

Man in the Image of God

by Henry T. Anderson

Man is the image of God, and through his consciousness of himself and his intelligent nature, we can gain knowledge of God's existence.

Scripture: Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:14, John 14:6, Romans 1:20, 1 Corinthians 2:11, Colossians 3:10

Topics: "Image Of God", "Human Nature"

Description

Henry T. Anderson preaches about the image of God, emphasizing that nothing visible or sensible can fully represent the invisible and supersensible nature of God. He explains that man, created in God's image, is distinct from the body and possesses a mind that reflects God's intelligence, will, and freedom. Anderson argues that man's consciousness of self and existence serves as proof of God's existence, making revelation a necessity. He concludes that man, as a sinner in need of a Savior, finds fulfillment and truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ, addressing the deep longing of the soul for salvation.

Transcript

There is not in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth, an image of God, nor is there aught that is like him. The Hebrew lawgiver forbade the Jews to make any likeness of anything in heaven, or earth, or sea; and gave as a reason for it, that, when God spoke to them from the mount, no similitude was seen by them. Nothing that is visible, nought that is sensible, can give a knowledge of that which is invisible and supersensible. We do not perceive God by one of our senses; for if we could do this, it would be a proof that God is a material being. The senses are operated on by that which is material. The eye, the ear, are material organs, and are affected only by material things. Visible forms and sounds, or voices, are all material. The words which are heard as sounds are nought but symbols; so those which are written, affecting the senses only. The mind is immaterial, and lives upon things of its own nature. I exclude every material thing, whatsoever it may be, from the possession of a power to communicate the knowledge of God; and the reason is repeated--that no material thing is like God, or possessed [486] of his image. If we know God at all, we must look, we are compelled to look at the image which God has made. This image is man; not the body of man, but man himself. For the Scripture informs us that God made man in his image and likeness.

There is a vast difference between man and the body of man. I am not my body. I am conscious to myself of myself, and of my body as distinct from myself. I am conscious to myself of possessing will, and the power to move my body. My will is not the body that is moved, but the moving cause. My body is not

myself. Body forms no part of the image of God. The body is not the man; for man is made in the image of God. The body is visible; but man, in the image of God, is invisible. The body does not think, nor will, nor reason. I am conscious to myself of will, of reason; and I know that the hand that now controls this pen does not think, but is an instrument subservient to my reason and my will. Whenever my body moves, I find in my will a cause of motion. But when my body moves, I find the motion is in obedience to an intelligent principle. I am conscious of an intelligent principle within me; I am conscious of thought; I am conscious of will; I am conscious of freedom or liberty; I am conscious of existence. I am; I think; I will; I plan; I devise; I design; I move my body. What, then, is this I? The I, or ego, is the man--a thinking, designing, reasoning, willing, active mind. The mind is the image of God. God is spirit; man is spirit: God is free; man is free: God plans; man plans: God works; man works: God is intelligent; man is intelligent: God wills; man wills: God rules; man rules. I move my body, and subdue the animal creation; God moves the universe, and subdues all things. My will moves my body: God moves the universe.

I find myself to be the image of God--finitely so. What is in me finitely, is in God infinitely. I can not divest myself of the knowledge of myself. I think, reason and move, by a necessity of my nature. I can not divest myself of my consciousness. It adheres to me. No effort of mine can throw it from me. What then? I prove myself to be what I am, and I can not avoid knowing this. I see the universe around me moving in harmony, and to a certain end. I can not avoid the conclusion that an infinite spirit rules the universe. I can as soon blot out of existence a consciousness of myself, as I can reject the knowledge of God. Each is, with me, impossible. My consciousness of myself is to myself an irresistible proof of the being of God.

Now, this consciousness of myself is not a result of sense. Consciousness of will is not derived from sight, or hearing, or touch, or taste, or smell. I seek for the intelligent within the intelligent. The intelligent is not to be found in the non-intelligent. It is in my own intelligent nature, which God has made in his own likeness, that I look for a proof of a higher intelligence. Mind alone perceives mind. [487] Surely we do not arrive at a knowledge of our existence by sight, or hearing, or any sense. Does my consciousness of my mental being depend on information derived from some other being? Do I see my mind through the medium of a fleshly eye? Do I hear my mind through the medium of my ear of flesh? Do I taste my mind? But enough.

Man being such, revelation is a necessity. It must be, and can not be supposed not to be. Man being such as he is, the absence of a revelation would be a greater wonder than aught that is written in God's book of wonders. The oracles of God are in the order of man's nature. They are the necessary consequences of the creation of man. A sound intelligence can not deny the existence of God, because each man's intelligence is proof to him of a higher intelligence. An intellectual atheist, or an atheist in intellect, never existed, in my estimation. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"--or, as Gesenius, "The impious man has said in his heart, There is no God." The wish is father to the thought. A corrupt heart alone, and not the intellect, harbors the thought that there is no God. God's existence admitted, as it must be from every man's knowledge of himself, a revelation of himself in speech is necessarily consequent.

Now add to the above considerations the fact that man is a sinner, and that he is subject to death; and, if no Saviour had come into the world, then the intelligent creation might justly have been astonished. Could it be possible for God to create a being in his own image and likeness, and see him led into sin, deceived, and subject to eternal ruin, and not put forth his arm to save? This is, in my judgment, impossible. I find, then, in man, and in his present condition, a full argument, an irresistible proof, of the truth of all that I read in the holy oracles. That which I there read I find adapted to my nature and all my wants. The oracles of God address themselves to man's intelligence; and the response of every sane intellect is, that they are true. The gospel of Jesus Christ addresses itself to the poor, the broken-hearted, the captive, the weary

and the heavy-laden; and finds in every heart a response that it is divine. As the thirsty soul longs and pants for the stream of water, so pants and thirsts the soul of man for the saving power of the gospel. When presented to such, it satisfies every wish. Man can ask no more.

The materialist, if a logician, is an atheist. For the denial of the existence of the spirit of man bears no argument for, no proof of, a God. The argument from nature is legitimate only in the hands of him who perceives in himself an intelligent principle. From himself he argues justly an infinite spirit. I am a spirit with finite powers; therefore, an infinite spirit with powers infinite. If [488] intelligence is a result of matter, or a modification of matter, there is no God the theist adores. If the existence of intelligence depends on the existence of various modifications of matter; these, always changing, and ever uncertain, must bring the conclusion that intelligence ceases to exist at each change. Materialists are, therefore, atheists, if they are logicians. If a materialist should believe in the saying of Moses that man is made in the image of God, then he must believe in a material God--a God who is like man in body, consequently perishable.--Hence the truth of that saying, "Nullus in microcosmo spiritus, nullus in macrocosmo deus."

While this matter is before me, I will notice the fact so often appealed to by materialists, that the oracles of God nowhere say that the soul is immortal. It appears to me that the apostles must have been guided by the all-wise Spirit in their selection of terms; and this fact, among many others--that they have not used such expressions as immortal soul, immortal God, etc.--is a convincing proof of their inspiration. If there are immortal souls, there must be mortal souls. If there are immortal Gods, there must be mortal Gods. We know of no such beings in Scripture. The Gentiles had their immortal gods, because those who were immortal gods with them, were our mortal men. It is evident that those who talk of the immortality of the soul must, if they are logicians, admit its mortality also; for, of whatever thing immortality is predicted at any time, of the same thing mortality must be predicted at some time. So Scripture speaks of the immortality of the body, because the same is now mortal. But soul can not be said to be either mortal or immortal; since these are predicted of body alone. "This mortal shall put on immortality." There are no immortal gods, nor immortal devils, nor immortal angels, nor immortal spirits in the language of inspiration. God lives; spirits live forever and ever. We are, like God, living beings, and our existence will continue as long as his--throughout the ages of ages. The man who can prove that a human spirit will cease to exist, must prove, by the same arguments, that God will cease to exist.

From these considerations, we are warranted in concluding that man is the most illustrious, the most noble of the creations of the living God. He is, in creation, next to the great I AM. Nothing in creation stands above him in true worth and grandeur. To know God by means of man, is no small matter.

I have long since ceased to inquire for or to read books on evidence. Man is my testimony from my proof of God. I am satisfied with man as a testimony. I am; therefore God is. Why do I speak? I speak because God has spoken. The sceptic himself must admit that the ear was formed to hear. Either God made it, or it made itself.

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