

Lesson Twenty-one

WHAT GOD DID THROUGH OUR
FIRST PARENTS

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:24-31.

Scriptures To Memorize: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). (Gen. 1:27). "I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14).

71. Q. Who were our first parents?
A. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve.
72. Q. Why do we speak of them as our first parents?
A. Because the human race is descended from them.
73. Q. What, firstly, did God do through our first parents?
A. It was through them that He established His moral system in our visible world.
74. Q. How did the first man and woman come into being?
A. The scriptures teach that God created them.
- (1) Gen. 1:27—"God created man in his own image . . . male and female created he them." (2) That God created our first parents is a far more rational and satisfactory explanation of man's origin than the so-called "evolutionary hypothesis" that he is the offspring of the brute creation. (3) The following are major objections to the evolutionary theory: (a) Nature, if left to her own resources, deteriorates instead of progressing. (b) The sterility of crossed species is contrary to the idea of an evolutionary process. (c) Evolution fails to account for all special organs, such as wings, feathers, eyes, ears, fins and electric organs in fishes, poison glands and fangs of reptiles, and others too numerous to mention here. (d) It fails to bridge the chasms between the inorganic and the organic, between the mineral and vegetable, and between the vegetable and animal kingdoms. (e) It fails to account for instincts peculiar to certain crea-

tures, such as those of the ant, the honey bee, the beaver, etc. (f) It fails to account for the origin of sex distinctions. (g) It fails to account for the moral and spiritual intuitions in man. (h) It fails to explain the origin of life. (i) It fails to account for man's high standing in the category of living creatures. (j) Finally, it is contrary to the known facts of observation and experience. If man were to disappear now from the face of the earth, there is no apparent reason for believing that by any process or change now going on in nature, another creature like him would ever be evolved, however long the animal kingdom might continue to exist. If evolution is true, then when and why did it cease?

75. Q. How did God distinguish man at creation from all other creatures?

A. By creating man in His own image.

76. Q. In what sense is man the image of God?

A. Man is the image of God in a personal sense.

(1) Gen. 1:27—"and God created man in his own image." The term image as used here, means likeness. In the ordinary sense of the term an image is a reflection; hence it may be rightly said that man is a reflection of God. (2) How is man the reflection of God? In a personal sense, primarily. This evidently means that as God is, as to nature, personal; so man is personal as to nature, and was so created. In short, man was endowed at creation with all the essential elements of personality, such as intelligence, feeling, will, self-consciousness, self-determination, memory, etc. (3) By his endowment at creation with the essential elements of personality, man was made a moral creature, and as such is subject to God's will and law. (4) In a nutshell, as God is a Spirit, so man is inwardly a spirit. His body is merely the tabernacle in which the real self (ego, or spirit) dwells; and as such is nothing more than a convenience adapted to his needs in this present world of time and space.

77. Q. What, secondly, did God do through our first parents?

A. He originated our human nature in them.

78. Q. What do we derive from our first parents?

A. Our human nature.

79. Q. What is meant by our human nature?

A. Human nature is what God made to be when He created him.

Human nature is what God has made men to be by virtue of their creation. Human character is what men make themselves to be by their own thinking and acting.

80. Q. What are the two essential elements of our human nature?

A. Body, or flesh; and spirit.

(1) Gen. 2:7—"Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (2) "Dust of the ground" means, literally, the earthly elements of which our bodies are composed. Dust is used in scripture as the emblem of frailty, humility, mortality, etc. It is obvious from this text that the body of man was mortal from its creation, i. e., subject to dissolution into its original elements. (3) In the sense that the body was originally formed of various earthly, or chemical elements, it was a divine creation; whereas the spirit that was breathed into it was a divine gift. (4) The body was lifeless and useless until God breathed into it "the breath of life." What does this mean? It means, evidently, that God implanted a spirit in the body. Out of His very own essence He breathed into the hitherto lifeless form all the essential elements of personal life. (5) Man as to nature, then, is twofold: he is essentially spirit (self, ego); and spirit dwells in a body of flesh. (6) This duality of man's nature is further indicated by its two-fold destiny. The body, we are told, will be resolved into the chemical elements of which it was originally formed; but the spirit will return to God. Eccl. 12:7—"the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

81. Q. What great truth about life is revealed in Gen. 2:7?

A. The truth that life is a divine gift.

(1) The body of man was originally a divine creation; but the spirit was a divine gift. And when God implanted spirit in the body, He implanted life in it. "And man (literally,

the man) became a living soul." (2) The story is told that Rowland Hill once conversed with a celebrated sculptor who was hewing out of a block of marble a statue of the great English patriot, Lord Chatham. "There," said the sculptor, "isn't that a fine form?" "Now," replied Mr. Hill, "can you put life into it? Else, with all its beauty, it is still a block of marble." God formed the human body of the dust of the ground, and He then vitalized the inanimate figure by putting spirit into it. Man is able to repair, assemble and arrange matter, but only God is able to make matter excel itself in quality. (3) The picture here is that of the Creator stooping down and placing His lips and nostrils to the inanimate form which He had created, and then expelling an infinitesimal portion of His very own essence into it. (4) Thus our personal life was originally a gift from God. The same is true of eternal life: it is a divine gift. Rom. 6:23—"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (5) Since life is God's gift to us, it follows that we should appreciate this gift, cherish it, and make the best use of it for the benefit of our fellows and for God's glory.

82. Q. What resulted from the divine implanting of spirit in body?

A. The result was that the man became "a living soul."

(1) Soul is a term which has reference primarily to the individuality. It stands for the entire being composed of body and spirit. (2) You are a living soul, I am a living soul, every human being is a living soul composed of two essential parts—body and spirit. (3) "We see that the expression 'living soul' is not applied to the breath of God as considered in itself and separate from the body, but that it describes man in his entirety, as the result of the union of the two contrasting elements" (Godet, *Biblical Studies: The Old Testament*, p. 32). "Soul is spirit as modified by union with the body" (Hovey). "By soul we mean only one thing, i. e., an incarnate spirit, a spirit with a body" (Hodge, *Popular Lectures*, p. 221). (4) When spirit enters into any kind of body to indwell it and possess it and unify it, be that body terrestrial or celestial, material or ethereal,

the result of the union of the two elements is a living soul.

(5) Human nature is, then, two-fold, consisting of spirit and flesh: a material body vitalized and energized by spirit.

83. Q. What twofold purpose was the human body divinely intended to serve?

A. It was no doubt intended: 1. to serve as a convenience for man in his present environment; and 2. to serve as a check upon whatever imperiousness of spirit he might develop.

(1) It was to serve as a dwelling-place for his spirit, or self; and hence as a convenience adapted to his needs in this present state only. 2 Cor. 5:1—"the earthly house of our tabernacle." (2) It was probably designed to serve also as a check upon man's imperiousness of spirit. This it does by confining his ego to a locality. "The body is to be regarded, not as the origin of want, desire and impulse, but rather as the instrument of their gratification — the medium through which the confined and restless agent within is ever acting out himself, and seeking satisfaction; and through which he is compelled to seek it, that he may, in the process, be crossed and repressed, disciplined and subdued, and thus be made to learn, if possible, the great lesson of submission to God" (Cook, *The Origin of Sin*, p. 152).

(3) It should be kept in mind that under most, if not actually all, circumstances, the body is subject to the control of our mental faculties, and hence cannot be in itself the source and seat of sinful impulses. Such impulses emanate from what is called in scripture "the mind of the flesh" (Rom. 8:6-7), i. e., the "carnal" or "natural" mind (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). (4) Impress upon the students the importance of resisting these sinful impulses, and of keeping their bodies clean and wholesome as God intended they should be kept.

84. Q. What, thirdly, did God do through our first parents?

A. He revealed in them the glory, dignity and worth of humankind.

(1) The distinction between human nature and human character should be recalled, in this connection. Human

nature is what God made man to be by virtue of his creation. Human character is what men have made themselves to be in consequence of their own thinking and acting. (2) While human nature, like everything that God created, was originally "good" (Gen. 1:31—"and God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good"); human character has become, says Jesus, more or less devilish (John 8:44—"ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do"). Human character has become depraved because men have made it so ("the lusts of your father it is your will to do"). (3) While the Bible writers portray human character as being depraved in consequence of the inroads of sin, they invariably speak of human nature in the noblest of terms. Gen. 1:27 — "God created man in his own image." Ps. 139:14—"I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Cf. 1 Cor. 11:7, Jas. 3:9. (4) The glory and dignity of man are indicated by the following: (a) By the time of his creation, i. e., after the earth had been fitted up as a dwelling-place for him and all the lower orders had been brought into being to serve his interests. He was the last and noblest of God's creations. (b) By the solemn circumstances of his making. His creation necessitated a Divine concilium at which the Three Persons of the Godhead conferred among themselves with regard to the nature and attributes of the creature about to be placed on the earth as its lord tenant (Gen. 1:26). (c) By the divine origin of his dual nature (Gen. 2:7). (d) By the marvelous range of his faculties. (e) By his extraordinary powers of transmission. In the case of Adam, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" but from that time on, the creature transmitted both body and spirit, from generation to generation, through the exercise of his own powers of procreation. (f) By his high standing in the scale of created things. Ps. 8:5—"thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor." (g) By the extent of his dominion. The entire natural world was placed under his rule and the divine command was: "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). Ps. 8:6—"Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;

thou hast put all things under his feet." (g) If these observations are all true of the natural man, how infinitely more so are they of the redeemed man who is God's special "workmanship" created in Christ Jesus for good works! See Eph. 2:10; cf. Eph. 4:24—"Put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

85. Q. What should we do in consequence of knowing these essential truths regarding our human nature?
- A. We should never debase our God-given human nature with sin. We should keep ourselves unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27). We should present our bodies daily as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service (Rom. 12:1).

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TWENTY-ONE

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80. Q. What are the two essential elements of our human nature?
81. Q. What great truth about life is revealed in Gen. 2:7?
82. Q. What resulted from the divine implanting of spirit in body?
83. Q. What twofold purpose was the human body divinely intended to serve?

84. Q. What, thirdly, did God do through our first parents?
85. Q. What should we do in consequence of knowing these essential truths regarding our human nature?

Lesson Twenty-two

MAN'S ORIGINAL STATE

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:4-25.

Scripture To Memorize: "And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17).

86. Q. What is the probable connection between the fall of angels and the creation of man?
- A. It is twofold: in the first place, it is obvious that when God created the angels, He had in view also the creation of man, for we are told that the office of the angelic host is to minister to the heirs of salvation; in the second place, it is likewise obvious that the apostasy of certain angels made it even more imperative that God should make a demonstration of His infinite love and justice, in and through our human race, sufficient to prove to all intelligent creatures, for all time and eternity, the falsity of Satan's lying accusations against Him.

(1) It should be remembered that prior to man's creation, God had demonstrated only His "everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. 1:29). This demonstration was made in the world of nature. (2) When the angels sinned, a final and incontrovertible demonstration of His infinite love and compassion became all the more imperative. (3) Naturally the field for such a demonstration was our human race, the creation of which had already been planned in the councils