

THE MYSTERY OF MAN'S NATURE

ROBERT LEO ODOM

A GREAT mystery that has teased the mind of man through the ages is the riddle of his own being. Wise men of every generation have thought upon the problem, and many books have been written about it. The great reason is the dreadful fact of death.

Death is a solemn reality, one that the most rabid, ranting atheist cannot deny. It respects no one. Both the proud, jewel-bedecked millionaire in his palace, and the ragged, filthy tramp on the road must bow to this their common enemy. No scientist has concocted an elixir of life to make our stay here eternal; no medical man has discovered an antidote for death.

Many think that they contain within themselves an immortal being—



another self—as enduring as eternity. They suppose that no matter how their journey on earth shall end—whether dragged down to the grave by disease, or engulfed in the sea and eaten by sharks; whether consumed to ashes by a raging fire, or blown to bits by a bursting bomb—theirs is to be a ceaseless, conscious existence. Is this notion based solidly upon truth?

To know what is the state of the dead, one must understand the nature of the living. The Sacred Scriptures throw much light on this mystery. They tell us that “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.” Genesis 2:7. Man became a living soul by God’s act of creation, by the union of “the breath of life” from God with the body of flesh made from “the dust of the ground.”

Just how the Lord formed the first human body from the dust of the ground is a secret that is not revealed in the Holy Bible. Man cannot understand science so deep as that. Yet we see, in another way, the process of creation going on before our eyes every day. When we eat the vegetables, fruits, and grains which the earth produces, the elements thus taken from the ground are changed into blood, flesh, bones, nails, hair, skin, brain, and other parts of the human body. Scientists cannot fully explain this daily con-

version of the earthly elements into living human substance.

The “breath of life” is the motive power of the human body. When the first man’s body was formed from the dust of the ground, it was perfect. But it had no life in it and could not move. The Creator took that lifeless form and “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Then the human body began to live—the heart beating, the blood flowing, the lungs breathing, the muscles twitching with power, the stomach and intestines working, and the brain functioning.

The “breath of life” comes from God, for with Him is “the fountain of life.” Psalm 36:9. Man is not like a clock that is wound up once and then left to run down. Food must be eaten daily for the restoration of the tissues of the body and to refuel the physical machinery. But “man doth not live by bread only.” Deuteronomy 8:3. He depends constantly on life flowing from God, “for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28.

“Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.” Genesis 2:19. These creatures were made not only of the dust of the ground, but they also have “the breath of life”—or “the breath of the spirit of life”—in their nostrils. (Genesis 7:13-15, 21, 22, A.R.V.) Hence it is written of man and beast that “as the one

Man was created by the hand of the Creator of the universe and did not evolve through the ages by a process of natural selection.

The same Jesus who raised the dead to life here on earth, breathed into Adam's body the breath of life in the beginning and he became a living soul.

dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath. . . . All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20. The Holy Scripture also speaks of living animals as souls. (Genesis 1:20, 24, margin; Revelation 16:3.)

What, then, is the soul? It is a body endowed with life by the Creator. A living human being is a soul. When Adam's body was formed of the dust of the ground, and the breath of life from God was breathed into it, he "became a living soul."

Where was Adam before he was created? He did not yet exist. Before his creation the dust of the ground did exist, but it was not Adam. God had life long before He made man, but it was not Adam. While the dust of the ground and breath of life were not yet combined by the process of creation, Adam did not exist. But when the two things—the elements of the earth and the life from God—were united by the Creator in the proper way, this combination resulted in the existence of a living soul. Therefore the living soul is a composite thing.

Let us illustrate this. For example, the electric current is not a light. The bulb is not a light. But when the current is properly run into the bulb, a light appears. The burning light is the result of the proper combination of the bulb and the electric current. Or imagine that you have in one place a bag of nails and in another place a stack of boards. The sack of nails is not a house. The pile of boards is not a house. But when the nails and the boards are properly put together, a house exists. In a somewhat similar way the soul is a composite thing, its existence depending on a proper combination of the earthy body and the life from God.

What happens to the light when the bulb is broken or the current is turned off? Because the existence of the light depends on the proper combination of the electric current and the bulb, the separation of the one from the other naturally results in the extinction of the light. And what happens to the house when the

nails are pulled out and put into a bag, and the boards are removed and stacked into a pile? Does the house continue to exist? No.

If the soul did not exist until after the Creator combined the breath of life from Himself with the earthy body that He formed from the dust of the ground, then what will happen to the soul when the breath of life is separated from the body?

Here is God's own answer to our question: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit [breath of life] shall return to God who gave it." Ecclesiastes 12:7. Thus *death is the creative process reversed*. In creation the human body was formed from the dust of the ground. In death it is dissolved to dust and returned to the ground. In creation the breath of life came from God; in death it returns to God. Death is, therefore, the cessation of life for man. He ceases to be a living soul when he dies.

When the Lord made man, He said to His Son: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis 1:26. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of

God created He him." Verse 27. Man's nature was not made essentially the same as that of the Deity. If such had been the case, man would be a god. By confusing man's nature with his likeness to his Maker *in form*, some people have thought that we have been endowed with immortality, that the soul cannot die, and that it is as eternal as God Himself. They even allege that He, using the hottest hell of fire imaginable, cannot put an end to man's existence. Hence they talk about "the immortality of the soul," an expression that is not found in the Book of God. But the Lord "is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28.

Only God is immortal, that is, incapable of dying. He is "the King eternal, immortal." 1 Timothy 6:17. He is "the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality." 1 Timothy 6:15, 16. God does not depend upon another being for life, as we do, because He is self-existing. "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John (Continued on p. 4.)



England's Most Haunted House

DALLAS YOUNGS

OUR attention was directed to England's Most Haunted House by an article appearing in the December, 1948, issue of the *Coronet*. We believe in "haunted houses," but we don't believe in them in just the same way that most people do. Most people believe that a house is haunted by the returning spirits of those who formerly lived in the place, or by the ghost of someone who was murdered in the house. We are fully prepared to accept the fact that some houses are the scenes of apparitions and psychic demonstrations, but we are not prepared to accept the theory that these demonstrations are caused by the returning spirits of the dead.

According to Mr. Henry Lee, author of the afore-mentioned article, the haunted Borley Rectory is conceded by investigators to be the real thing. In this case explanations of the demonstrations cannot be found in the wind moving the limb of a tree against the side of the house. One of the many apparitions that haunt Borley Rectory is described by Mr. Lee as follows:

"The lights materialized into an old-fashioned black coach and team, which lumbered rapidly toward him across the road and right into the yard. The apparition was so vivid that Cooper saw the straining horses and two top-hatted coachmen on the box. Moonlight flickered on the harness, and the head lamps gleamed."

This has been going on for seventy-five years. On one occasion a clergyman heard a woman's voice saying, "Don't, Carlos, don't!" Carlos was the nickname of a former resident of the Rectory. But these things constituted but a small part of the demonstrations all of which appeared to be inexplicable. "There were the sounds, too, of church music, footsteps, raps, taps, crashings, bumps, thuds, and rustlings galore. Many of

these occurred while professional investigators were in the house, with all entrances and windows sealed against trickery.

"At times Borley was a bedlam of flying pebbles and slates, smashing candlesticks, levitating bars of soap. Mrs. L. A. Foyster, semi-invalid wife of the last rector, was hit on the head by flying metal and thrice thrown from her bed. Her husband was pelted with stones, and a water jug fell on his head as he slept. Curious writings and pencil marks appeared on the walls, right under the noses of investigators....

"Captain Gregson, last tenant of the manse—'Within a day or two of our taking possession of the Rectory, we lost our dog in a strange way. He was a black cocker, the most sane and shrewd dog possible. I took him out one night to get water from the courtyard pump. I distinctly heard footsteps at the far end of the courtyard, as though something were treading over the wooden trap door leading to the cellars. My dog stopped dead and positively went mad. He shrieked and tore away, still shrieking, and we have not seen or heard of him since. I searched the yard, but no one was there.'

"Shortly afterwards, the Captain purchased another spaniel. In the courtyard, the second dog displayed the same wild alarm and vanished forever."

We are unable to accept the proposition that these psychic demonstrations are due to the returning spirits of the dead because of the fact that the Bible gives us to understand that the dead are incapable of returning in any manner or in any degree to their former habitations. God's Word assures us that the dead know not anything:

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not

any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10.

Since the dead are unconscious, since there is no knowledge or wisdom in the grave, and since their memory is departed, what then is the explanation of the psychic demonstrations? The explanation is this: We have inhabiting the atmosphere of this earth beings that are unseen, unknown and unrecognized by most people. However, the Bible leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of these beings. The following quotations give us an understanding of these supernatural beings of the atmosphere:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon



The first lie told in the garden of Eden by the Serpent to Eve has been the foundation of all the deception of evil spirits and ghosts.

fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9.

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2:4. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitations, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.

Following the war in heaven the Devil and one-third of the angels were cast out into this earth where they have been ever since. It was they who led Adam and Eve into disobedience. It is they who incite war and crime. It is they who stir up lust and passion, and it is they who impersonate our dead friends in the spiritualistic seances and who are responsible for the psychic phenomena manifest around such places as England's Most Haunted House.

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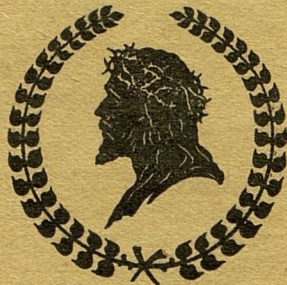
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5:26. Therefore both the Father and the Son can create living creatures, and they can restore to life those who have died.

Although the Creator did not endow man with an immortal nature, He did purpose that Adam should live eternally, but only on condition of obedience to the divine law. With Adam's reach was placed the tree of life, and as long as he was obedient, he could partake freely of its fruit and live.

The Lord tested man that he might show whether he would obey and be worthy of life. To Adam He said: "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." Genesis 2:16, 17. Thus Adam was a mortal being, one capable of dying. The only way whereby he might have avoided death and lived eternally was by obeying his Maker. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezekiel 18:4, 20.

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JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

*The time is fast approaching
When Christ shall claim His own;
The days are right upon us
That prophecy hath shown!
'Tis now we need His power;
Now claim His promise sure,
For He alone can strengthen
The Christian to endure.*

*Ask Him for His guidance
And never cease to pray;
Angels He will send thee
To guide thee in the way.
God's great secret service
Awaits thy humble call;
They shall bear thee upward,
Lest thou dash thy foot and fall.*

*Beauteous heavenly guidance!
Tireless witnessing!
'Tis God's appointed cherubim
That joy to rebels bring.
Trust thy future to Him;
Fret not o'er the past!
In thy earthly sojourn
He will hold thee fast.*

*Let others hear of Jesus
Who means so much to thee;
Perhaps some guilty sinner
The love of God might see!
That love, whose life is endless,
Can pardon, strengthen, cheer
And sanctify forever
Whom God hath chosen here!*

—RAYMOND H. NASVALL.



"The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4. That "liar" (John 8:

44) who contradicted the Word of God was "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Revelation 12:9.

Our first parents believed that lie told by Satan, and they sinned. Then God said: "And now, lest he [man] put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. . . . So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Genesis 3:22-24.

Hence "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. Our first parents could not pass immortality on to us, because they themselves never had possessed it.

But we are not left to perish. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22. One of Adam's descendants—the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15)—would accomplish man's redemption. That promised Seed was Christ. (Galatians 3:16.) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. Therefore immortality is not something that we already possess. It is God's gift to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Timothy 1:10. By faith in Christ we can conquer death!

When shall we obtain this promised immortality? In the resurrection day. Jesus says of the man who believes on Him: "I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:40. "We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

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