

1893

Man--what is he? What is his destination?

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MAN -- WHAT IS HE ? WHAT HIS DESTINATION?

An interrogation point never followed a more interesting & important question than the one, what is man ? It has been the great question of the past, it is the greatest question extant, & it will continue to be the question of questions in all ages yet to come.

What must have been the yearnings of that sublime soul, the sweet singer of Israel, when out in the starlight, in solitude & in communion with his God, as he looked into the star-decked heavens above him & exclaimed, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon & the stars, which thou hast ordained : What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? & the son of man that thou visitest him" ?

This 8th. Psalm from which the above is taken is one of the most interesting, because it leads us to think of this greatest of all questions, the relationship between God & man.

In our search for answers to the questions urged in the heading of this paper, we find it necessary to make some comparisons:

First, let us look at the apparent smallness & insignificance of man: We see by comparing him with the world & system of worlds, & the factors therein contained, that man indeed seems a very insignificant factor :

Compare him with the population of one of the great cities N. Y. or London: again, with a continent of millions: again, with all the continents & their multiplied millions, - how small a fraction by a comparison with the whole has he shrunken into.

Let us see, is it possible that we can reduce him to a still smaller point? Yes, compare him with the whole Earth itself & its position in space, then add to this, a series of planets, viz., Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus & Neptune, & all but two of them larger than Earth; think of it; this great Earth on which we live swung out into space, & all of the other seven great bodies respectively whirling through space with their own respective movements, & apparently all resting on nothing: What a wonder! Where is man now, is he not growing so small that we will lose him altogether?

Ah!. this is not all yet, science has still another surprise for us: It is said that on a clear moonless night, that by the aid of a good telescope there can be seen five hundred thousand million stars, & it is too, very probable that each of these stars are suns around which revolves a planetary system of worlds like our own; we are indeed over-whelmed in wonder & amazement; so far beyond man's puny power of conception, that he can only gaze & wonder .

Again, the sun is one of the greatest of wonders to be added to the list; What mind can concentrate & focus down to anything like a proper conception of its position & magnitude as compared with the Earth & the other planets?

Think of it, one million & one-half times larger than the whole planetary systems combined; Always on hand at the birth of worlds to give them heat & light, & to hold them in position.

Imagine the Earth & all the planets whirling & circling through the great vaulted space, & as has been said, apparently unsupported & undirected; yet we find each one of them is guided & controlled & held in proper position by the great master-wheel of machinery, - the sun.

If upon a casual & superficial glance & vision we infer that the great system of revolving worlds is not guided & controlled by a power greater than themselves - the sun - & if in this we find our error upon a closer & more scientific investigation & find that the sun is a great central magnet, by which they are held to the most perfect law, are we not at greater fault still when we say there is not a great Architect & Builder of all these worlds & this great sun, when we say that there is not a great all wise personal energizing mind & central Sun, Magnet of Magnets - Eternal God Himself, over which the whole world & all its wonders is presided ?

What would become of us if we were not guided by any more law than that which guides the poor moth that flutters about the lighted candle until it finally drops into the flame & puts an end to its feeble existence ?

What do you think would be the result, if the sun which is 90 millions of miles away from us, should slip a notch in nature of 10 millions of miles, one-ninth of its distance from us, with its 8 octillion, 150 septillion, 100 sextillion, & 150 quintillion of weight ? As the saying is, we would not know what hurt us; it would only be a flash to Earth, & we & all the Earth would be extinguished.

How frightened some people were a few weeks ago, when we thought that another great light in the heavens was getting a little too intimate with us ! How some thought the world was surely about to close up; had they read their Bibles a little closer, their minds might have been disabused of this fright, for God has surely taught us, we will not know the day or hour.

Again, the moon, our closest neighbor, while it is not so large as Earth, its total surface only 14,500,000 sq. mi., yet in connection with Earth & its universe of worlds, as a factor we cannot exist without it . In its absence, what faithful guide & satellite would gravitate around us ?

Where would be the guide of the voyager in the midnight hour on the pathless ocean, or in a trackless desert without thee? But you ask in all this vision a series of worlds a wonders, where is man? Have we lost sight of him entirely?

Almost, but let us not leave him yet; let us see if it is possible to make a comparison that will minify him still more.

Let us imagine a being with unlimited powers of flight, a soaring; starting from Earth in his flight, through endless space to the seven planets, a to the millions of worlds beyond. As this being begins to ascend, a is a mile above Earth, how small this globe begins to appear to him, a how small all the people combined appear to him, a how much smaller still one man of all this number; but on he goes to the moon, how small the world a still smaller man; a on again, millions of miles to Mercury, again to Venus, to Mars, to Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, a finally to Neptune 2,746,000,000 miles from the sun, a on through infinite space trillions of miles, let him now look back if he will, what a small speck is Earth, a how much smaller still is that little creature call man; smaller than the smallest point of the finest cambrick needle, if such a comparison could be made. Is it possible that we, one of these little creatures will stand up a boast of our greatness in face of such comparison?

We have surely reduced man down about as small as we can get him, at least, with our finite means of comparison : but let us see if there is not another side to this question. Although by comparison we have found man so small, is it necessary to conclude that he is insignificant, because he is by comparison so small ? Are not the greatest things of Earth composed of little particles & factors ? Is not this great Earth of ours composed of single grains of sand ? The mighty ocean, three times larger, composed of little drops of water :- "Little drops of water little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean & the pleasant land".

Are not the wonders of the world of small particles ? The great pyramids of Egypt are composed of single stones, & they of small grains of sand. The great cities are of stone, brick, wood, lime, cement &c. The world was submerged by a mighty flood, composed of drops of water.

Solomon's great temple was built out of single stones from the quarry, & of single trees of the mountains, & gilded, emblazoned & beautified by gold, silver, iron, brass & bright gems, all composed of little particles .

The whole of the human language made up of words composed of letters .

The little snow flake so light & delicate, that you can scarcely feel its weight on the hand, yet they fall one by one, until an avalanche is formed with its thousands of tons weight. If after seeing that the great things of creation are composed of small things, is there not a possibility of finding a greatness in man & humanity, although we have found him apparently so small by comparison, "When I survey the heavens &c., What is man" ?

Let us note some distinctions between man & mere animal; When we consider man from a physical or material standpoint, we find him in many ways akin to the animal; but on the other hand when we view him from the standpoint of reason, will power, conscience, sense of right & wrong, manner of action, & power of discernment &c. we find a great distinction.

Can an animal know that it is an animal ? Can it know to what class it belongs? Can it know of a past, present or a future? Can it know anything of its own existence ? Can it will to do a thing & then put that will into action ? Can the horse say, I will go to Europe & go ? Can the dog say, I will take this great stone & chisel the features of a man into it ? Can the animal perform one of the highest acts of life, viz., give its life voluntarily for a friend, or a cause ?

Are there any martyrs among animals burning at the stake for their belief in God? Can the animal edit news papers, become the authors of great books, build great pyramids, bridges, cities, R. R. & ships? Can it say, "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers"?

We have said that man in many ways is common to the animal, which is true; yet even his physical organism & powers indicate that he is far above the brute, as far as man being "fearfully & wonderfully made", we can to some extent say the same of animals in their limbs, ligaments & brain adaptation of parts &c., but we find even here a great distinction.

The use of the animals tongue in its peculiar way of making sounds does not convey any intelligence, or indicate that it has any reason or knowledge even of the sounds that it makes; it sees the same objects with its eyes that we see, but it does not know that it sees them. The eye is the most important factor in the physical make up of man, by which we can discern that a real soul is back of these organs: Is it not wonderful the different expressions we can see in the eye? Look straight into the eyes of one who has committed some great crime; again into the eyes of one who has done some great work for Christ; again, to one who loves you & would give their life for you;

Mother for child, husband for wife, & thus I might continue;

What mean these series of different expressions in the eye ?

Is there any soul back of them ? Can the mere animal exhibit

the same ? Can it even in facial expression indicate what man

can ? Can it blush & turn pale & show distress or pleasure as

man ? We see a distinction by comparison again in grada-

tion; We see that the plant life of flower, grass, shrub or

tree is higher than mineral ; we see that the life in insects,

fish, fowl & animal is higher than the plant or tree.

We see that human life is so much higher than any or all of

these. Beside all these actual demonstrations, take the Bible

statement & it is very conclusive: Gen. 2/7, "God formed man

of the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the

breath of life, & man became a living soul". Can you find such

a statement in regard to any other creature that God has made?

We again see the great difference between man & animal,

in his power over nature & the elements that God has placed in

the world; this 8th. Psalm itself speaks of man having all

these, the fish of the sea, fowl of the air, & the beast of the

field as his servants; & we see too that man has been availing

himself of these privileges, & has been making wonderful im-

provements from his humble starting point .

But tell me wherein the fish, fowl or animal has improved: Does not the fish swim as he first swam? The bird build its nest & fly as it first did? Does not the lark sing the same notes it always sang? Has the beaver in its plans of architecture changed? Does the dog bark different from what he first barked, & if you torment him will he not pounce upon you & rend, as at the first? Has he learned of a higher & better life, that his temper is modified? Will not the mule too, the proverbial kicker, kick & kill you the same as he always did? (No modern improvements or scientific ways of killing you as man has invented).

But let us see if man has made any improvement: It is impossible to enumerate all improvements & inventions that have come from the hand of man from our earliest account of him, but we will give a few of them to illustrate: Take the general intelligence of man today, & compare it with man in his humble position & condition of life 3 to 5,000 years ago, & see the contrast; compare the cities of today with those of ancient times.

Take the many inventions, the microscope, printing press, Corliss engine, the watch, the clock, & machinery of all kinds, & compare them with the rude instruments & machinery that existed, & we see such a contrast that we can hardly comprehend it.

Also as to means of travel, see our great monster vessels (appearing to be things of life) that plow through the pathless sea; our great R. R. systems, through great mountains; our wonderful sculpture art, our different sciences, music &c., & the science in executing it &c.

Again, look at our telescopic, magnetic & electric inventions : How could we see the wonderful motions of the planets, count such large numbers & know so much of them, except by the great telescope ? The magnetic needle, who can estimate its value ? Great as is the invention of steam, how limited its service on the mighty sea, if not for the faithful guide, the magnet in connection with the North star;— Yes, & over life's great dark sea, how aimless our course without the wonderful magnet, Jesus Christ our wonderful star in glory, & his Holy Spirit, our magnet to guide us to a peaceful haven of rest, when o'er this tempestuous sea. Electrical inventions, how amazing, as we stand on this side of the ocean & talk to our friends in Europe, how wonderful! As we stand in a large city, & all of a sudden a flash & thousands of lights are instantly flashed upon us, how wonderful! When we see a large number of cars of tons & tons of weight, plus the weight of humanity in them, & see these great systems all in operation, & see no visible power moving

them, only a little frail wire above them, & in it an invisible force, more powerful than numbers of horses, we exclaim wonders of wonders, untill we are over-whelmed in wonder & amazement, & say is it possible, that this small & insignificant looking thing, that we call man is back of all this, where are his limits in harnessing up & in using these great creations from God's hand. Sometimes I think if a man of several centuries ago, could suddenly drop down into Earth & this life again, & see these wonderful inventions & transformations, would it not take considerable effort to convince him that he was now in the same old world that he had left a few centuries ago ?

But after all there is a limit to man's capacity; he must in the end admit that all these wonderful powers are given of God, his Creator. We may mould a man of clay & put him out into the sun to dry, & we may take the hammer & chisel & chisel away at the huge marble or stone untill we say there is a man; but after all there is no man there, & the very thing that is required to make this clay or stone a man, viz., the breathing into him the breath of life, we cannot do.

But after all when we consider the great powers & possibilities that God has created in man, as in contrast to the mere animal, can any rational man say, "That it is all of life to live, or all of death to die" ?

Can he say we die as an animal ? Can he conclude that God will expend all this creative energy, & so wonderfully endow man & then only give him this little flash of existence ? Do we think when this little flash in the dark is out, that it is out forever ? No, no. Can we see the great love of God that prompts Him to give his only Son to descend from the glory of the skies, to take upon Him the form of humanity, of a servant, to be tempted, tortured, to agonize, & to be put to death on the cross, to rise from the grave & ascend to His home in the skies, all this would He do if man's life ended with his last hours on Earth ? No, no, no never.

Have not men in all ages looked forward to a life beyond? Even the rude Indian believes he will have his favorite dog & gun in the great hunting grounds above. The philosophers have looked forward to their time of release upon Earth, to a happy existence beyond; One noted philosopher, Gato the younger, became so much concerned to know what was beyond, that he could not wait his natural death, but killed himself, in order to know something of the great beyond. What was the great question of Aristotle ? Immortality of the soul. What did Plato the philosopher of philosophers mean by his wonderful life & work ? Why are men so enraptured with it?

Why does it bring a spell & charm over them, they cannot resist? Because he speaks of the immortality of the soul. What did he mean when about to die when he said, I thank God especially for three things: first, that He has endowed me with a rational soul; second, that I was born a Greek & not a barbarian; third, that my birth was in the time of Socrates.

What means this, "The trumpet shall sound, the dead be raised," "the hour is coming when all that is in their graves shall hear His voice & come forth, & they that have done good to resurrection of life, & they that have done evil into resurrection of damnation"? Shall the sleeping millions sleep on forever?

What mean all these symbols in nature, of the fading leaf & of the withering flower, to come into new life again the following spring time. What meant Christ when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you", & "I will come again for you &c". If we deny all this, we deny Christ; but if we admit Christ was all that he claimed, then there can be no other conclusion but a future life, a life of the soul beyond. Shall we not know as we are known, when the mists have cleared away? If death ended all, when we consider the average life is made up of one hour of pleasure & three of sorrow; we might as well be animals at once & eat & drink & die & dying end all.

Seneca pleaded for a future life, & when he was condemned for his belief, & his enemies insisted that there is no life beyond, his reply was "then you cannot make fun of me in another world". Hope is the great factor in this life, pluck that vital factor out of life, & you have almost extinguished life itself. Who does not like to think of a better country where life's hopes are never blighted & where the brightest prospects crumble not? Take away the expression, "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens", or "where the wicked cease from troubling & the weary are at rest", or "to the city which hath foundations, whose builder & maker is God", & we have taken the vital factor out of life.

As the dying worm changes to the beautiful butterfly, How much greater will be our change from these bodies of clay to the heavenly spiritual & glorified bodies. Are you content to call this body the man? Did you ever think that a real man was never seen? That this which we commonly call man, is not man at all, but only the temple, only the house in which he lives; the part that God did in breathing the breath of life into the nostrils was what made the clay, man, & that is what we have never seen.

When you tell the operator at the desk to send a message for you, you see the wire that conveys the message for you, but the real electrical power that carries the message you do not see, neither do you see the man that starts the message.

When you stop by a corpse & see the body, the ears, eyes, mouth &c., they have ceased to perform their functions, the real motive power, the moving acting force, that which had formally been the man, the person, the soul or spirit has taken its flight from its residence of clay, & you cease to call the body him or her, but it. The friend has simply left this temple & gone to occupy another, the occupant is gone & the temple must decay now.

The resurrection, this is the key to all Christianity, if we admit that Christ died, was buried & arose & ascended, if this is the fact then we know there is a future; & as to whether this is true, we cannot stop to give the whole proof; but the best evidence is the fact that the conclusive features were admitted by the enemies of Christ themselves.

Take away all these exterior proofs of prophecy, revelation & the life of Christ, & our conscience our inward thoughts will not allow us to think of no hereafter: It is a terrible & foreign thought to us to think of annihilation of ceasing to exist.

Some deny the resurrection & the life beyond because it is mysterious ; the most feeble of all objections, for it is quite evident that the greatest things of the world are the most mysterious ; You cannot even explain yourself, but you do not deny that you are & that you exist, do you ?

Can you explain the great world about you? And yet it is. Can you explain the force of electricity? And yet you know that it exists. If a grain of wheat will lay in a mummy 3,000 years & the germ remain sound all that time & then sprout & grow, can not God who made the germ & God who made the life in the body in the first place, in the resurrection give it a new life & body ? "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead" ?

"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then was Christ not risen, & if Christ be not risen, then our faith is vain, & they which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished".

Oh, what a dark day was it to the friends of Jesus when He was lain in the cold tomb of death, all their hopes of His Messiahship blasted; & how dark it would have remained to them, had He not risen & to us if he had not risen, & if He had not sent, when leaving the Earth, the Holy Spirit to guide us 'till His coming again .

What now should be our conclusion, if man is immortal, if God has created him in His own image & likeness, the highest of all creatures & has designed for him a home in glory, & even after man's falling, He so loved us that He gave His only Son Jesus to die to redeem & save us: Oh, how ungrateful, how rebellious must we be to refuse all these offered privileges.

Heavenly, holy city, city of our God: What charms?
A city whose streets are pure gold, whose walls are of pure jasper or crystal; twelve gates of pearl, with its river of the water of life from the throne of God & the Lamb; its twelve manner of eternal fruits, on either side of the river, & where the leaves of the trees never fade, where there is no night, no need of lamp or sun or stars, for the Lord God shall be its light forever; home of the redeemed, of Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Paul & our dear friends, & above all, our Lord & Savior. Oh, my friends, when we have passed over Jordan, who can imagine the joys of our entering into the temple of God; the sweet rapture, the heavenly carols, the angelic harmonies, the sweet strains of music from the harps of gold: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, dreams cannot picture a world so fair": Sorrow & death cannot enter there.

We talk of Solomon's temple, of the great cathedrals, palaces & mansions of the world; but the finest that Earth has ever see cannot compare with the temple of God, with the p^lace above, the mansion in the skies. That glorious temple whose foundation is God, whose chief corner stone is Christ, (the one which the builders rejected in their blindness) is become the Head of the corner; That which unites the Church of God on Earth with that of heaven, & the blessed Holy Spirit which pervades this mansion of the skies.

What are its adornments? What its beauties ?

Its adornments are, I imagine, gold finer than that of Ophir, diamonds finer than the finest of Earth, finer the topaz than the Red sea can yield, pearls clearer than they of Persia, rubies & sapphires purer than they of siam, or finer the opal than that of Ceylon: A temple where is heard , "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Host"; Should this not be & is it not the true destination of man ?