

THE TWO LIKENESSES.

"There are two likenesses spoken of in the bible – the likeness of men, and the likeness of God. From several scriptures it is evident these cannot be the same, though they are sometimes confounded in the minds of the people. David says: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Psa. 17:15. As much as to say I am not satisfied now, because I am not in thy likeness. We know the Psalmist had the form and likeness of man; hence man is not in the likeness of God. If it be claimed that this was a prophecy of Christ, the conclusion can not be weakened, but rather strengthened, on account of positive statements. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6,7.

Here we have a clear statement of the condescension of Christ; in leaving His own exalted condition – "The glory He had with the Father before the world was" – and coming down to the condition of man. He had the nature and form of God, and took not the nature of Angels. Heb. 2; but the seed of Abraham, the nature and form of man. But if man is in the nature and form of God then the condescension of Christ exists only in name. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich." This passage gives us the object of His condescension, to enrich us. But the value of this offering of Christ depends upon the depth of our poverty, or the contrast between what He was and what He became. Or the difference between what we are and what we may become through Him. He came down to our level that we might go up to His level. He took our nature and form, that we might become partakers of the Divine Nature, and in due time be made like Him when we shall see Him as He is.

Wondrous love and abasement on His part, glorious exaltation on our part! But all these scriptures mean nothing, if human nature and Divine Nature are one and the same; or if man is in the likeness of God.

We, makes a distinction between the terms, nature and form as applied to persons, the former being the foundation of the latter. The nature is in the seed, but properly speaking, the form is not. The apple nature, in a seed, will produce an apple tree. The tree has the form. Human nature produces human forms, and Divine nature produces Divine forms. Those who in this age become partakers of the Divine nature, have the assurance, that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him." "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," &c. Phil. 3.

The terms form, likeness and image are used, in reference to persons interchangeably, and apply primarily to what we term body, though it may be proper to use them also in reference to mental conditions, as when the Heart is used to represent the mind. "Son give me thine heart." "I will create within you a new heart."

The term flesh as used in the New Testament, evidently refers to humanity as a whole and not to what covers our bones, in common parlance called flesh. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." John 3:6.

This passage is not designated to teach whether man is unit, dual or tripartite, (one, two or three) but simply, that which is produced by human beings is human, and that which is produced by the Divine Spirit is Divine. "The Word was made flesh," means simply, what is elsewhere taught in scripture. That "He was made in the likeness of men" – became a human being. As a human being – born of the flesh, he was a Jew. But Jesus has been born again, not of the flesh, but of the spirit; "The firstborn from the dead" and as such is "declared to be the Son of God."

That human beings as represented by "The first man Adam" are "of the Earth, Earthy" is clearly taught by Paul, 1 Cor. 15:47. Man made of the dust, is sustained from the ground, and returns thither again. "Naked came I from the Earth, and naked shall I return thither again." All who are born of the flesh "bear the image of the Earthy." (Ver. 48,49.) Christ Himself in becoming our brother on the plane of the flesh, bore the same image. But now, born of the spirit having "returned to the glory he had with the Father before the world was." "He is the brightness of His (Father's) glory, and the express image of His Person." Heb. 1:3. That is, He was in the likeness of man, but He is in the likeness of God. Here we have the two likenesses fully developed in the same person. First the Natural, and afterward the Spiritual.

That the foundation for that spiritual body, was laid during His earthly life, in the spirit given Him without measure, we fully believe, but He was not, as a man (to leave out the idea of His Preexistence for in that He is an exception and not our Forerunner, of course) a fully developed spiritual being, until His Resurrection which was His second birth. He being the "First Born from the dead." Col. 1:18. He had the Divine Nature, before He was put to death but he was in human form.

In His life, death, and resurrection, or in the process of development from the lower to the higher, from the Natural to the Spiritual, He is the Forerunner of His saints; the "Head," that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. Col. 1:18. He opens the way and Himself is our Leader. All who ever enter the Heavenly life, and bear the Divine Image, as Sons of God, must go the way He went.

While in the flesh, which is the first or lowest stage of development, they, by the spirit of God imparted, become partakers of the Divine Nature. They are thus begotten to a lively hope, which

hope is consummated when they, like their Head, are borne from the dead. Those thus begotten by virtue of the spirit given them, call God, Father, claiming Divine Sonship. By faith they grasp the glorious realities of that Blessed Hope, and so count themselves, as God also counts them, in Christ, as on the Risen side, to die no more. This is indeed a glorious privilege, and we can exclaim, as John says: "Now are we the sons of God, but," we add, which tends both to humility and encouragement, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

This order of development must be observed by us as it is by the Lord. "First, the natural, &c." Some overlooking the order, and quoting from Paul, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," conclude at once that both bodies exist together, and that at death the spiritual body leaves or is withdrawn from the natural body, and that this is the Resurrection. By this view they are forced to ignore the Apostolic teaching concerning the Resurrection and the coming of Christ.

Nothing is more simple than that death and resurrection are not at the same time. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order. Christ, the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Even Christ was not raised until the third day after His death. But they that are Christ's, no matter when they died, are raised at His coming. "At the last trump," says Paul, and all must admit the seventh or last trumpet did not sound all the way through, as men have been dying.

The stress laid by some on the present tense of the verb, be, in the passage: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body," is of no value as an argument. It proves nothing. "Unto us a child is born," spoken by Isaiah hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, is understood by all. In common language we say: "As

the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." All understand it is first the twig and afterward the tree. "As is the child, so is the man."

Describing the order of seasons in a year we may say: There is Spring, it is followed by Summer, &c. Paul was speaking on the same principle in reference to the order of human development, from the lower to the higher; and of its stages he says: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:44.)

The first half of the same verse shows that they do not exist together, but, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." But as if he were anticipating the caviling which would come, and determined to give a clear offset to it, he says: "Howbeit that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural, (is first) and AFTERWARD that which is spiritual." (Ver. 46.) The whole passage is luminous with the glorious hope of Eternal life and glory at the coming of Christ, the Life Giver, at the last trump. "As we have borne (in this life) the image of the earthly, we shall also (in the future life) bear the image of the heavenly." (Ver. 49.) Glorious promise and hope. Here again is the positive evidence that here, in the flesh, men have not attained the likeness or image of God, but that it is something to be attained, when that which is perfect is come.

It is, we are well aware, the general impression, and not without apparent good reason, that man was at first created, and is, in the image of God. "Let us make man in our own likeness." But the harmony will be seen by those, and those only, who will take a glimpse at God's revealed plan as a whole, and remember that all that is done on the plane of the flesh is preparatory, and that the natural life is only the first step in the plan of development.

It may be said that the first is typical of the second, or higher, to which the lower points. The whole plan is built on the two phases, "First the natural and afterward the spiritual." There are two

creations, two Adams, two Eves, two marriages, two births and two lives, and consequently the two likenesses. [R90 : page 3]

Christ, as already seen, was Adam-like, the first to enter the second, or higher life. [R90 : page 4]

By his life, drawn from his side, so to speak, the church, Eve-like, derives her life, and being called out during the gospel, enters fully on her higher life at his coming to claim his Bride, when the marriage takes place.

Then the plan reaches the world; as on the plane of the flesh, none entered life excepting Adam and his wife until after their marriage, so none enter the higher – the Eternal Life – excepting Christ and his wife – the Church – until after the marriage of the Lamb. Then follows the Regeneration.

The life to come is the perfect life, and until that is reached, we must ever speak of God's plan as in process and not complete.

The New Testament is the complement of the Old, and it clearly reveals when and how we are to attain the maturity – the glory, the perfect day. The prophetic eye of the Psalmist looked forward, and seeing the perfection of character and person combined, he exclaimed, "I will behold thy face in Righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15.)
