

# IMAGE AND LIKENESS

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# Image and Likeness

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*by*

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## \* IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Beginning with Septuagesima Sunday the Book of Genesis is studied as a prelude to Lent. Especially is our attention called to the three outstanding patriarchs, Adam, Noah and Abraham.

Because this is Septuagesima week, our consideration is particularly directed towards Adam, in whom is revealed the natural state of man. One point which we should always remember when reading the Old Testament (for example, today, when studying Genesis with its historical characters, Adam, Noah and Abraham) is that, in order to find their proper interpretation in relation to the entire Scriptures, they must be seen in the light of the New Testament. Really to understand the full significance of Adam—of his meaning to humanity and

\*(Class lecture, February 6, 1953)

his personal relation to man—he must be seen and known through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who is the Second Adam. Nor can we really understand Noah or Abraham if we consider them apart from their relation to our Lord, Whom they prefigure. Their full meaning and real significance is discovered only in their divine Archetype.

The same is also true when we consider humanity as a whole. If we consider the human side of man only we become hopelessly confused and entangled in seeking reasons for his existence. People can neither understand themselves nor find a logical reason for being when they look at human nature only. It is when we consider man in his relation to God that we begin to have some understanding of his value. When we consider Adam in relation to Christ, the Second Adam; when we consider Noah and Abraham, with all the characters and events of the Old Testament, in relation to the New Testament and Jesus Christ, then only can we begin really to understand their true meaning. For example, unless

his spiritual significance is found, Abraham is historically described as a none-too-clean nomad, and Noah as a man who drank too much wine. And as for Adam—according to the theory of evolution—he probably didn't exist at all!

But seen through the divine Antitype, Christ, the Old Testament takes on real meaning. So it is with all existence, and especially with man himself. If you consider man without recognizing the fundamental principle of his constitution, you do him a gross injustice. There is but one science in which man is comprehensively and completely known, and that is the science of God. Man is a subject made for an object; until you know for what object he is made, it is impossible to know what man is as a subject. When man finds his object, he begins to understand himself and all other men. True man is within us, but this true man can be reached neither by the scalpel of the anatomist nor by the investigator of mental operations. Yet he is there, to be revealed in the light of God, for God is not only the



Creator but the Illuminator of man; it is God's divine light that reveals us to ourselves. He who knows himself through this illumination has a light by which to know all mankind. When we limit our knowledge of man to exteriors, the result ends in absurd theories of origin and nature; but when, on the other hand, we remember that man is made for God, we know his great capacity for eternal truth and for unlimited good.

Because it is utterly impossible to understand man unless we consider his relations with God, we must begin at the beginning of creation—with Adam, when the relation between man and his Creator was first established. But again, to consider Adam alone would offer a most incomplete picture, nor can the offspring of Adam solve the enigma of why humanity was started.

It is possible to trace in Adam the roots of conflicting natures. From the same stock came vessels of clay as well as sacred vessels—that is, Cain, Abel and Seth. How, from one stock, can there arise so many variations in humanity?

There are good and bad people; there are the mistakes and the successes of humanity.

The answer to the puzzle is never found in the world nor in the nature of Adam. The only answer to the persistent problems of life is obtained through the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is true Man and true God. He saw so much to love in mankind that He gave Himself to solve their problems. Perhaps you see nothing lovable in humanity, but God does; He so loves man and the world that He saves and glorifies His creation; He sees the true value of His masterpiece.

Today, Friday of Septuagesima week, we consider Adam, the corporeal root of humanity, the first patriarch of the human race. And in the lesson for today:

\*This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day that God created man, he made him to the likeness of God. He created them male and female; and blessed them: and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

\*Roman Breviary in English, Winter, page 546.  
(Quoting from Ch. 5, 1-5)

Notice first that man was created to the image and likeness of God. The whole Trinity spoke within the Godhead, saying: Let us make man to our image and likeness. What is meant by image and likeness? Was not man's body made out of the slime of the earth? Not much likeness here to the Godhead, is there? Why did not God provide some more suitable material for His image? There have been those who believe that God's selection of material for making man was most unwise—the slime of the earth—certainly nothing very valuable in this that it should become God's masterpiece! Reduce man's body to its elements and its value is almost nothing, for slime is composed of the elements of water and earth. But God so loved what He had created that He gave it the breath of His own life. Not only did He make man to His own image but He breathed into him a living soul; He gave him life; He made him a living likeness. Besides making man to His own image, He gave him the gift of divine likeness, God's living likeness.

I have had people ask why the two terms, "image" and "likeness" are used? Would one—image or likeness—not be enough? Neither of the two terms is redundant, as the natural world proves. All natural existence reflects God as to the image—for the trace of the Trinity is in all being—but until the grace of likeness is discovered, man's life is incomplete. For image without likeness becomes a sort of counterfeit in which what should be life seems to die. The image of God in us, the root of our being, can never be lost; yet likeness too often becomes obscure. Man never loses the root of being for he is a rational creature; it is this which gives us our human nature. But he needs the added gift of likeness to fulfill his nature.

Memory, understanding and will are the image of the Trinity in the soul; but when these faculties are turned away from God, divine likeness is forfeited. And whereas man should live and be immortal, he begins to die. Therefore the two words, "image" and "likeness", become inseparable and are our guarantee of perfection. So essential is the unity of



the two that the Lord Himself came to secure their inseparableness; He Who *is* the Image came to restore man to spiritual likeness. For this He gave His own spirit, the spirit of likeness called grace. The image in us is given by nature; it is this which makes our soul rational; yet rationality alone is not enough for man, for rationality may be diverted into channels of rationalism. But when, over and above rationality, comes the gift of likeness which permeates through and through the rational nature as the life of grace, then we really live. Divine likeness is not superficial; it is not a superimposed life; it is reality. An image in a mirror is superimposed, but likeness is not superimposed. Likeness is identification theologically called the gift of grace, which means a permeation of divine life. For example, a piece of metal may be thrust into a burning furnace; it burns, glows, and gives off light and heat even as fire itself, yet the metal still preserves its own original nature.

In the same way the soul, the image, thrust into the grace of divine likeness, preserves its

own nature, yet now has a splendor which reveals God's all-pervading glory. Man, God's masterpiece, is complete—a human nature into which is breathed the divinity of God. Thus is man not only the image of God but His likeness also.

God gave man a garden, a beautiful garden, in which to live and to have all his desires fulfilled—a paradise, a garden of fulfilled desire. God took man and put him into this paradise, to tend and keep it. For the Lord God had planted from the beginning a paradise of pleasure, wherein He placed man whom He had formed.

Nothing was too good for man. A beautiful garden, with wonderful trees which bent down their fruit, was man's proper abode. All this that man might have bliss—as long as he preserved the love of truth. You may read the story for yourself if you do not already know it. There was just one tree in this whole beautiful garden upon which man needed to exercise his moral discipline. Perhaps we should call attention to the fact that there was noth-

ing really evil about this or any other tree in paradise. How could there be an evil tree or evil fruit in a good paradise?

Justin Martyr says that when God created man and gave him all his wonderful faculties, senses, organs of action, a mind—that is, all this standard equipment with which to enjoy the garden—He gave him also free will and

\*...He suspended the things of nature on his [man's] will,...

that he might learn the true values of these great gifts and obtain the right to experience freedom in the exercise of free choice; that is, man was offered the great privilege of personally choosing truth—truth that is not forced on him, but truth that he himself desires.

Man is not a puppet, with the divine Stage Manager pulling the strings; he was made a living, rational human being, with a will which he was free to use. And that he might exercise his faculty of free will, he was given

\*Christian Healing, by Evelyn Frost, Ph. D., page 72

a choice on which to practice discipline. Free will deteriorates by indulgence; it grows strong by discipline. This is the paradox of free will: the more freedom you give it the weaker it grows; the more you discipline the will by resisting temptation, the stronger it becomes. Therefore God planted this one tree in paradise, that man might learn the true use of free will.

The tree of knowledge is not evil; the fruit of knowledge is good—it must be good because it is in paradise. God did not create evil. If God had created in paradise an evil tree with evil fruit, then it would mean that God had created evil. But this is false. God did not create evil; He created only that which is good, and all that He created He saw was good, and He pronounced it so. Therefore this tree in paradise, upon which man was to learn discipline, was not in itself evil. Theophilus of Antioch says:

The tree of knowledge itself was good and its fruit was good. For it was not the tree, as some think, but the disobedience, which had death in it!...



The tree was good and the fruit was good. Knowledge must of itself be good; however, it is not the absolute good, but it is good. Knowledge, good in itself, can be wrongly applied when one begins to experiment with its power. Even right knowledge, when wrongly applied, becomes wrong knowledge. For example, right knowledge about a circle becomes wrong knowledge when applied to a square. Yet knowledge itself is good and is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—the gift of knowledge. The Holy Spirit does not give any gift that is not of itself good.

So this tree was good; its fruit was good, but not *the* good. When man sought the good in knowledge and made knowledge an end in itself rather than a means of knowing God, man's disobedience became a corruption of knowledge. Because of disobedience, man's confidence and faith in God disappeared, and man became self-assertive rather than God-assertive. By knowledge man hoped to build himself up to greater glory and power in his

own name. This was impossible; however, he tried—to his own misfortune.

'The tree of knowledge itself was good and its fruit was good. For it was not the tree, as some think, but the disobedience, which had death in it . . . Not, therefore, as if there were any evil in the tree of knowledge, but from his disobedience did man draw, as from a fountain, labour, pain, grief, and at last fell a prey to death.'

Justin Martyr says:

'When God formed man in the beginning, He suspended the things of nature on his will, and made an experiment by means of one commandment. For He ordained that, if he kept this he should partake of immortal existence; but if he transgressed it, the contrary should be his lot . . .'

When man disobeyed this commandment, his disobedience became a poisonous fountain from which came all human misfortunes. Then, man having forfeited his rights to paradise, human nature for its own good was exiled from its paradise of fulfilled desire. Of course man does not see why his loss of paradise was really his greatest protection, but actually it was. For in paradise was also the tree

of life; and it certainly was not fitting that man should make his state of disobedience permanent, nor the poisonous results of his disobedience eternal. Therefore man was exiled from the garden in which grew the tree of life and immortality. Disobedience, corruption, and all grief and pain need only to be temporary. The finiteness and temporality of evil is man's greatest protection. To be exiled from paradise into the desert of the world, where man seems forced to labor by the sweat of his brow to keep the thorns and the thistles down, is not actually as great a misfortune as it seems. In fact, Saint Theresa says that when man started his campaign of disobedience his greatest blessing was that he could not be permitted to settle into a false paradise. Disobedience does not bring the bliss of pleasure; it always sours on us; undisciplined indulgence in pleasure is so painful that man soon seeks to escape the hell he has made. Paradise cannot be exploited for undisciplined pleasure; therefore, before man could deteriorate completely, he was exiled to the desert of the

world, where he would learn the art of discipline in the hard school of experience.

It has been suggested that hell is only the having of the things you think you want, and then finding them permanently attached to you. For example, if your heart is set on cake and you are given only cake, you are soon so surfeited with cake that anything would be better. Enslavement to sense pleasures is a virtual hell, but God in His wisdom has protected you from permanence in anything but truth. Man is not permitted to remain in any earthly pleasure long enough for it to become a hell; pleasure on earth is cut short lest attachment to the physical become permanent. Thus even death becomes man's friend rather than his enemy in the affairs of the world. Paul said that the last enemy to be overcome is death. Until the perfection of truth is realized, the termination of incompleteness becomes a blessing. If you are aware of corruption, an end to this defect is good. For this reason death, which followed the poison of disobedience, became a protection to man. God is most



lenient, most merciful to man; He gives man every opportunity just as He did Adam, to whom He gave nine hundred years in which to repent.

But merely prolonging life, even for repentance, is never the answer; God provides the answer only through His Son, the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world. As Origen explains, death ceases in the world when the sin of the world dies. Of course we must remember that death is unnatural, is not a part of the integrity of human nature. This is true in spite of the fact that the term "mortal" is included in the dictionary's definition of man. However, the mortality ascribed to man does not make this a true part of his nature. The idea is built on circumstantial evidence; that is, man is judged by the company he keeps. In spite of appearances, death is not natural.

Nature is the mirror of God, and the eternity of God is reflected in this mirror as immortality. Therefore death is not made by God and hence is always contrary to nature. We

note how every form of death violates nature; the reason is evident—death is unnatural. Death does not belong to the image and likeness of God, which is a living, vital image and likeness. Death has no place even in the image of clay, and certainly much less has it a place in the image and likeness of eternity.

Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that the good of human nature can never be diminished by subtraction. It may be obscured indefinitely, but it is never diminished by subtraction. This is because the root of being in man is the image of God. Likeness may be obscured until barely a trace is discoverable; but the image, which is the root of created being, is never destroyed nor is it diminished by subtraction. Consequently there is always a capacity for likeness because, when the image is imprinted on man's soul, there is also capacity for the likeness. Man has capacity for God; therefore when he tries to find happiness in anything less than God he disobeys the very principles of nature and the result is frustration. An im-

age which turns away from likeness contradicts the very principle of being.

But fortunately such incompleteness can never be immortalized; for over all there is a protection which saves man from the poison of his disobedience, saves him from the consequences of his ignorance—that is, saves him from himself. Man unto himself is nothing, but man unto God is God.

\*Outside the garden of Eden, there lies the immense desert of the earth.

Man, in this desert of the earth, finds it necessary to give it fruitfulness by his toil, otherwise the earth will yield only thorns and thistles; besides idleness would only corrupt his heart. Saint Theresa explains why thorns and thistles are here: these prevent us from settling complacently into a false paradise. A bed of roses always must have its thorns, otherwise man would, in corrupting idleness, accept a material paradise as a sub-

\*Liturgical Year, by Dom Gueranger, Septuagesima, page 143

stitute for heaven. The thorns in the bed of roses force us out of apathy; in this way divine mercy shows itself.

It has been granted to man to have capacity for union with God, and anything other than this is a desert. The thorns and thistles of the desert prevent complacency, and this is most fortunate, for the pleasures of this world can never satisfy the need of man for God.

. . . divine mercy shall show itself . . .  
it shall be granted to man to unite himself  
to his Creator by eating the Bread of  
life . . .

Man is not satisfied by eating of the tree of knowledge but by eating the bread of life; the act may seem the same but the object differs. He ate the fruit of disobedience and suffered accordingly. Let us eat the bread of obedience and live the life of truth. Like a wonderful, eternal fountain of life flows the likeness of God over the image, revealing in all existence the splendor of divine glory.

Man has a capacity for reality; ideas and symbols will not satisfy. So let us not stop with



the pictures on the window of the mind, but seek instead the transparency of the mental window through which the true light shines. Too often we mistake the pictures—the signs and wonders—for truth; but the true disciple penetrates the pictures to the meaning, to the reality beyond all pictures, for only God can satisfy the soul.

According to the theologians, the image of God in man is his rationality; but rationality is not enough. It is important, for without rationality we have no roots, but reason is not a stopping place. You can only *till* the soil with rationality; the real fruitfulness is an act of faith. Reason is the image which seeks likeness through faith, hope, and charity. These three theological virtues form likeness to God. Faith is that by which man lives, not to himself but to God. Faith, hope, and charity—these three theological virtues are granted to man as a likeness whereby perfection is guaranteed. By faith the mind is united to God; by hope the will is united, for he hopes in the Lord, not in

himself; and by charity his heart is united; thus he gives himself.

If you give your mind, will and heart, you can not give more. When you have united your heart with God in charity and your will with Him in hope, and your intellect with Him in faith, the image has been confirmed in likeness, and your life is supernatural. The image is the natural; the likeness is grace, which perfects the natural. Thus the supernatural is a gift of love.

It is not merely knowing God, but it is loving Him that obtains the likeness. The image is in the very constitution of the soul, the essence of your standard equipment; you receive likeness to bring your standard equipment to its supernatural perfection. The prerogative of bearing God's image constitutes the capacity of man for receiving His likeness and of coming into union with Him; both are necessary. A king may have an image which does not have a likeness to him, or he may have a likeness which is not an image of him. But where there is image, there is capacity also for likeness;

this is the prerogative of God's masterpiece, man. The image of God enters into the composition of man's nature and is therefore ineffaceable. Saint Augustine affirms that man's dignity is great because he bears God's image and beholds God's countenance within him, and through contemplation has God ever-present. In the ancient Jewish book called the Kabbalah it is said that when countenance beholds countenance there is perfect equilibrium, grace is uncovered, and all things are found in light and in perfect happiness. Thus the image formed in us is no longer remote but receives the divine gift of resemblance beyond our nature, by which we are raised to supernatural life in God. The image in the soul calls upon the will to seek likeness, because the image is incomplete without likeness. The image is in accordance with reason, but likeness is in accordance with the divine gift. The image is truth in us; likeness is our love of truth, for truth is form and love is life.

The enemies of likeness, Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us, are pride, disobedience and

sensuality. When we turned our countenance away from God to seek pleasure through the senses, judgments were stirred up and pride set us against God. It was pride in the first Adam that obscured likeness from the image. But disobedience and pride are healed, for while pride is disobedient, humility is obedient.

These enemies to likeness have been overcome through the Second Adam. He Who is *the* Image restored likeness by obedience; He destroyed pride by humility; He healed sensuality by installing in the heart the pure desire for good—not covetousness, not greed, not concupiscence, but pure desire—a vital desire for God that cannot be satisfied short of complete fulfillment. Love for truth in man is never satiated but keeps desiring and hungering even as he receives the bread of life. Instead of the fruit of disobedience, we are told to eat of the bread of life, for this is sweet; and we eat it by our love of truth, our desire for union with God. Happy are they that hunger and thirst after truth, for, according to the Lord's promise, they shall be filled.



The object of an image is to acquaint us with the original, and its significance is in what the original represents. Thus the first Adam, the natural image, is as nothing without the Second Adam Who is the Original, and Who unites and confirms the image with the likeness. Saint Hilary says that as a sovereign imprints his image on the coin, so God imprints His image on man, with a likeness proportioned to the depth of the impression. How deep is your desire for truth; how great is your love? For the life of God is love, and the likeness of His life is love in the living image looking towards the divine Original. When our natural life is turned toward God with true desire and love, the likeness of God's glory perfects our being, and as Paul says, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

\*Wherefore the image of God is given to our nature to make us capable of God, and of eternal things. Framed in the substance of the soul, that image is a mirror,

\*The Endowments of Man, by  
Bishop Wallathorne, page 35

but a mirror that is living, spiritual, and highly sensitive. It is sensitive to the touches of that divine light of truth which is itself a luminous image of God; it is sensitive to the touches of divine grace, from the finger of God's Holy Spirit, which give the sense of God; and thus we obtain the deeper sense of His divine presence, and the more intimate consciousness of His loving communication. When, therefore, the warmth of His charity comes with the ray of His light, the soul is moved in her inward sense to ascend toward the Divine Author of her gifts, and is gratefully inclined to return love for love.

\*All the Presence there is,  
All the Power there is,  
All the Consciousness there is,  
Is *Love*, the *Living Spirit Almighty*.

GENEVIEVE BURNELL FORGEY

\*Axioms: Book of Health,  
by George Edwin Burnell, page 80

Misses  
Horn Rinsel.  
Red Lads.  
Rimsey Rals.  
Listune  
apet car.  
Rubber gloves.  
Roses - plant?  
June Jackson - officers.  
R.S.L. Books.  
Tractor slab from Eugene  
Six Jellies —  
Seedling mixture.

Phone Capsels.



