# Shaping the Image of God in Man

Man has been given a very great grace: the opportunity to work as an apprentice in God's workshop, alongside Him, so that he may grow up in all things until he comes to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Because His plan is for us to be conformed to the image of His Son, and everything is subordinate to this magnificent plan, God sent His Son, who in turn sent His disciples to describe to us what He is like. Only if we know His features will we be able to shape ourselves after His image. ("For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29)

## God's Work of Perfecting Us

Just as no sculptor in the world, however talented, can carve a person's face without having seen its features, so no one will be able to work at bearing the image of Christ without knowing the features of His face.

No one in this world can imagine a sculptor reproducing the face of Nero if he has never once seen Nero.

A sculptor at work always has as his model the face of the one he is going to reproduce in stone. In his workshop he keeps the image of the model he must look at, and he copies each feature with great care until the stone takes on the likeness of the model.

God's work with us is much the same. From the moment of the new birth, the Holy Spirit, like a sculptor, is the One who works together with us and transforms us step by step until Christ is formed in us.

## Shaping His Image

At the beginning, His image is found in the seed of God that is sown in us, the seed that carries God's genetic code. The Holy Spirit makes this divine seed sprout and works together with us in this transformation. For this purpose He gives us the model, that is, the face of the Lord, which we can behold as in a glass, as Holy Scripture tells us. Then we work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, step by step, until we come to bear the image of Christ, until all His features are imprinted on our heart.

We all look as into a mirror in which we see all the features of the Lord, and we will keep polishing until there are no longer any differences between us and our Model. ("But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18)

The Lord's outward face cannot be seen, but His inward face can: what His heart is like, what is in His heart. And this we can see with the eyes of our heart. ("That the God of our Lord Jesus

Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened." Ephesians 1:17-18)

There is an inner part of the heart in which we can become like God, a part that can only be seen with the eyes of the heart, yet most people pay it no attention. ("For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matthew 13:15)

## The Character of the Lord

When Moses wanted to know Him, he did not ask to see His outward appearance. He asked Him to show him His ways, the way He is, that is, the features of His heart. ("Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee." Exodus 33:13)

So God revealed to him the hidden face of His heart, that is, the qualities or features of His heart. ("The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6; "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." Psalm 145:8; "God is love." 1 John 4:16; "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deuteronomy 32:4)

When God tells us that His image must come into being in us, He is really telling us that our heart will have to be changed to be like His heart, and that His qualities, the features of His heart, must be imprinted in us.

When we look with the eyes of our heart, we must see the features of His heart as in a mirror, and we must let ourselves be worked on and shaped according to these features of His, so that by the end of the Spirit's work our heart will be like His. ("The LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart." 1 Samuel 13:14)

He is at work restoring His image in us, and He guides us by the Holy Spirit to clothe us with His qualities, which will be the fruit of the Spirit's work in us. ("Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Colossians 3:12)

In the Gospel we find the features of the Lord Jesus' heart, with which He draws all people to Himself. ("And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32)

Yet we can see that, in most people, Satan has blinded the eyes of the heart so that they do not see the gospel of Christ's beauty shining, Christ who is the image of God, so that they do not see in the mirror the Model after which they should be changed. ("But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

## The Mystery of Christ's Character

A great many of us do not see the image of Christ, and stop at knowing a few things about the Lord Jesus.

Many know what healings the Lord Jesus performed, they know about His sacrifice on the cross, where He walked, what miracles He did, when He prayed and where He prayed, and that is where their knowledge of the Lord Jesus ends. But what is essential, what they need to know for their salvation, they do not know.

We must understand that we will never come to resemble Him, to be like Him, unless we seek to discover the beauty of the features of His heart (His ways) and unless we long to have a heart like His. ("Shew me now thy way, that I may know thee." Exodus 33:13)

The question each of us should ask is this: What can move me to look into the mirror and work together with the Holy Spirit so that the Lord's image is born in me? Is there something in particular? Is it the fear of hell? Is it the promise that He will take us to heaven? Or is it the beauty of His heart?

This article is taken from the booklet Transformed into the Image of Christ – Unmodified Word – Spiritual Revival Resources, available free online in .pdf format.

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