

it is in the possession of freedom that man is in His image—after His likeness. "He doeth his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" And yet this supreme Sovereign has permitted creatures to exist who are free to be out of harmony with His will in the little circle designated as their own!

This fact of disturbed harmony indicates that the image of God which men now possess is an imperfect one. Originally there were features in it that have now faded beyond recognition. There is in the Scriptures some outline of how this original similitude was lost—not exhibited with precise scientific exactness—but through the suggestive symbolism of Eastern parable. The reality of this loss is easily attested by an appeal to consciousness. There is still found the intuition of the perfect law—often disregarded, often strangely blended with superstitions and erroneous judgments, but still the possession of every normal human creature. In the presence of this law, known as having emanated from the highest authority, the soul recognizes its obligation to obey. As soon as it is formulated in intelligible words the soul instinctively responds "*I ought*," but not "*I will*." And this is the condemnation, "that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Formulate for them and strive to apply to them in any practical way the supreme law to which they themselves appeal when their rights are invaded, and they either refuse to listen to the response, "*I ought*," that reverberates through the recesses of consciousness, or attempt, with sophisms and evasions, to escape the appeal to duty. And herein is the image imperfect: not in substance, not in constitution, not in completeness; but in the loss of that line of curvature which reflects all truth upon its focal point, which focal point is righteousness.

And when we think of man as the image of God, we must remember that

it is a *vital* likeness that is intended, a likeness that has its source in a community of life, that is outwardly revealed as an expression of a vital principle, and whose imperfection is a vital, not a formal, imperfection. Christ is called the "express image of his person," by which we are to understand that in Christ, the life of God, His secret, uncommunicable personality, has its expression; so that Christ stands as the image, the apparition, the visibility of God. Man was created to be this, but by a deflection of the life-currents which shape the outward presentation, he is now but an imperfect image, because the vital law—law for man's life, as it is a principle of God's character—has been disregarded.

And now we can understand why God is mindful of man, in spite of man's natural insignificance. Man is God's image, and God would not have His image marred. Something dead in man has stopped and dammed the moral currents of his life. "As in Adam all *die*, so in Christ all shall be made *alive*." "*I am the resurrection and the life*," said Jesus. "God is in the world, reconciling the world unto himself." "I am the way, the truth, and the *life*."

The image of God has the gangrene of death in it, but it is His image still, and He would cleanse away the dead infection. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," again says Jesus. The imperfection of man as the image of God is outwardly of the nature of a *scar*, inwardly of the nature of a *disease*. Inwardly and outwardly it is a *vital* defect. Its remedy is *life*; a new breathing into man's nostrils of the breath of life, as when he first became a living soul. And yet Jesus says: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." It is to win and capture this refractory will that Christ has come forth from the bosom of the Father. The atonement is a bloody one, because God would be known to man as a life-giver, and the blood contains the life. Is it symbol, or is it potency? It is a sym-