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**STUDIES
IN
DOCTRINES**

**THE CREATION
AND
FALL OF MAN**

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THE ORIGIN OF MAN (The Creation View)

The origin of man has long been a mystery for those individuals who desire to place man's beginning in the universe as an act of nature. This presumption that man is derived from some form of matter separate and apart from being the divine creation of God is just another example of man being confused by the things of God.

The non-believer spends much time and energy attempting to place the origin of man in a self evolved state of one type or another. Much has been said about even the creation of the earth itself. The big bang theory is just one such example. One of the theories put forth for the origin of man is the one cell approach or evolutionary view that man evolved from one celled creatures to monkeys and then to the present state of man. This theory has been described as "From goo to you by way of the zoo."

The difficulty with these theories is that they are based on erroneous information from the inception of the theory. The attempts at eliminating a supreme being which produces or creates all things makes evolutionist theory untenable and false postulations at best.

The creationist view of the origin of man is obviously the correct view since it begins with the Creator. One cannot have a creation (man) without first having a creator. The Christian's acknowledgment of man being created by God is of course substantiated by the Bible and is detailed enough to dispel the myth of being born in a cess pool. The Biblical account provides sufficient description of the creation process of the origin of man that it should be accepted by all who read it. All intelligent beings should recognize that their intellect must have been derived from a higher intellect than their own. Present scientific evidence indicates that degeneration of intellectual capacity is a regression to the mean. Intelligence does not evolve to a higher form, it dissipates to a lower level.

Evolutionist are devoted to the identification of exactly when did the creation of man occur in time. Creationist believe that the Biblical account is sufficient evidence for the time of creation. The Bible says "In the beginning God created..." and it is clear that He created man both male and female. The anthropological and anatomic arguments are satisfied in that man was made from the dust of the earth and God provided the first breath of life. The "when" is satisfied by God's own good time.

THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER OF MAN

The original character of man immediately brings to mind several premises which should be given consideration. The original character of man is usually interpreted in light of the scriptures "in the

image and likeness of God". An understanding of this phrase is necessary to determine what is meant by "image and likeness". Since God is spirit and as such possess no physical body, then man is not made in the "image and likeness" of God as a physical being. If man is not in the likeness of God as a physical being then in what capacity is man like God? According to Hodge

God is a Spirit, the human soul is a spirit" and the "attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will...a rational, moral and...free agent."¹

Given this likeness, man then is capable of communication with God Himself. Lower forms of creation not possessing spirit have no such attributes and are considered brute in nature. The "likeness" produces within man the capacity to know God. This capacity for knowing God allows for the regeneration and sanctification according to the apostle Paul in Colossians 3.10.

The evolutionist view of man's capacity to reason is quite different from that of man being created by God. The evolutionist view of man postulates that man was incapable of mental capacities when first evolving and not created as a whole man. Given these two differences in opinions one must choose between scientific speculation and the gift of God. "Goo" or God, you decide.

Along with the mental capabilities provided by the spirit are also moral capabilities or likenesses which as spirit are "created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph 4.24). Man's ability to choose "holiness" places him in a regenerated state and this condition returns man to his pre-sin position with God.

One of the reasons why man can be considered social in spirit is projected because God is social. Evidence of God having fellowship with man in the garden (Gen 3.8) indicates that God was available to commune with his creation man. God demonstrated man's social nature by providing a help mate for Adam. Eve being recognized as part of Adam established early that man should not be alone but should have social companionship. God's endowment of His spirit into man produced human love. Only as God loves man can man in turn possess the same attributes as given by God "in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1.26).

TWO VIEWS OF MAN'S BEING

Man has a material and an immaterial nature. The material nature is his body while the immaterial nature is his soul and spirit. Depending on whether one believes that the soul and spirit are one, or if soul and spirit are separated determines whether one's view is that of dichotomy (soul & spirit combined) or trichotomy

¹Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), 2:96-97

(soul & spirit separated).

The dichotomy view has as its base Gen 2.7 in which God breathed into man "the breath of life and man became a living soul." Other proof scriptures seem to indicate that "life" and "spirit" or "soul" and "spirit" are interchangeable. Matthew and Mark's gospel both indicate if one loses the soul, they lose everything. Thiessen adds an additional argument for dichotomy, in that man's consciousness can only discriminate between the material and immaterial parts of man's being.²

The trichotomy view holds that man is three different parts. The parts are body, soul and spirit. Using the same base Gen 2.7 as proof text the trichotomist point out that the text is plural and translate a "breath of life (lives)." In 1 Thess 5.23 the apostle Paul considers man's nature to have body, soul and spirit. Hebrews 4.12 speaks of "dividing asunder of soul and spirit".

Most Scripture indicates that soul and spirit are synonymous. Dichotomists only need to explain 1 Thess 5.23 and Heb 4.12 while the Trichotomists must explain several dichotomist proof text.

MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN

The moral constitution of man consist of the ability to make right and wrong decisions. Much of what scholars believe makes up the moral constitution of man is primarily man's intellect and sensibility, as well as to use one's conscience and will. The first two, intellect and sensibility are used to identify right and wrong, and to use man's sensibility to decide to do right or wrong. According to Thiessen intellect and sensibility must of necessity be accompanied by conscience and will.³ Conscience according to Romans 2.15 is to bear witness. This may be a good description of conscience. Conscience being the knowledge of right and wrong. It is a moral standard against which man measures his actions. Man's conscience then bares witness to whether or not the impending thought or action is morally correct. Will is man's ability to do anything which is within his nature. He is not free in his will to do that which is contrary to his nature. Man's will allowed Adam to decide to sin or not to sin. Our will allows us to make a similar decision. The Holy Spirit provides opportunities for man to exercise his will to follow God's will.

PROBLEMS WITH MAN'S FALL

The fall of man seems to have some difficulties involved with it. There seems to be what Thiessen calls three principals which are

²Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 160.

³Thiessen, Lectures, 162.

open for discussion.⁴ These three principals or problems are as follows. Can a holy being fall?, why would a just God allow man to be tempted?, and why so great a penalty for disobedience?

First, can a holy being fall? Yes a holy being can fall if he fails to differentiate between that which is holy and unholy. God created man and woman in a sinless state with free will and moral abilities to choose to sin or not to sin. Satan arranged a temptation which would cause them to sin and Adam made the decision to disobey his creator. When he did that, he took upon himself the responsibilities for his actions. We today may not comprehend how a holy being can sin, however, it is clear that Adam acted against the true nature of God and placed himself in direct disobedience with God. Man revolted against God of his own free will. Satan could only use that which was available to him for use to tempt man and woman. He could only use those things in the garden. According to Genesis 3.6 Satan used man's God given desires for food against him in order to cause man to disobey God. The driving force was man's desire to know that which God did not desire him to know at that time. Rebellion against God had a price.

Second if God is just, why did He permit the temptation? Man was created a being which had been given the will to make a decision concerning serving God and serving self interest. Man's God given ability to make such a choice separates him from all other creations of God. Even though God had foreknowledge of man's inability to make the appropriate decision, a just God, by being just had to allow man's decision. Being a just God, God provided an immediate counter action to man's poor choice. God's decree was a Savior for man's sin against Him.

Last, does the Creator have the right to set the penalty for disobedience? Eminent authority must rest with God. God used material things to bring man to the under-standing that having all knowledge gained from the forbidden tree does not make him like God or God. Man still remained the created being and not the Creator. God's command was a serious command. It was a decision to choose death or life. To choose between God or self. Adam choose to place his trust in himself. Man still has the same decision to make today. Man may choose life and Christ or man may choose death and the devil. The forbidden tree is still in man's garden.

THE NATURE OF ADAM'S SIN

The nature of Adam's sin is in most part involved in a discussion of "what is sin?". There are several definitions of sin which have been put forth and most of them contain some form of the following premises. Under-standing these premises can provide insight into the nature of Adam's sin.

Sin by many has been described as transgression of the law's of

⁴Thiessen, Lectures, 175.

God; selfish-ness; nature that is sinful; different kinds of evil; and depravity. According to these definitions one can clearly see the nature of Adam's sin.

Sin is the transgression of the law's of God and therefore when Adam chose not to conform to God's will regarding Adam, then Adam sinned against God. The Bible calls this action, sin, disobedience, godlessness and even unholiness.

Sin is selfishness and was found to be in Adam when by free election he chose to put himself before God and went his own direction. Isaiah 53.6 describes the action as "turned every one to his own way." Proof that selfishness is a part of sin rest in "the fact that all the forms of sin can be traced to selfishness as their source."⁵

Man having a nature that is sinful can bring forth sin. 1 John 1.8 clearly dispels any myth of not having a sin nature. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Man's conscience even speaks to man and when it does it speaks of self not God.

Sin has been described as different types of evil. One of these types is moral evil. This evil is found in man himself and is his sins of omission and commission. He elects to do evil or not to do evil by his very nature of rationalization.

Depravity seems to be the lot of sin. Sin according to the Bible effects the whole man and only by the shed blood of Jesus Christ can man have hope to be cleansed from "all sin." 1 John 1.7.

Much of what represents what sin is not is that, sin is not forever; is not unlimited; and sin does not begin as a sensuous nature. Accordingly, Adam's sin was not part of the definition of what sin is not.

EFFECTS OF THE FALL ON ADAM AND EVE

The immediate effects of the fall on Adam and Eve were their "relationship to God, on their nature, on their bodies, and on their environment."⁶

One of the immediate effects of the fall on Adam and Eve was the establishment of a different relationship to God than had been prior to the fall. God was a God to commune with prior to the fall, where as, after the fall Adam and Eve sought to hide from the face of God. Their relationship to God had changed from that of fellowship to that of disobedience and guilt. Their sin was compounded with accusations of blame on the God, the serpent and each other.

Another effect of the fall was on Adam and Eve's nature. They no longer possessed a sinless nature. They were naked before God and themselves and placed upon their descendants a sin nature. Man became a sinner by birth.

5Thiessen, Lectures, 174.

6Thiessen, Lectures, 182.

The effect on their bodies was surely immediate as the body became corruptible. Man must "surely die" according to Genesis 2.17. Their bodies would never be as created, incorruptible, immortal. Physical illnesses and maladies would be the pain of a dying body. A body weakened by sin and subject to decay. As they were "dust, and to dust you shall return." Genesis 3.19.

The immediate effect on their environment is seen in that the serpent was cursed, that the cattle and beast of the fields would suffer. That the animals would seek to destroy those of lesser ability to survive. That the earth itself would be caused to bring forth thorns and thistles as was not its nature prior to the fall. All of the creation must now be made to exhibit a world full of sin and suffering.

CONCLUSION

What can one do to reverse the situation which is described as the fall of man? According to God's word man must be made righteous again before God. God will not accept man's righteousness since in the sight of God, man's righteousness is as filthy rags. Jesus Christ, God's Son is the only righteousness God will accept. However, the payment for sin requires death. Therefore, Christ has already provided the payment for the penalty of sin. Christ died on the cross, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of life is eternal, provided for all those who will accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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