

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.

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### "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-

Asiatic countries, and upon their return imitate in Europe or America what they have seen in Asia, and in which they took part while there. This is but a little flaw on the surface of things and has no significance in the great movement of spirits.

The modern pagan movement, on the other hand, is driven by an entirely impersonal object. It has no thought of setting up idolatrous images. It scorns idolatry proper which is still perpetuated in India, China and Japan. But it is negatively impelled by the denial of a living, personal God and positively by doting on vague ideals, or else on pleasure and money. This makes warfare against modern paganism far more difficult than that which Bible prophets and apostles waged against the idolatry of antiquity. Then name was contrasted with name, person with person, image with image. Not Baal, but Jehovah. Not Jupiter, but the Lord of hosts. Not the image of the great Diana, but Christ, the image of the Invisible God. The personal character which paganism derived from visible idolatry made it imperative to set up by the side of it an equally personal object of worship. Thus Sion was contrasted with Basan, Jerusalem with Gerizim; priest with priest. And the living, eternal and adorable Jehovah was contrasted with Moloch and Baal. Hence the scornful description of idols. Ears have they, but they hear not. Eyes have they, but they see not. Mouths have they, but they speak not. They who made them are like unto them. O, Israel, trust thou in the Lord (Ps. 115:6).

There is nothing of this now. In our times a man dotes on humanity. Another man has a zeal

for art. The higher forms of life are loved and appreciated. Multitudes engage in the chase after pleasure and wealth, and obey the dictates of passion. By way of reaction this has resulted in the fact that they who in other respects are faithful Christians have abandoned far too greatly the personal element in the living God, and in turn dote on the beautiful ideas of mercy and love, of peace and the higher good. But personal communion with the personal God is no longer cultivated with that warmth of devotion and consecration which was the secret of the heroic faith of the fathers.

It is granted that the immortal ideal of love and mercy indicates the essential nature of God. But the trouble is that instead of saying, "God is love" or "love is God," one forms an idea of love for himself, transforms this idea into an ideal, which eclipses God from sight. And estranged from the living God, one dotes on creations of his own thought. Applying this to Christ, we reach the same result. In contrast with an image of an idol, God has set up his Image in his Only-begotten Son, as Christ is revealed in the flesh. This relegates ideas and ideals to the background. And in the foreground, in clear and transparent light, stands the Christ, the incarnated Word. All the enthusiasm with which Christianity was carried into the world sprang from this heaven-wide difference. The philosophers of Greece and Rome doted on beautiful ideals. The Apostles were enthused with love for the living Christ, the tangible Image of the living God. The secret of their power lay in this personal attachment of faith to the living Christ in

very person. It was a heart-to-heart love that conquered the world in that early age. Love, and attachment to the Mediator between God and man, worked the downfall of ancient paganism. When St. Thomas puts his hand on the wound-print in Jesus' side, sinks to his knees and exclaims: "My Lord and my God," all the power of personal worship of God in Christ reveals itself. And by this alone the church of Christ has become what it is.

This is also lost to us. First, this power was weakened by a sentimental holding fast to Christ as man. Thereby God, if not forgotten, was obscured in his majesty. And now even Christians put back the person of Christ, and pay homage to an ideal in Christ in order soon to own a relation to this ideal which is stronger than to the person of Christ himself. By admiration of the ideal the faith is demolished.

This is the Lord's complaint in Asaph's Song, Psalm 81:11: "And Israel would none of me." It could not have been expressed more personally than this. They love my creation. They enjoy the world which I called into being. They admire the wisdom which I have made to shine as light in darkness. They dote on love and mercy, the feeling and appreciation of which I implanted in their breast. But me they leave alone. Me they overlook. Of me they have no thought. To me they consecrate no personal love of their heart. With me they seek no communion. Me they do not know. Personal fellowship with me has no charm for them. They have everything that is mine, but they would none of me.

This complaint is often overheard among us.

People will enjoy our belongings and take pleasure with our goods. They will honor our ideas and adorn themselves with flowers from our garden. They will praise our deeds without stint, but they hold themselves aloof from every personal touch. No trace of affection for us can be discovered in their heart. No sympathy for us can be observed in anything they do. They show no desire to have personal knowledge of us. The reason for this, no doubt, in many cases, is to be found with the person himself. We can admire a man, honor him, praise his works and his life, and yet say, "He is no man to invite personal affection."

This, however, can not be the case with God. He alone is adorable. He is the highest Good. He is Love. In everything He is loveable and eternally to be desired. And when in spite of all this God complains, "They would have none of Me," it is directed against our heart and against our faith. In words of deepest feeling it expresses God's grief over our disregard of him. I alone am He whom they should desire, and lo! they would have none of Me. They do not love Me. With heart and soul they do not cleave to Me. To their personal affection I, their God, am not the strong and all-else expelling center of attraction.

This is a complaint against everything that is superficial, vague and unreal in our Christian life; against weakened conceptions of religion; against faithlessness of heart. Religious weakening shows itself in lack of holy ardour, in the quenched fires of nobler enthusiasm, and in the congealed state of the waters of holy mysticism. This is partly a

personal wrong which springs from an overestimate of self, from too much self-sufficiency, from lack of dependence and fidelity. It is also an evil of the times, a general, contagious disease whereby one poisons another. It is apostasy on the part of the world of spirits which diverts the heart from the living God.

But this must be resisted. The struggle must be begun against our own heart first, that it may be restored to personal communion with the living God. This struggle must be extended across the entire range of our environments to repress the false religions of vague and empty ideals, and in their room establish personal affection for the living God. This struggle must be continued with unflinching faithfulness in public preaching, in devotional literature and in ardent supplications to call God back into our personal life. And finally this struggle must be carried into the world at large to call it back from idle fancies to sober reality; from empty ideals to essentials; from religion to the only object of worship, and from doting on barren abstractions to the love of the faith that directs itself solely and alone to Him who has revealed himself in Christ as the personal, living God.

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## A SUN.

A little child, especially when it is a girl, is often said to be the sunshine of the house. But however glad we may be, in dark hours of life, to own such a little sun to brighten the home, the joy of the Psalmist was far greater when he sang, "The Lord is the sun of my life." -