

very life of God, and clearly sees in it all, the Divinity of Omnipotence, understands the glory of the Invisible.

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“AND THE SECOND IS LIKE
UNTO IT.”

God is invisible. He hides himself behind the veil of nature. But the folds of it move in undulations and in vibrations, from which we perceive that God behind it, is close by. In everything that lives in nature, rustles, throbs, and stirs itself, we feel the pulsebeat of God's own life. The Scripture has nothing to say of a dead nature, but in all sorts of ways it makes us watch that we might hear “the voice of God” and his “footsteps” in nature. When the earth trembles, it is because He is “wroth” and makes “the foundations of the mountains to shake.” In the darkened firmament “God bows the heaven and comes down.” In the whirlwind “God rode upon a cherub and flew.” When “the deep abysses of water” foam, it is God who “rebukes” them and drives them forth with “the blast of his nostrils.” The flashes of lightning are arrows, which He shoots forth into the firmament. When it grows dark the stars appear, because God calls them, and behold not one faileth. He drenches the mountains from his heights. He sends forth the fountains, so that they walk among the hills. He makes grass to grow for beasts, and for man bread to come up from the ground. It is He who cleaves the sea, so that its waves foam. And he whose ear is spiritually

trained, observes how God as his good shepherd goes before him in the way, hears the sound of God's rod and staff on the ground, and is comforted thereby.

All this is not for the sake of giving us a poetic, vivid view of nature. Heathen poets have done this. In nature also everything is for the sake of religion, to reveal to us in it the glorious presence of God, to bring us the fostering sense that in nature everywhere the living and almighty God is with us on every side, and to fill us with the sublime impression of his Power, Divinity and Majesty.

But this is not all. This self-same living God, who in nature always envelops you and imposes his presence upon you, reveals himself altogether differently and far more richly in you as man, whom He has appointed as lord over nature. The revelation of his life in man is so wonderfully divine, that after having said: thou shalt love God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy strength, He transposes this great commandment into an altogether different one: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and adds to this second commandment, that it is like unto the first; that to love God in his majesty and to love God in one's neighbor is one and the selfsame commandment. To love God in God himself and to love God in man, or in one's neighbor, differs in form and in fulfillment, but as commandment it is one.

Vagrant wisdom forces the representation that from dead matter gradually the plant evolved of itself, presently from the plant of itself the animal, and finally from the animal, man. This

wisdom has been christened with the name of Evolution and Darwin is called the prophet of this new evangel.

This whole system is nothing more than self-infatuation of unbelieving thought. But there is this truth in it, that the whole creation seems to have been built up as a temple in which man should serve as priest. Everything in it points to man. It calls for man. And when at length man appears in this temple of nature, everything that went before, appears to have served merely as preparation for his coming. Man has justly been called a world in miniature. The creation only finds its end in man. Almighty God who hides himself in nature as behind a veil, makes personal revelation of himself in man, not only in his power and majesty, but, what is far greater, as Spirit. In man there is self-perception, clear consciousness, thinking after God the thoughts of God, revelation of will, thirst after holiness, the spark of genius, appreciation of the beautiful, premonition of eternal existence, the resumption of being in one personal existence, the imprinted, increased knowledge of the Eternal Being, and all this is in him, solely and alone because God created him after his image.

You can know a master-builder by the palace that he has built, a poet from his poetic works, a cogent thinker from his writings. But the impression of him that remains is altogether different, after you have seen in his picture the features of his face, the flaming of his eye, and the expression of his person.

Such is the case here. The Divine Master-builder and Artist first showed his works in nature

He comes a second time and shows his image in man, the portrait of himself. Not in one individual. This is impossible. But in man, as in the course of centuries, he was born, has lived and has died by the millions. Among these millions there was the hyssop and the cedar. In these occasional instances of mighty personalities, who like cedars have stood high above the ordinary rank and file of men, the revelation of the Being of God centered itself ever more clearly. And when you take all the virtues, excellencies and rare capacities together, which have characterized the best and noblest of the sons of men, the grand and overwhelming sum-total brings a revelation of God, which far exceeds God's self-revelation in nature.

This is still the case now. What would it not have been, had not sin marred and ruined the features of the Divine Image in man? Now there is disturbance. The mirror in which the image is reflected is ruined by a thousand cracks; it is weather-beaten and blurred. Parts of lines and features are still discernable, but no more the image in the loveliness of its unity, nor in the clearness of its tints. And when even so, this image still interests and attracts, and ever and anon fills you with warm sympathy, what must it have been to Adam, when in Eve he beheld it in its original perfection, and how deep must have been the fall in sin, which at once and irrevocably marred and ruined it.

Experience of human baseness at times is very disheartening, and makes it easier to become misanthropic than philanthropic. But from the course of centuries history retains what was best

in human nature, and by its magnificent revelation of noble human lives reconciles us again unto man. There is the picture gallery of history, of the heroes in common life and of the heroes of faith, as the Apostle declares: (Heb. 12) "we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," wherefore we should lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." This is revelation of God even yet in fallen man. And if love awakens in you real drawing love for man as man, it is in virtue of the glory that is seen in man, the glory of God in human talent, in human genius and in human heroism, pouring out its rays in human love towards you.

There is something mysterious in your own self, which is attracted by something equally mysterious in another, whereby you overlook his failings, forgive his sins, disregard social differences, and with the mysterious power of love envelop him in the hidden parts of his being. And though this love can be spoiled and become itself a sin, it is in love for one who loves you, that the warm glow of Divine sympathy overpowers your heart, and the mystery of love in the Being of God reveals itself to you.

At first it is a matter of choice. In its beginnings love is limited, narrow-hearted and repellant to others; a gleam of light, which casts correspondingly the darker indifference for others as a deep shadow round about itself. This continues as long as love is still held in the meshes of selfishness. It is love from God, but it is not as yet love for the sake of God. Love for a few whom we deem worthy of our love, but it is not yet love for the neighbor, i. e. for man as man, a creature of God

created after the Image of God. But the Spirit purifies this love. Love for man must be like the love for God. There must be no difference between these two, or else the love for man will detract from the love for God in the heart.

Thus it becomes more and more a process of distinction. Love of whatever of God there is in man. Likewise hate of whatever of the Evil One there is in man, with the serious purpose of love to oppose it, until it is gone from his heart. This is the way to discover whatever of God, hidden and latent through it be, still glows in other men's hearts, to encourage this spark and not to tolerate its extinction. Until at length this neighborly love reaches down to the latest trace, which in every man on this side of the grave, even in those who have most deeply fallen, still reminds us of his creation after the Image of God, and of the possibility of its restoration. Even as the lover of choice porcelains gathers with great care the shards of the broken dish because he appreciates their worth in the possible case of their being glued together again. But even so your love for your neighbor has become nothing else than love for whatever of God there still remains in him. The second commandment is like unto the first.

“THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.”

God is a Spirit. God is Invisible. But with increasing clearness He reveals himself. There are glimmerings through and back of the veil