

VIII.

After the Scripture.

“In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created He him.”—*Gen. v. 1.*

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In the preceding pages we have shown that the translation, “*in* Our image,” actually means, “*after* Our image.” To make anything *in* an image is no language; it is unthinkable, logically untrue. We now proceed to show how it should be translated, and give our reason for it.

We begin with citing some passages from the Old Testament in which occurs the preposition “B” which, in *Gen. i. 27*, stands before image, where it can not be translated “in,” but requires a preposition of comparison such as “like” or “after.”

Isa. xlviii. 10 reads: “Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” Here the preposition “B” stands before silver, as in *Gen. i. 27* before image. It is obvious that it can not be translated “in silver,” but “as silver.” Surely the Lord would not cast the Jews in a pot of melted silver. The preposition is one of comparison; as in *1 Peter i. 17* the refining of Israel is compared to that of a noble metal. It may be translated: “I have refined thee, but not according to the nature of silver”, or simply: “as silver.”

Psalm cii. reads: “My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.” In the Hebrew the same preposition “B” occurs before smoke, and almost all exegetes translate it, “as smoke.”

Again, *Psalm xxxv. 2* reads: “Take hold of shield and buckler and stand up for mine help.” “Stand up *in* my help” makes no sense. The thought allows no other translation than this: “Stand up so that Thou be my help;” or, “Stand up *as* my help”; or, as the Authorized Version has it: “Stand up *for* my help.”

We find the same result in *Lev. xvii. 11*: “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Here the same preposition “B” occurs. In the Hebrew it reads: “Banefesh” (Heb. Shin dot Pe segol Nun segol Bet patah dagesh), which was translated “*for* the soul.” It would be absurd to render it: “*in* the soul”; for the blood does not come *in* the soul, nor does the atonement take place in the soul, but on the altar. Here we have also a comparison (substitution). The blood is *as* the soul, *represents* the soul in the atonement, takes the place of the soul.

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We notice the same in *Prov. iii. 26*, where the wisdom of Solomon wrote: “The Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” The same preposition occurs here. The Hebrew text reads “Bkisleka” (Heb. Dalet hataf qamats Lamed segol Samekh sheva Kaf hiriq Bet dagesh sheva), literally, “for ‘a’ loin to thee.” And because the loins are a man’s strength, it is used metaphorically to indicate the ground of confidence and hope

in distress. The sense is therefore perfectly clear. Says Solomon: “The Lord shall be to thee as a ground of confidence, thy refuge, and thy hope.” For if we should read here: “The Lord shall be *in* your hope,” it might be inferred that, among other things, the Lord was also in the hope of the godly; which would be unscriptural and savor of Pelagianism. In the Scripture, the Lord alone is the hope of His people. Hence the preposition does not mean, “in,” but it indicates a comparison.

To add one more example, [Exod. xviii. 4](#) reads: “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.” Translate this, “The God of my father was *in* my help,” and how unscriptural and illogical the thought!

From these passages, to which others might be added, it appears:

(1) That this preposition can not always be translated by “in.”

(2) That its use as a preposition of comparison, in the sense of “like,” “for,” “after,” is far from being rare.

Armed with this information, let us now return to [Gen. i. 26](#); and in our opinion, it does not offer us now any difficulty at all. As in [Isa. xlviii. 10](#), the preposition and noun are translated “as silver”; in [Psalm cii. 4](#), “as smoke”; in [Psalm xxxv. 2](#), “as” or “to my help”; in [Lev. xvii. 11](#), “as” or “in the place of my soul”; in [Prov. iii. 16](#), “as,” or “to my confidence,” the German Version of the Vienna Hebrew Bible translates, “Let Us make men to, or as Our image,” *i.e.*, let Us make men, who shall be Our image on the earth. Or more freely: “Let Us make a sort of being who will bear Our image on earth, who will be as Our image on earth, or be to Us on earth for an image.”

Then it follows, in [Gen. i. 27](#): “And God created man for His image, to be an image of God created He him.”

It is, of course, exactly the same whether I say, “God created man after His image,” *i.e.*, so that man became bearer of His image, or “God created man for an image of Himself.” In both instances, and in similar manner, it is expressed that man should exhibit an image of God. Thus far the image of God was lacking in the earth. When God had created man, the lack was supplied: for that image was man, upon whose being the Lord God had stamped His own image. Hence we see no difference in the two translations.

Speaking of the image stamped on sealing-wax by a seal, I can say, “I have stamped the wax after the image of the seal,” referring to the *concave* image of the seal; or, “The image is stamped *on the wax*,” referring to the convex image on the wax.

We add three remarks:

First, the word “man” in [Gen. i. 26](#) does not refer to one person, but to the whole race. Adam was not merely a person, but our progenitor and federal head. The whole race was in his loins. Humanity consists at any given moment of the aggregate of those who live or will live in this world, whether many or few. Adam alone was humanity; when Eve was given him he and she were humanity. “Let Us make man in Our image and after Our like-

ness,” is equal to: “Let Us create humanity, which will bear Our image.” But it refers also to the individual in that he is a member of the human family. Hence Adam begat children in his image and after his own likeness. Yet there is a difference. Men have different gifts, talents, and qualifications; the complete impress of the divine image could appear not in *individual* endowments, but in the full manifestation of the *race*, if it had remained sinless.

Hence the Dutch Version uses the plural, altho the Hebrew the singular “man”: not Adam alone, but the genus man, humanity, was created in the divine image.

Hence when the original man fell, the second Adam came in Christ, who, as the second federal Head, contained in Himself the whole Church of God. In His meditorial capacity Christ appeared as God’s image in Adam’s place. Wherefore every member of the Church must be transformed after His image—[1 Cor. xv. 49](#); [Rom. viii. 29](#). And the Church, representing regenerated humanity, is the pleroma of the Lord; for it is called “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Secondly, since man is created to be God’s image on earth, he must be willing to remain *image*, and never presume or imagine to be original. Original and image are opposites. God is God, and man is not God, but only the *image* of God. Hence it is the essence of sin when man refuses to remain image, reflection, shadow, exalting himself to be something real in himself. Conversion depends, therefore, solely upon his willingness to become image again, *i.e.*, to believe. He that becomes an image is nothing in himself, and exhibits all that he is in absolute dependence upon Him whose image he bears; and this is at once man’s highest honor and completest dependence.

Lastly, God must have His image in the earth. For this purpose He created Adam. Having defiled it beyond recognition, man denies the existence of the divine image in the earth. And thus image-worship originated. Image-worship means that man says: “I will undertake to make an image of God.” And this diametrically opposes God’s work. It is His holy prerogative to make an image of Himself; and the creature should never dare undertake it. Hence it is presumption when, aspiring to be God, man refuses to remain His image, defiles it in himself, and undertakes to represent God in gold or silver.

Image-worship is an awful sin. God saith: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” ([Exod. xx. 4](#)) This sin is from Satan. He always imitates God’s work. He will not be less than God. When at last the Great Beast appears, the Dragon proclaims: “They that dwell in the earth should make *an image of the Beast!*” God has decreed to make His own image to be the object of His eternal pleasure. But Satan, opposing this, defiles that image and makes an image for himself; not of man, for he is defiled and ruined, but of *a beast*. And thus in his supreme manifestation he judges himself. God’s Son became a *man*, Satan’s creation is a *beast*.



When finally the Beast and its image are overthrown, by One who is like a son of man, it is the Lord's triumph over His enemies. Then the divine image is restored, nevermore to be defiled. And the Almighty God rejoices forever and ever in His own reflection.

IX.

The Image of God in Man.

“As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”—*1 Cor. xv. 49.*

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One more point remains to be discussed, viz., whether the divine image refers to the image of Christ.

This singular opinion has found many warm defenders in the Church from the beginning. It originated with Origen, who with his brilliant, fascinating, and seducing heresies has unsettled many things in the Church; and his heresy in this respect has found many defenders both East and West. Even Tertullian and Ambrose supported it, as well as Basil and Chrysostom; and it took no less a person than Augustine to uproot it.

Our Reformed theologians, closely following Augustine, have strongly opposed it. Junius, Zanchius and Calvin, Voetius and Coccejus condemned it as error. We can safely say that in our Reformed inheritance this error never had a place. .

But in the last century it has crept again into the Church. The pantheistic philosophy occasioned it; and its after-effects have tempted our German and Dutch mediation theologians to return to this ancient error.

The great philosophers who enthralled the minds of men at the beginning of this century fell in love with the idea that God became man. They taught not that the Word became flesh, but God became man; and that in the fatal sense that God is ever *becoming*, and that He becomes a better and a purer God as He becomes more purely man. This pernicious system, which subverts the foundations of the Christian faith, and under a Christian form annihilates essential Christianity, has led to the doctrine that in Christ Jesus this incarnation had become a fact; and from it was deduced that God would have become man even if man had *not* sinned.

We have often spoken of the danger of teaching this doctrine. The Scripture repudiates it, teaching that Christ is a Redeemer from and an atonement for sin. But a mere passing contradiction will not stop this evil; this poisonous thread, running through the warp and woof of the Ethical theology, will not be pulled from the preaching until the conviction prevails that it is philosophic and pantheistic, leading away from the simplicity of Scripture.

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But for the present nothing can be done. Almost all the German manuals now used by our rising ministers feed this error; hence the widespread prevalence of the idea that the image in which man was created was *the Christ*.

And this is natural. So long as it is maintained that, even without sin, man was destined for Christ and Christ for man, it must follow that the original man was calculated for Christ, and hence was created after the image of Christ.