

The Glory of the Terrestrial

ONE OF THE MARVELS of the creative works of God is their almost endless variety. Many believe that this variety simply indicates development and progression, which fluctuates as one species evolves into another. This continues, they say, haphazardly and endlessly. The Bible disagrees. The Bible teaches that the great variety in creation is by the Creator's design and that species are fixed.

The highest order, or species, in God's earthly creation is the human. This is referred to by the Apostle Paul as the "terrestrial," which simply means "earthly." (I Cor. 15:40) Man was created in the image of God, and in his perfection he reflected the glory of the Creator's character.

Man was not a blending of earthly and spiritual natures. In all the myriad creations of God there are no hybrids, except as man has produced them. While a very limited number of God's human creatures, upon conditions of faithfulness in following in the footsteps of Jesus, will be exalted to a higher nature in the resurrection, this does not mean that humans are, by nature, partly spiritual.

The perfect man was given dominion over all the lower forms of the earthly creations. In this respect he was endowed with the official glory of the Creator, who exercises dominion over the entire universe.

Because of disobedience to divine law, man not

only lost life but he also lost his dominion over the earth. As a result, we do not see the glory of God reflected in the human race as it was possessed by the first man, Adam. Today we see man fallen, imperfect and dying, and unable to extricate himself from the thrall of sickness and death into which he was plunged because of his sin.

God, however, has continued to love his human creatures and has made provision to deliver them from sin and death. God's provision is redemption through Jesus. Thus, while today we see man dying, and without his dominion, by faith we see that Jesus has already given his life that man's life and terrestrial glory may, during the thousand years of the Messianic kingdom, be restored to him.

It is not the divine purpose to exalt the people of the earth to a higher plane of life but, through a resurrection from death, to restore them to life on the earth. This is expressed by the Apostle Peter in the word "restitution," which means not exaltation but "restoration."—Acts 3:20,21

What a glorious provision this is for a sin-cursed and dying race! Today the world is filled with misery and woe, degradation and sorrow, all of which will pass away as the work of restitution progresses. Eventually, not a stain of sin will mar the peace and harmony of humanity. There will not be an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of the former reign of sin and death. Instead of dying and going into the tomb, the people will be returning from death, the power of God being utilized to restore them to life. This is God's loving provision for man. This is the destiny for humanity that has been made possible through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This will be the restored glory of the terrestrial.—Rev. 21:3-5 ■