisen. Any concept of man's nature has a bearing on the problem of sin.

Man's Spirit

1. Man is a spirit, contrary to materialism. The first thing the Bible records about man is God's statement, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness" (**Gen. 1:26-28**). "Male" and "female" are two images of flesh but the body is only the clothing or drapery worn by the inner man. The inner person both male and female reflects the same image of God. God is a spirit without man's body of flesh and blood (**Jn. 4:24**). The fleshly form of man cannot reflect the image of God (**Rom. 1:23**). God's image is found in the inner man or the spirit, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones" (**Lk. 24:39**). Four hundred years after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, God as a spirit still lived and these men as spirits still lived (**Exod. 3:6; Matt. 22:29-32**). That fact is what makes the resurrection possible. God's image is reflected in man as a spirit-being who has intelligence, will power, and a moral capacity.

Materialism is the view that man is a body without the inner man of the spirit. This theory is held by atheists, evolutionists, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Worldwide or Seventh Day Church of God started by Herbert W. Armstrong and others. Some of these deny the spirit but affirm the resurrection. Jesus taught that the spirit is essential to the doctrine of the resurrection (**Matt. 22:23-32**). No spirit, no resurrection (**Acts 23:8**). If there is no resurrection, the sin problem is meaningless because both the wicked and the righteous will have the same end - annihilation! "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (**1 Cor. 15:18-19,32**).



Man's Body

2. Man has a body of flesh and blood, contrary to "Christian Science. " "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (**Gen. 2:7**). After sin entered the world, God ordained that the body "return unto the ground; . . . for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (**3:19**). God gave man both plants and animals for food but forbade blood because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (**Gen. 9:3-4; Lev. 17:11**). The natural or earthly man is flesh and blood, but God has no such body (**1 Cor. 15:44,48,50; Matt. 16:17**). This body of man appears to sleep in death as it returns to dust, but the spirit or soul remains very much alive in the hades world (**1 Cor. 15:18; Matt. 10:28; 22:32**).

The Christian Scientist cult started by Mary Baker Eddy in 1879 embraces philosophical idealism which dismisses the real world as an illusion. The dust of the ground, man's body of flesh and blood, and death are all said to be illusions. If such teaching were true, the deeds of the body would be mere phantoms of an illusion. Sin could not be real. How then could each of us be called to give account at the judgment for "the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (**2 Cor. 5:10**)?

Man's Creation

3. Man exists by the creation of God, not by the chance evolution of the species. After God had created all other things in five days, on the sixth day he created man and woman. The man was created directly from the dust of the ground and the woman from the rib of Adam (**Gen. 1:26-31; 2:7,18-23**). God made all forms of life including man capable of reproducing, each "after his kind" (**1:11-12,21-25,28**). God completed his work of creation and ceased or "rested the seventh day" (**2:1-3; Exod. 20:11**). Jesus taught that a proper understanding of God as the Creator of all things "at the beginning" is fundamental to proper human conduct (**Matt. 19:3-6**).

According to the general theory of evolution, life came by chance from non-life, animals from plants, and man from animals. Man is considered a high order of animal life. If man is nothing but an animal, he may be expected to act like an animal. The result is a philosophy of self before others barnyard morality, and of might makes right in the survival of the fittest. Every man becomes a law unto himself. "Right" and "wrong" in an absolute sense are replaced by evolving concepts which are always relative and which result in radically different but equally valid "life styles." The godless chaos of such living is pictured in **Romans 1:18-32** and in today's newspaper.

Man's Place

4. Man can know his place in the world and utilize the creation around him for his good, contrary to such Eastern religions as Hindu and Buddhism. God ordained man to exercise "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (**Gen. 1:26-28**). Understanding God's order in the universe is essential to man's finding his proper place in that order and to his properly utilizing the creation. We must distinguish God from ourselves and from the rest of his creation. We must distinguish ourselves from God and the rest of his creation.

Hinduism has some 330 million gods and Buddhism has no personal God at all, but both tend toward pantheism. They do not clearly distinguish an ultimate Being from the ordinary existence of all things. God is not a personal Being separate from the universe but is something of a force or "ground of being" shared in the nature of all the universe. The line between the Creator and the creation is blurred. All things are "God" and "God" is all things.

Blending and blurring divinity, man, and the universe breaks the mainspring of human activity. Rather than striving to subdue the creation so as to harvest the blessings ordained by God, man feels that such action challenges and disturbs the divine essence found in all things around him. It is not appropriate to kill the sacred cow or to disturb the insects which gather on its manure. By not subduing the creation, man denies himself food and health. Man tries to blend and balance the divinity within him and within all nature by leaving things as they are. With some variation in the route taken, that is the conclusion reached by many of the world's religions.

In the Hindu scriptures (Vedas and Upanishads), man's inner self and the divine are held to be identical. When man becomes divine, the idea of sin quickly becomes nebulous. All actions of man become manifestations of divinity in some manner. Sin becomes the break of some code, or represents the struggle of man toward higher and purer levels of divinity, but there is no consciousness of rebellion against God as a person distinct from the created order. That basic flow appears in many world religions. Just as there is no absolute God distinguished from man or the universe, there is no absolute right or wrong to be distinguished in the deeds of man. The denial of man's nature and of his proper place in the world leads to much confusion, much sin, and much sorrow. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (**Rom. 1:22**). *** To Be Continued In Next Month's Issue ***

Aristotle (384–322 BC) "Just as at the Olympic games it is not the handsomest or strongest men who are crowned with victory but the successful competitors, so in life it is those who act rightly who carry off all the prizes and rewards."