

most hidden recess of the soul is God by his Holy Spirit. He alone can fully break this solitariness of the soul. He alone can comfort him who is caught in the snares of death. He alone can save the soul of him who has long sought diversion in the vain pleasures of the world.

12

“GOD CREATED MAN AFTER HIS IMAGE.”

All true religion and godliness springs from the fact that we have been created after the Image of God. Some of us have passed from the period in the Christian life of “milk for babes” to that of “strong meat for adults.” We understand therefore that calling upon God and walking in the ways of his laws do not by themselves constitute true religion and godliness, and that the secret of salvation is unveiled in all its fullness only when we have fellowship with the Eternal and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Outward forms of worship are not without value. Provisionally they are the only thinkable ones. Although they do not make sure of heaven, they exert binding influences upon many thousands of people which prevent the dissolution of society. But the plant of spirituality outgrows at length the outward form and goes on, in the words of the Apostle, unto perfection. It comes to blossom in the very gleam of God’s majesty. It is fostered by the outshining of his glory and watered by the dews from above. Thus it comes to a personal knowledge of the Lord, as a man knoweth his brother; to a dwelling of the soul in

the tabernacle of the Lord, and to the indwelling of the Holy One in the temple of the heart.

This requires a new emphasis. Religious forms change and pass away, but that which remains the same under all skies, and which does not lose but gain in strength to the end of life, is the blessed communion of soul with the Father of spirits, so that by night we retire with God, and at the dawn of day we awaken with him, and that all the way of our earthly pilgrimage we follow our good Shepherd.

Moreover, the more intimate communion of saints consists in this alone. It surely binds heart to heart when we learn that others hold the same faith as ourselves, that we belong to One church, and that together we break One bread and drink One cup. But in the great journey through life to the courts of everlasting light companionship is sweetest with those who, under whatever outward form, have given us intimations that they live in communion with God.

This relates back to our creation. That is to say, true religion and our capacity for genuine godliness spring solely from our creation after God's Image and after the Likeness of the Almighty. This is not altered by the fact that we have been conceived and born in sin. Without regeneration there is no true religion. In this re-birth the fundamental trait of creation after God's Image is revived again. The fact that we have been born in sin can therefore be passed by. The subject in hand is conscious, actual fellowship with Our Father who is in heaven. And this depends upon the necessary harmony which of itself prevails between the Original and what the

image shows of it. The sodality of the Original and the image is felt and understood at once. One can not be an image, or image-bearer and an exhibitor of the same apart from the relation that binds him to the Original. If a picture is a good likeness, it is this because the original is what the likeness shows that he is. This is more striking with a photograph than with a painted portrait or with a face that is cut from marble. For with these the artist painter or sculptor comes in as the third factor between the original and the picture. But not so with a photograph. By the operation of light upon the sensitive plate the original here creates his own image and forms the features after those of his own face. And what a person makes in a photograph is an exceedingly weak imitation, which only resembles from afar what God did when he said: "Let us make man after our likeness," and then created him so.

Intimate fellowship is only possible between people of like mind. There is fellowship of a less intimate sort. An impressionable mind communes with nature when she is arrayed in her beautiful garments of spring. This fellowship with plants and flowers is more intimate than with the starry skies. It is closer still with the horse we ride, with the dog that greets us joyfully at the gate, and the lark whose morning song charms wood and dale. With stream and mountain, moon and star, with flower and domestic animal, however, fellowship is always from a distance. An animal may look us in the face with marked expression, but we do not understand it. Animal life is different from our own. True fellowship only comes when we get in touch with man. Even as St. Paul put

the question to the Corinthians, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (I-2:11). Man alone can understand man. The more human we are ourselves, the more fully will we understand the truly human in others. Of course, always with this difference, that the more nearly we are alike, the closer will be our communion. A compatriot comes closer to us than a foreigner. A member of the family, a professional colleague, a peer in society, one whose lot and experience in life are similar with ours comes nearer to us than he whose settings of life are in every way different from our own. Like alone understands like.

The Divine saying, "Let us make man after our image and likeness," implied of itself therefore the Divine intention of creating beings who would be capable of Divine fellowship and who would be susceptible to this glorious communion. If, then, all true religion consists of this mutual fellowship, it follows that when God created a being after his likeness He thereby simultaneously created religion.

God magnified his omnipotence in the works of nature; and the more fully its early chaotic estates refined and unfolded themselves, until the murmur of waters bore fruition in the note of the nightingale, the more majestic became the revelation of the splendor of Divine Almightyness. The whole earth is full of God's glory. But there is no self-conscious and responsive fellowship between all this and God. God stands above nature. Nature is subject to His majesty, but it has no knowledge or understanding of God and therefore no single note of thanksgiving, worship or com-

munion goes forth from Nature to God. There is power in it everywhere, but there is no fellowship of love in it.

And this is the Divine desire. God must needs address his creation and obtain a response from it in return. He must needs establish close, personal fellowship and mutual communion with his creation. The eternal, knowing, loving, seeking Father desires to be known, to be loved and to be sought. The flame of religion must inwardly gleam through the works of creation, even as in the outward sphere the sun gleams throughout the earth. But this is impossible and can not be thinkable, except as God creates a being after His own image and likeness—a being of his own generation, and who therefore is a child, who will cleave to him as Father; a being whose distance and distinction from his infinite majesty will be unfathomably deep, but who, nevertheless, feeling and knowing the Divine life in his own life, will associate with God as brother with brother, and who will thus be brought into secret and sacred communion with him.

Religion, therefore, is not founded upon our creation after the Divine Image for our sake, but for the sake of God. Only our earnest endeavor to cultivate this hidden communion with God will fulfill the purpose for which he created us after his likeness. For though it is true that this glorious distinction of our creation in the likeness of God renders us unspeakably rich and happy, that it baptizes us into the Divine family, so that we are children of the Most Highest, and are thereby elevated to princely holdings in the heavenly sanctuary, he who counts this the all

and all of this matter will utterly and dismally fail. In this respect also that which is first in rank and order is not what makes us happy and blessed, but that which tends to realize God's purpose. It is his purpose to be known and to be loved; to be sought after and to be worshipped; and to have the offerings of conscious, worshipful communion with himself brought to his altars by his Creation. His purpose is not merely to be great, but to be known, to be praised and to be loved as such. And, therefore, God created man after his Image and after his Likeness.

13

"NONE OF ME."

The new paganism, which is broadly on the increase, differs from that against which prophets and Apostles protested, in that it has no idols. Speaking metaphorically it has. It is properly said that a mother makes an idol of her child, a wife of her husband. One worships his idol in art and another in Mammon. However common, though, this manner of speech may be, the thing indicated is not idolatry proper, for this exhibits visible idols. It builds temples and pagodas in their behalf. It appoints priests, burns sacrifices and orders public festivals in their honor. Ancient paganism, with its visible idolatry, was personal. Modern paganism soars in vague enchantments.

In Paris and in London, and as report has it, in New York, societies have been formed that assemble in pagan-like chapels and kneel and mutter prayers before idols. But these do not lead the new pagan movement. For the most part these people have lived for some years in pagan-