

"ECCE HOMO" – BEHOLD THE MAN.

This exclamation by Pilate (Jno. 19:5) concerning Jesus, seems to express his admiration of the perfect man. Pilate saw that "for envy" the Jews had delivered Jesus up to death, and Roman though he was, and alien and stranger to the covenants and promises – without God – yet he had sufficient justice in his nature to cause him to shrink from taking the life of so noble a specimen of humanity; yet he as governor, must keep the peace of the country, and preserve the good will of the people.

Thinking that by scourging him the clamor would cease, he did so, and declared that he found no cause of death in him, and would let him go. But when the people cried out the more – "Crucify Him!" he brought Jesus forth before them, as though thereby he expected to move to reverence the stony-hearted crowd, and exclaimed, "Behold the Man!" as though he would say to them: Could you really put to death such a man?

And as we look back, every action of his life, from first to last, marks Him as THE man, "one above all others." When first brought before the governor, charged with claiming to be a king, Pilate seems to have been so much impressed with His personal appearance and majesty that for a time he was almost a convert, and inquires: "Art thou a king, then?" Our grandest conceptions, we believe, fall far short of the reality when we try to picture to ourselves what none of us have ever seen – a perfect man. There he stands, the embodiment of physical, mental and moral perfection. – "BEHOLD THE MAN."

But not before Pilate only, does He thus appear to tower above all other men. As a child, when among the Doctors of the Law, He was a marvel. When a man, as a natural leader, He had but to say,

"Follow Me," and His disciples forsook their nets and obeyed. As a teacher, the common people and Israelites in whom there was no guile, heard Him gladly, for "He taught them as one having authority," and they said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" How His superior mental acumen shone out when the Scribes and Pharisees sought to catch Him in His words, and were defeated with their own argument – "Why tempt ye me? [It is utter folly for imperfect men to seek or expect to entrap the perfect one.] Give me a penny. Whose image and superscription is this upon it?" They answer, "Caesar's." He said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." No wonder that they marveled at such an answer, and thousands who have read it since have marveled, and said: "Whence hath this man this wisdom?"

Even the soldiers, when about to take Him in the Garden, were so worked upon by the majesty of His presence, that like as wild beasts shrink from the eye of their keepers, these went backward, and fell to the ground, and could not take Him until "He gave Himself" into their hands. No; they had often, during the three and a half years of His ministry, "sought to take Him, but could not, because His hour was not yet come." This influence and power was not exercised over the poor and unlearned soldiery only, but also over the learned and noble, for when the rulers and Pharisees had sent certain of their number to take Him, they returned without Him. In reply to their question – "Why have ye not brought Him?" – the answer was: "Never man spake like this man." Why was there this difference between Jesus and all other men? Because, we answer, all other men have had their mental, moral and physical power impaired by sin, some more and some less, according as sin has gained more or less control of each.

Adam, the head of our race, was created a perfect man – perfect mentally, morally and physically. Not that he had ever yet tried or used these perfect qualities, but still he possessed them, and could, as time and opportunity presented, make use of them. He was what phrenologists would term a perfectly balanced man. But how sin, which entered so quickly, has marred this perfection! Adam's disobedience brought him under the penalty – "Dying, thou shalt die." And from that moment, Adam, as a whole, mentally, morally and physically, began to grow weak and die. In fact, the physical nature of man is so far the basis of the others that he cannot be either mentally or morally perfect if physically imperfect. Thus death has passed upon all men, and all we can do is to hasten or retard the effect. To this end, men establish medical colleges, hospitals, etc., to inform themselves as to the best way to prolong physical health; schools of learning and science, to prolong and increase mental power or health, and schools of law and theology, to hold in check, as much as possible, immorality and vice, and to develop moral health. And in all these things men are more or less successful, yet none may ever expect to restore the race to perfection in any of these respects. Perfection can and will be accomplished only in "the times of restitution of all things," when Jesus and His Bride, made one with Him, "shall restore all things."

But what does all this prove? It shows "that God hath made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions." The futile efforts of men to bring themselves back to perfection should also prove God's word true: "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." God has arranged to help or bring mankind back to the condition of the first man – perfect manhood, mentally, morally and physically. This is restoring what was lost – a restitution of all things through Christ. We are well aware that many of God's dear children differ with us on this matter and regard Adam an imperfect creation, and claim that, when it is declared, "God saw that it was good," He

must have been looking down to the "New Creation," and that it was this New Creation that God declared to be in His image and likeness. If this be true, then the spiritual man is but the development of the natural man; i.e., the natural reaching its full proper perfection. But the scriptures teach us that these two natures are distinct and separate: the one, earthly and fleshly; the other, spiritual and heavenly. The one, begotten and born of the flesh; the other, begotten and born of the spirit. The first partakes of the nature of man; the New Creation become "partakers of the Divine nature." As well might we say that God looked upon a grain of corn and called it very good, because it would eventually develop into a man, as to say that God called the natural man very good because He saw that he would develop into a spiritual being. They are totally different natures. The Divine nature is not developed out of the human nature, but was first, and the expressed conditions for the obtaining of the new nature is, not to develop and perfect the old, but to crucify it.

We, on the contrary, hold that while the New Creation will certainly be the express image of God, yet this does not interfere with the fact that the natural man, Adam, was created in God's image also; not physically, for God is a spirit, but in the qualities of mind. God had created the fish, fowl and lower animals, and yet of them all there was none that could appreciate and recognize Him and His great works; none that could comprehend His wisdom and power. "And God said: Let us make man in our own image and in our own likeness. [One upon whom the higher qualities of reason, justice, mercy, love, &c., will be bestowed.] Let him have dominion over every living thing." Let man bear the same relationship to all earthly creatures which God bears to the whole creation; i.e., be its ruler and governor. **[R104 : page 2]** Thus man, a lord of earth, having dominion, is a type or likeness of the Lord of all, and in his perfection we believe that man was recognized by all the lower animals as their lord. Doubtless his character as well as his personal

appearance made him the worthy object of their respect and veneration. Even to-day, notwithstanding the fall, and that all are at least half dead, we find men possessed of sufficient willpower, &c., to command and obtain the obedience of even savage beasts. What power may not have been possessed by the perfect man?

Now to return to our subject – Jesus. Behold the Man! We understand the scriptures to teach that Jesus, having laid aside the glory, took upon himself the form of a servant and was found in fashion as a man; not in the fashion of a sin-blighted man, physically, mentally and morally depraved, but in fashion as a man such as God made Adam – a "very good," a perfect and upright man. We believe that Jesus was as much a direct creation of God when born of Mary as Adam was when born in the womb of the earth, and that He partook no more of a sinful nature by His association with Mary, than Adam did by his previous association with the earth.

Thus God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. All men are said to bear the image of the earthly Adam (1 Cor. 15:49). Although, as a matter of fact, we have lost much of the grandeur and beauty of character, mind and form, yet we are in his likeness. So Jesus, in taking the form of a perfect man, would, of necessity, be in likeness to sinful flesh. We may be sure He was not born with a depraved nature, for He was ever in harmony with the Father. "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the laws of God, neither, indeed, can be."

Another thing assures us: "In Him was no sin" – "He knew no sin." And this being true, it follows that He could not know or experience any of the penalties of sin except as He did so voluntarily. For the same justice that says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and that can, by no means, clear the guilty, also guarantees life to the obedient and innocent. Jesus' life, then, was not forfeited, but was guaranteed. All the powers of heaven stood

pledged to defend the "Just One." He Himself said: "I lay down My life; none of you taketh it from me. I could ask My Father, and He would give me more than twelve legions of angels to defend it."

Sickness and pain are as much a part of the penalty of sin as death [R105 : page 2] itself; in fact, they are the beginning, and therefore a part of death. And if Jesus, being free from sin, was, as we have seen, free from death, by the same law of justice He must also have been created free from sickness and pain. But is it not written, "Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses?" Was He not "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?" Yes, truly, He was, and let me say that if, while on earth, He had been unmoved by the sorrow and pain which surrounded Him, it would have proved that He was not a perfect man, for that being who can live in a world of sorrow, wrapped up in self and oblivious to the sufferings of his fellows, has lost the first and grandest distinction between a man and inferior animals. Yes, Jesus did take our infirmities; but how? Were they laid upon Him from His birth? Did He grow up afflicted with the various maladies and loathsome diseases which beset sinful men, especially men on the lowest round of the ladder, covered with moral and physical pollution? Was He thus corrupt? No; our minds revolt at such a thought, as we consider Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." No, they were not laid upon Him, but "Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses." When we read, "He hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," we understand it to mean that when Jesus voluntarily became our ransom, the Father accepted it, and laid upon Him the chastisement of our sin. But did that chastisement consist in sufferings? By no means. Thousands of the human family have suffered intensely, and the sufferings and groanings of the whole creation from Adam down would make amends for a vast amount of sin if suffering could expiate sin, but it cannot. The wages of sin is death, not suffering. Therefore, "Christ died for our sins,...even the

death of the cross." But "Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses." Let me illustrate how I think He, being perfect, could take of our ailments: Brother M., living in Vermont, a man of great faith, and an earnest, loving child of God, moved by strong sympathy for a brother who had been crippled with a lame back for a long time, made him a subject of prayer, and feeling convinced that it was the Lord's pleasure to heal through his instrumentality, he went to him and laid his hands upon the lame back. The man was instantly cured, but so great had been Brother M.'s sympathy for him that the lameness went to his own back, and it was several days before he fully recovered from it. Brother M. has not unlimited power of healing, but has been used several times since the above, which was his first. And he informed me that at each time it is accompanied by intense sympathy for the afflicted and some pain to himself, but that as he learned to govern and control his sympathy it has the less effect upon himself. This first started the thought in my mind – May not the miracles of Jesus have had such effect upon his grandly sympathetic and loving nature? We remember well the case of the poor woman with an issue of blood, how that coming near the Saviour and touching the hem of his garment, she was immediately made whole. And Jesus turned him about, and said: "Who touched me, for I perceive that virtue (power, strength) is gone out of me." (Luke 8:46.)

Yes, we believe that every cure performed by Jesus served to exhaust, to some extent, his very life forces, yet He gave Himself – spent His life in acts of love and kindness to poor fallen humanity. Thus, He shared our sorrows, sickness and pain. Weeping with those who wept, He was touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Already perfect as a man, He was, by these self-imposed sufferings, "made perfect" as our High Priest.

Think of Him – nobly grand in character, form and deed, and both Christian and infidel to-day will agree with the decision of God and of Pilate 1800 years ago, viz.: "I find no cause of death in Him." Having proved Himself entitled to life, "He gave Himself a ransom for all," "He tasted death for every man, even the death of the cross." "BEHOLD THE MAN." "He hath set us an example that we should walk in His footsteps."

"We did esteem Him, smitten, stricken of God and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4), just as the prophet declared many would do, but now, examining carefully the record, we find that God created Him perfect, and "Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses."
