

SEX AND FOOD

by Ray C. Stedman

We have been seeking light on the world's greatest mystery -- the mystery of what is man. I am sure you recognize that the root of all our troubles, both internationally and individually, is our ignorance in this matter. We do not know what man is intended to be. We are blind to our own purposes, almost totally ignorant of why we are here upon the earth. Because we have lost our sense of direction, we are involved in amazingly intricate problems and are making the most atrocious blunders, both individually and internationally. Therefore it is especially important that we give ourselves to a clear understanding of what this passage teaches us about man. It is especially essential that we know this, as Christians, for if we know what we were meant to be, then we know what, in Christ, we actually can be. This is why this passage is of such tremendous significance to us.

Let me review briefly what we have previously learned from this sixth day of creation. We learned first that man did not arise from the animal creation. Contrary to the now-fading theory of evolution, man did not arise from the animal creation but was created directly by God as a distinct and separate new beginning in creation. We will see more of this as we come into Chapter 2, and especially more reasons why this is true. But it is evident that there is a fundamental difference, psychologically and spiritually, in the makeup of man from that of the animals.

Though the theory of evolution contends that man has arisen from the animal creation, nevertheless science does not provide any evidence to contravene the implication of Scripture that this is not so. As we have seen in previous studies, such a concept is purely a scientific guess which is without any adequate evidence to support it, and therefore it is perfectly proper for us to maintain the position of Scripture and to recognize that both scientists and biblicists proceed on the basis of faith, in this area.

We saw that the basic difference in man is that he is made in the image of God. This image is the spirit which is in man -- not his body or soul, the possession of which he shares to some degree with the animal creation. God loves to generalize and the body of man is part of that generalization. But the spirit of man is something quite unique, something quite different from anything the animals have. It is this spirit which renders man creative, communicative, and moral. These qualities are the reflection of the image of God in man. Man can create and invent. All man's marvelous inventiveness is involved in that one word, creativeness. Man can also communicate; there is the possibility of the free flow and interchange of ideas among us, vocally, which no animal possesses. We also are moral beings. Though there may be wide differences as to what constitutes right or wrong, there is never a man or woman made who does not have a sense of right and wrong. Therefore we are all moral beings. God has imparted his image to us and we thus share these faculties.

We saw also that man, having these godlike capacities, has been commanded to rule over nature, to be in dominion over the animal kingdom. But his authority and position, which is one of great prestige and dignity, is a derived authority. Man is only able to exercise his authority over the animal world and the world of nature to the degree that man himself is subject, in turn, to the authority of God. This is inherent in every passage of Scripture that deals with the relationship of God to man. It is man's departure from this obedience to the God who indwelt him which renders him unable to fulfill his function of dominion over the world around. Whenever man does fulfill this then he is godlike, as well as -- to coin a word -- God-able. Man has the capacity to be godlike (that is the image of God), but the likeness of God, the actual manifestation of godlikeness, has been lost and is found again only in the new creation. Without godlikeness, man becomes the most dangerous animal on the face of the earth. Some time ago it was reported that the New York Zoo had a sign on a cage in the ape section, headed, "The Most Dangerous Animal in the World." As the passersby would look into the cage they saw their own image reflected in a mirror.

There are two more factors on this sixth day which we must comment on, and then we shall bring the study of this day to a close. They are: the difference between the sexes, which is mentioned here, and the provision of

food for the entire created world. The subject of sex is brought to us in verse 27.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. {Gen 1:27 RSV}

It is significant that at the first mention of man, both sexes are named. This means that sex is no afterthought with God. Nor is woman an afterthought. As you know, there exist two widely different versions of the creation of woman. The man's version is that God created man, and then he rested; then he made woman and neither God nor man has had any rest since! The woman's version is that God made man, and then he looked at him and said, "I think I can do better than that" -- and he made a woman! But regardless of which view you hold, it is significant that Chapter 2 tells us that woman did not appear as a separate entity from the man until somewhat later in the creation scheme, coming along after the completion of Adam's task of naming the animals, and after God had accomplished the work of growing a garden in which man was to be placed. We cannot determine from the Scriptures just how long this was, but Adam was, for awhile (and this is the point that is significant in the phrasing of Verse 27), a male/ female being, incorporating in himself (not physically, but psychologically) the characteristics both of man and woman. This is highly significant.

Lambert Dolphin and Carl Gallivan have recently written a very interesting paper entitled *Sex Through the Looking Glass*, which is to be published shortly. It is based upon certain little-known passages of Scripture (i.e., little known to the general reader), such as the Song of Solomon and passages in the book of Proverbs. In these they discover that Scripture indicates that every male has within a female "shadow," i.e., the female characteristics are held as recessive traits within each man. Correspondingly, within each woman there are male recessive traits, so that she has a male shadow -- self. The relationship between these two factors is very, very important. There is a "battle of the sexes" going on within each one of us, and the struggle of each individual is to live properly in this inner "marriage" relationship. If we learn how to live in a proper relationship in this inner marriage we will be able to handle an outer one without any difficulty. There is a great deal of helpful matter in this paper, and I would commend it to you when it is published.

It indicates, as does this passage, that sex pervades our whole being. We are essentially sexual. "Oh," you say, "are you going to drag in sex emphasis, the way Freud did?" Well, in a way Freud was right, because the Bible confirms that behind all human life is this strange and mysterious element called sex. However, Freud did not go far enough. He never got beyond the psychological and physical. He could not, because of the limited knowledge he had in these matters as an unregenerate man. The Bible goes much further. The Bible indicates that we are sexual at all three levels of our being: body, soul, and spirit. It suggests that this strange force, which is such a powerful drive in human society, manifests itself at all three levels in three different ways, but it is the same force behind all. Science has discovered that x-rays, light waves, and radio waves are all manifestations of a single law, visible at three different levels. So we have here a reflection of a similar thing; the law of sex is manifest in three different ways.

On the physical level it is manifest by the familiar act that is the subject of so much discussion everywhere today. On the soulish (or psychological) level it is manifest as an urge to communicate with or to share the thoughts of another, thus it is manifest largely in terms of friendship, or close companionship; the need for acceptance by other individuals. We are all familiar with the fact that sex involves both these two levels, physical and psychological. But there is also a third manifestation of the strange power of sex, and that is the function we are exercising at this moment: the power or function of worship. Worship, too, is sex; but sex manifested at the level of the spirit. It is a strange and mysterious hunger to interchange with the divine Being, to become part with him, to share his nature and experience the ecstasy and joy of that union. Thus this strange force operates at every level of human life.

The significance of Adam as a male/female being becomes apparent when we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ came as a Second Adam. He was all that Adam was. "It behooved him," said the writer to the Hebrews, "that he be made exactly like us, except for sin," {cf, Heb 2:17}. He became the second Adam, and therefore he, too, was a male/female being. I stress the fact that this duality was not physical -- he was not a freak, a hermaphrodite but psychologically he combined within himself all the elements of male and female characteristics. It has been often noted, in reading the gospel accounts of Jesus, that he combined in himself the sternness and strength of the male, with the tenderness and gentleness of a woman. He manifested both in

perfect balance and in equal degree.

This is why men, viewing the Lord Jesus Christ, see in him the man, the manliest of men; while a woman, viewing the same remarkable person, sees in him one who thoroughly understands and empathizes with a woman's nature, able to enter into all her feelings and reactions. We know from the Scriptures that all the races were in Adam. The different colors and all the distinctions which we say mark race are merely superficial distinctions which were all derived from one source, created by various forces playing upon a single race of man. As you trace mankind back to its source in Adam they all disappear. All races were in Adam, and thus, all races are in Christ. He shares the characteristics of every race on earth. This is why he is such a universal figure, why, wherever Jesus Christ is preached among various people, they culturally identify with him instantly. He combines their cultural distinctives in himself.

Likewise both of the sexes are in Christ, so that Christian character is exactly the same, whether it is found in a man or in a woman. The tenderness, the gentleness, the softness of Christian love is exactly the same in a man as in a woman. The strength and sternness and sturdiness of Christian courage is exactly the same in a man or in a woman, it makes no difference. This is why Paul could write to the Galatians and say to them, at the close of Chapter 3, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," {Gal 3:28 RSV}. All this is wrapped up in these amazing words in the opening chapter of Genesis where we are told that Adam was created a male/female being. Thus we have a key to the makeup and character of the second Adam.

This brings us to the last thing about the sixth day, which is this matter of food. In verses 29-31, we read,

And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day. {Gen 1:29-31 RSV}

Here we learn that the intended food for man is the seed plants (the ones we call the grains), and the fruit of trees. I was somewhat startled this week while eating breakfast and after having worked on this passage somewhat. My eye was caught by the breakfast cereal box in front of me. It declared that this particular cereal was made up of a combination of rice, corn, wheat, and oats (the major grains of the earth), and suggested that it would taste best if it was eaten with peaches or berries (the fruits of the earth). I realized that we were not so far away from this sixth day of creation as many of us have imagined.

The animal world was given as food the whole kingdom of plants. But here we have something of a difficulty with the fossil records. This passage suggests that originally all the animals were plant-eating animals, herbivorous. But according to the fossil record many of the early animals were carnivorous, meat-eating animals. If you have seen any fossil skeletons of these you will recognize that their teeth certainly indicate that they were very likely carnivorous animals. Perhaps the most ferocious and formidable beast that has ever lived on earth was the Tyrannosaurus Rex. Along with the Triceratops, who was also fearsome-looking, these terrible animals were very likely meat-eating animals. There is some difficulty here in understanding this passage, although it is clear from the book of Isaiah that when the curse is removed from creation in the millennial scene, the carnivorous animals will eat plants again. "The lion shall eat straw like the ox," says Isaiah {Isa 65:25 RSV}. If a meat-eating lion can be reduced to that kind of forage, certainly God could have changed the habits of the Tyrannosaurus and the Triceratops and all the rest. I do not wish to enter into controversy in this area. However, it is instructive that the animals upon which carnivores feed are, in turn, plant eating animals. The basic food yet today of all life is vegetable. Even in the oceans the basic food of the swarming animals of the ocean is the diatoms, and algae, which are really microscopic plants and which make up, in incredible quantities, the "pastures of the sea" upon which ocean animals feed.

The point of this whole narrative is that God has made a marvelously complete provision for his creation. The world of nature is full of the most astonishing evidences of the care of God, and it is ridiculous to attempt to

explain these things by the formula, "the survival of the fittest." Not long ago a couple of Christian men were seated in a park together observing the squirrels as they were busily gathering nuts and furiously looking for suitable places to bury them. One man said to the other, "Isn't it amazing how these squirrels hide these nuts? Do you know that the Indians would observe the activities of the squirrels in the fall, and thus they would know whether the coming winter was going to be severe or mild." He added, "I think it is a most remarkable thing that God has made these animals to know what the coming winter would be like. This is a wisdom we don't possess. How ill-equipped we are in comparison to the animals, in this respect."

His friend nodded his head, but said, "Do you know that the squirrels forget half of the places where they hide these nuts? It's a pity God did not give them better memories along with their remarkable ability." The first man was rather disconcerted about this and tried to rationalize it. He thought that perhaps God made the animals to hide twice as many nuts as they needed in order that they might conveniently forget half of them, but that seemed like too strong a rationalization. He finally had to face the fact that the animal kingdom seemed to be somewhat remiss in the area of memory. But a few weeks later his friend sent him a clipping from a scientific magazine in which there was a paragraph that pointed out that certain research had been made and it was found that squirrels plant 17,000 trees per acre, by forgetting the nuts they had buried. This man suddenly realized that the lack of memory on the part of squirrels was really a proof of the greatness of the wisdom of God, who utilized these animals' forgetfulness to provide them a continuing harvest in the years to come.

There are many instances like this in nature. How is it that certain birds can fly with an unerring instinct halfway around the world, and find a tiny pinpoint of land in the middle of the ocean, though this is the first time they have made the flight? How is it that bees can maintain the temperature of their hive within a variation of a few degrees, regardless of whether it is a hot summer's day, or a cold winter's morning outside? How is it that certain varieties of spiders have learned how to capture bubbles of air and build nests under water, bringing those bubbles down from the surface, and thus creating tiny diving bells in which they rear their young? Who taught them to do a strange thing like that?

How is it that certain hunting wasps are able to provide fresh meat for their larvae by seeking out a certain species of beetle and stinging it so as to paralyze but not to kill, making it possible for the meat to remain fresh though the beetle remains immobile until the larvae are hatched? That has deep freezers beaten all hollow! By the time the larvae emerge the mother is dead, and yet the larvae repeat this whole procedure, without error. Who has taught the animals to act like this and has made such abundant provision for them? It has been calculated that if every ant on the face of the earth were to be exterminated except for one pair, they would soon be able to reproduce all the skill and wonders that are present in the ant world. They would have lost none of the knowledge of ants.

But look at men. Look how apparently ill-equipped we are, with basically no instincts at all. We must be patiently taught everything all over again in each generation. If children are abandoned to the wilds, as sometimes through accidents they have been, their lives will be more beast-like than the beasts. They cannot even talk to one another. After the age of 12 or so, they can only learn a very small minimum of knowledge. Is it not humbling to realize that we could solve the problems of earth by removing one species, *Homo sapiens*? If something happened tomorrow to remove man from the face of the earth, it would not be long until the skies would clear and the stars could be seen at night; the waters and rivers would run clear again, the forests would grow back on the denuded hillsides, and the earth would be restored to an orderly, balanced, beautiful kingdom once again.

What is the problem? Man is the problem. It is man who pollutes the water and the air, ravages the forests, strips the ground, and exhausts the resources of earth. Now he threatens to bring everything down to a smoking nuclear ruin, destroying all animal life along with himself. What is the reason? It is because we have lost our way. We have no understanding of how to handle the commission given us to rule and reign in the natural world. We are out of step with nature. Man is now opposed to nature; he is like an orphan in God's universe.

Why is this? The Lord Jesus put his finger right on the answer when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," {cf, Matt 4:4}. When God provided bread as the basic food of man, bread made from the grains of earth, the seed-bearing plants and the fruits, he

intended, as we have seen all through this account, that such physical bread would be a picture of the bread desperately needed at the psychological and spiritual level of man as well. This analogy has been true in everything we have seen so far. The physical is the picture of that which is more vital and more necessary behind it.

That "bread" of the spirit is the understanding of God's will. It was said of the Lord Jesus by the Apostle John, "The Son of God has come and has given us an understanding." "I am that bread of life," said Jesus {John 6:35}. "He that eats of me shall never hunger." He will never walk in darkness, will never be at a loss to know what is the next step to take to solve the problems with which he is confronted, will not be left, like a naked homeless orphan, wandering blindly through a mysterious universe whose forces he does not understand, but he will know where he is going and what he is doing, and how to do it. The Son of God has come, and he gives us an understanding.

Is not this essentially the meaning of those remarkable words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 6? Jesus said,

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" {Matt 6:25-26a RSV}

"And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field; which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." {Matt 6:28-33 RSV}

Not yours -- in the same way that God provides for the birds and the animals and the flowers -- automatically, without their thinking. But when we begin to put first that which is of first importance, there is imparted to us an understanding by which we can see how to supply, through the normal faculties given to us as men, all that mankind needs in terms of food and shelter and clothing and supply, so that no one will starve, no one will go naked, no one will go hungry, no one will lack.

Is this not the promise of the Great Society? But it comes only at this point -- "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Then God promises that you shall be again part of that kingdom for which full and ample provision is made, and in which the least needs of life are understood and provided for. You will experience once again the care of a heavenly Father who knows how to provide all that his creation needs. "I am that bread of life," {John 6:35} said Jesus, and entrance into that kingdom comes only by a response to him. That includes not only that initial response which brings us into the kingdom of God, taking us out of the cold and darkness and lostness of life outside God's kingdom and outside of nature, and putting us back in to operate as we were intended to do; but also there is to be a continuing response by which we go on to learn more and more of him, and thus learn how God intended human life to be. As we do, the inner problems, the inner turmoils, begin to disappear. These strange tensions that tear us apart, these fears that hinder us and keep us from being what God wants us to be, these destructive habits that seize us in an iron grip and will not let us be free, all begin to disappear, to lose their power over us, and we are set free to be men and women as God intended men and women to be. "If you continue in my words," said Jesus, "you will be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," {cf, John 8:32}.

Prayer:

Our Father, we pray that we may come to know your word and to know it in its fullness of revelation. How blind we have been, how lazy we have been, who will not learn that which is

set before us so freely, so fully. Bring us back, Lord, to this book, to search it, not only in public meetings such as this but in private hours that will make us masters of this revelation, understanding the greatness of the truths that are here set before us. Make us ashamed to be anything less than thoroughly conversant with your word. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

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