

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

of nature. In man, who is created after his Image, he becomes more transparent. He is fully seen in Christ, who is the express Image of his Person, the Image of the Invisible God (Col. 1:15). Image and not picture. What has been sculptured conveys more reality, than what has been pictured in lines and tints. It gives the full appearance. In marble or in metal the image imitates the massive form of life. The picture that is drawn with the pencil or painted with the brush conveys in turn warmth of life, glow of soul and mobility of features, which cold stubborn marble refuses to express. But the image is more impressive. It is overwhelming by reason of its greater reality and almost tangibility.

The Scripture therefore does not speak of the portrait, but of the image of God, who is invisible, and in this expression the whole action of religion centers itself. God gives his image. Man corrupts it. Man himself wants to make an image of God. This is a heinous sin. In the end sin reaches its utmost height, when Satan, as the Beast, the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, erects an image of himself, and demands the worship for it, which is due alone to the "express image of God's person" i. e. Christ.

This revelation of God is not to be taken in a figurative or metaphorical sense. On the contrary it is supernatural reality. Hence the saying of Jesus to Philip: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father". (John 14:9) and hence the hope of glory for every child of God, that once he also shall see Christ as he is, and that in seeing the glorified Christ he shall see God himself face to face. He shall not see Christ and afterwards and

alongside of him see God, but he shall see God in Christ. In the unregenerate, sin has made the image of God unrecognizable. In Christ God gives his image in all its fullness and perfect clearness. This was possible in our human nature, because the Son was the Image of the Father from all eternity, and as by the shadow of this Image our human nature was formed from the dust of the earth. He therefore who rests content with the revelation of God in nature, depressed as it is by the curse, or he who rests content with the revelation of God in the natural man, who is dead in sin, can not come to the true knowledge of God, but must of necessity fall away into idolatry or false philosophy. "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mat. II:27).

Christ therefore remains the center of our Divine worship, not only by what he spake, by what he did, or what he suffered, but through his own Personal Self. The glory of the apostles lies in what they have heard, and seen and handled of the Word of life. Christ is not only the chiefest among the prophets, and the Head of the apostles, He is himself the personal embodiment of everything that is comprehended in the glory of our religion. "In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." We name ourselves after Him. Salvation is given us in his name. From his Person and Name has gone forth the regenerating, life-renewing power, which has changed the fashion of this world. True Christianity is only where he is worshipped. He rules not merely by the tradition of what he once was, spake, did and endured, but by a real power, which even now,

seated as he is at the right hand of God, he exercises over lands and nations, generations, families and individuals. The course of the world's history and the final destiny of every individual life decides for him or against him. In loyal subjection to him, the world will rejoice in peace, turned against him, it will be troubled, and will continue to be troubled, until it either returns to him, or in rebellion against him works out its own destruction.

And therefore every effort to weaken the Christian religion and to detach it from Christ, or to mingle it with philosophic and heathen inventions must result in spiritual and moral retrogression. He who in any wise puts the supreme name of Christ on a line with that of Buddha, Confucius or Mohammed, undermines the Christian religion, and all religion, together with the happy development of mankind, since it all leads away from the knowledge of God, falsifies it, and hastens its loss. And while to know God is itself eternal life, to be enjoyed here and in the hereafter, all alienation from Christ, all beclouding of his Name is no search after life, but after death.

Seeking Christ for the sake of salvation is the beginning. But he who understands what salvation is, will for its sake cultivate the knowledge of God. Of a truth Christ is the surety that once the soul will be free from sin; the guarantee that no guilt of sin will any more distress us; the promise that once the body will be restored in glory; and no less the hope of a home in the Fathers' house of many mansions; of sacred joy in the realm of eternal light, and of endless

fellowship with all the saints of God; in brief, of an inheritance that will provide what no ear has heard, no eye has seen, and has not entered the heart of man. But all this is yet nothing else than the glory of the palace and of those who may enter therein. But the glory of salvation is found in God alone. To own God; to know him with clear-sighted understanding; in humble worship to fellowship with him; that alone is the heart and the soul of everlasting salvation.

Hence there is salvation in Christ both because he delivers you from sin, and because he guarantees the inheritance among the saints in light. But salvation in Christ is realized in full only when in him, as the Image of the invisible God, you lay hold on God himself, and in the knowledge of God, which radiates from this Image, you imbibe eternal life. Salvation is not prepared by Christ, brought down to us by him, and into which he shall once lead his own, in order that, when all is done, he may retire from the scene. On the contrary, there would be no salvation even in the realm of glory, if Christ would not be forever there, as the One in whom God can be seen and known and enjoyed.

But this does not tarry until we come to the house of the Father on high. In the heavenly life our knowledge of God will be made perfect, but it is begun here. We have no bare promise of future revelation, but there is a revelation of God in Christ now within our reach. The Image of God in Christ is sketched for us upon the sacred page. God is a Spirit, and this self-revelation of God in the eternal Word is expressed for

us in the written Word. After his ascension also Christ lives in the Word. With it the portrait of God's Image has gone out into the world. Its presence lives among us. Thanks to the Word we are so familiar with the person and appearance of Christ, that he walks with us by the way. As he moved among the people of his times, the imagination brings him into our own surroundings. And we take his word of the long ago to ourselves, as through he speaks personally to us for admonition, encouragement and comfort.

There is moreover not only a portrait of Christ in the written Word, but powers, operations and influences have gone forth from him, which have kindled fire in the human breast and have inspired love, holy resolves and spiritual consecration, in all ages to this day, the thought of which uplifts and cheers, and as it were, brings close the very breath of Christ to us. All this is not merely the passive result of his appearance twenty centuries ago, but in sober fact it is daily fed and nourished by himself, and from him makes its appeal to us. Every soul that is born anew, every holy thought that comes into the mind, every good work which we are enabled to do, is all the work of Christ through the wondrous indwelling of the Holy Ghost. He would come and take up his abode with us. And He is come, and still comes every day and every night to confirm this indwelling in the congregation of the saints. He knows and calls us by name and adapts himself to the needs of the heart. And so he, who is the Image of the Invisible God, holds himself before us, continues in us the work once begun, and through ebb and flood tides makes the ocean

of God's unfathomable mercies glisten ever more gloriously.

Thus there is a knowledge of God which we learn and derive from Christ. But there is a far greater knowledge of God which He himself imparts, which He brings, and makes fully clear to us in the hidden parts of the soul. The mystical part of it is, that he who is the Image of the invisible God, not only shows us this image, and fascinates us with it, but he chisels this image in us. Our inner life is made conformable to the inner life of Christ. His image is imprinted upon the saints of God. The highest knowledge of God that we can obtain in the earth is, when the image of God in Christ renews the image of God in us.

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“HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”

True knowledge of God does not come from storing the memory. It only becomes this when it finds its startingpoint in the things, which the soul inwardly discerns and experiences. Everything here must go out from personal contact between us and God. There is no knowledge of light possible for one who was born blind. And as long as we do not perceive and discover God in ourselves, and are consciously affected by workings that go out from him, true knowledge of God is impossible. This is not felt by the sense of touch, but in our own immediate spiritual perception, so that not from reasoning, and not from what others have told us, but immediately from our own selves we know that God is and that God is great.

In times when defence of the faith called for