

Adam, A Type Of Christ

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Adam, a Type of Christ (Romans 5:14)

"Adam.....who is the figure [type] of Him that was to come."

THIS is the earliest of all the types: in time, it comes first; in position, it lies deepest. There are none before it—none beneath it. Bowing down from heaven in love, God the Spirit grasps the first fact of man's history, and therewith prints the lesson of man's redemption. There was no delay, for the King's matter required haste. The Giver was prompt and eager; the receivers have been indolent and slow.

Mark the nature of the relation that subsists between a type and its letter—between a seal and its impression. There are at once likeness and diversity; they are the same, and yet they are opposite. The type, whether it be a single letter or a varied landscape, is of the same size and shape as the object which its impress leaves behind; and every several point or turn in the one has an equal and corresponding point or turn in the other; and yet there is a complete and pervading difference, or rather contrariety, between them. Look first to the engraving on a seal, and then to the image which it has left on wax: the two are in certain aspects the same, and yet they are reciprocally opposite. They agree, and yet they are antagonist. The

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left of this is the right of that: where this reveals a hollow, that exhibits a height: where this is shaded, that lies in the light. In their whole aspect they are the reverse of each other.

After this manner is Adam a type of Christ. In some aspects there is likeness; and in others, not only diversity, but contrariety. Observe first the *agreement*, and then the *difference*.

I. The agreement or similarity.

1. Adam and Christ were the true sources or heads of their respective families.

There are two conceivable methods of constituting humanity. Whether both were possible, in consistence with all the attributes of God, we cannot tell. One is, to make men such that each should be absolutely independent of all, and the conduct, good or bad, of any one should have no effect, physical or moral, on the condition of any of the rest. The other is, to constitute the race such that the first man should be the head and source of humanity, and that the state and tendencies of all should be determined by the standing or the falling of this one.

This latter method our Maker has adopted, and it is useless to agitate the question whether the other method would, in its own nature, have been honourable to God and salutary for men. When the bird is shut up within an iron cage, it is better for itself that it should not dash itself against the bars. It was in an attempt to be as God that our first parents fell. If we would escape their fault and fate, we should abandon speculations on what might have been and address ourselves to what is. We are men ---creatures with a short lease and a narrow boundary.

incarnation of the Eternal Son. God in Christ would not have been so near to us; we would not have been so near to him. The unfallen would have been good servants; but the ransomed, by brotherhood of nature with the Divine Redeemer, have attained the place of beloved children.

Great was the joy set before our Redeemer when he undertook our cause; great is the joy he is reaping now when his work is finished. He has gotten a multitude, like the stars of heaven, nearer to himself, and higher than the angels. God compels evil to become the instrument of good on a wider sphere than this world. When a portion of the angels fell, that fall, by omniscient forethought and infinite love, was so directed that it set agoing a process which never ceased until it had raised from the dust a countless family of God's children to a higher place than angels ever held.

This hope might be the source of unmeasured joy to believers. This union to the Lord that bought us, and this destined elevation to sit with him upon his throne, should surely cheer us in the house of our pilgrimage. This promised dawn should give us songs in the night. But he who hath *this* hope in HIM should purify himself even as He is pure. No unfair or foul thing should lodge in the bosom of the man who is already in a flutter of expectation, as not knowing what moment he may be called into the presence of the Great King.

Let us leave with God the things that are God's, and evidently require omniscience for their solution, and let us mind our own business.

In point of fact we all come into the world with darkened minds and wayward hearts. As water flows down and sparks fly up, human beings, as they emerge successively into consciousness, turn aside into sin and fall into suffering. The grandest of God's works is most awry and out of joint. The highest creature falls furthest short of fulfilling its destiny. The Scriptures, acknowledging this fact, explain it by the *Fall*.

Some people complain much of the difficulties which they find in the Scriptures regarding this subject. A serious mistake is made, however, in the statement of the question. The difficulty lies, not in the Scriptures, but in the fact: it would have been all there although there had never been a Bible. Creatures manifestly the head of creation, having an intellectual and moral nature in conjunction with an exquisite physical frame, under the government of a Being who is at once omnipotent and beneficent, lie weltering in sin and suffering, like the sea when it cannot rest. This state of things has endured from age to age, without intermission and without mitigation. This is the difficulty; all the difficulties that you meet in the Bible are small when compared with this. The aim of the Bible is to throw light on the darkness; but even if some parts of the scene remain obscure, we have no right to lay the blame of the obscurity on that which, to some extent at least, has brought us light.

The first man, according to the actual constitution of humanity, stood as head and representative of the race. His fall brought all down. At the head he stands, and

from him the long line stretches away down the course of time. Two hundred generations constitute the links of the chain, and its length extends to six thousand years.

At first the line of march is narrow: on the apex one; and behind him two or three walk abreast: broader and broader grows the stream as it recedes from the source, until, in our day, the file of march is a million of millions deep. Adam, like the point of the wedge, stands on the summit, a unit alone; the generations in the ranks immediately beneath him are numbered by tens, and anon by hundreds, until they have in our day reached a number that can indeed be expressed in figures, but cannot be adequately comprehended by finite minds.

On the other side stands the second Adam—he that was to come. Alone he stands at the head; and his also shall be a numerous offspring. Here and there, in the earliest ages, appears a righteous Abel offering faith's sacrifice, or a righteous Enoch walking in newness of life with God. Yonder a Noah preaches righteousness over a world lying in wickedness; and here an Abraham is called from his home and his kindred to a better country and a higher life. Broader now is the line of their marching since Christ came in the flesh. Already a multitude, which no man can number, tread the pilgrim's path, and shall in due time enter the joy of their Lord. All the redeemed in heaven and on earth are Christ's,—their life as certainly flowing from and dependent on him as the natural life of humanity flows from the first man.

The chief feature of similarity between the figure and the greater fact which it predicts is that each stands for all his own; and this principle of God's government, introduced at the beginning, runs through to the end.

And as Christians hold directly of Christ, Christ holds individually by Christians. The Vine bleeds and languishes when the branches are torn away: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The Head endures pain when the members are injured. How safe is that life which is hid with Christ in God!

4. Yet another point of difference. The gain by the second Adam is greater than the loss by the first. The scripture intimates, indeed, that there is a likeness,—that Adam is a figure of Christ. But having made the intimation of the similarity, it proceeds immediately to intimate that there is also a dissimilarity: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (v. 15). The gain in Christ is not merely the loss that we sustained made up. He pays our debt, and makes us rich besides. He sets free the slave, and makes him a son. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." A blessed word this "much more"!

There is a mystery here. We may stand on the brink of this great deep, and reverently gaze into its far-receding, limitless light; but this is a thing which we cannot fully comprehend; and attempts to be wise in it above what is written may do us serious harm. In Christ we are far better than we would have been as unfallen children of Adam. Had we entered the society of heaven as men that had kept their first estate, we should have been accepted as perfect men; but when a ransomed sinner is admitted to the joy of the Lord and the company of angels, he enters as one with Him who sits upon the throne. With man unfallen, there would, as far as we can see, have been no

It is not thus in the relation between Christ and Christians. It is from him that their life flows as its fountain. But further : each generation of believing men, down to the end of the world, continue to draw their spiritual life and justifying righteousness directly and immediately from the person of Emmanuel. It is not that Christ gave forth a germ of new spiritual life, once for all, and that each new generation of Christians derive their better life from those that went immediately before them. No ; the new creature does not propagate its kind. A Christian now gets his life as directly from Christ as those who lay in his bosom or sat at his feet. Death once imparted at the sources of humanity, runs down its stream ; but life imparted to one man by the God-man Christ, needs to be equally imparted to every saved sinner, by personal relation with the Saviour. If the first Adam were annihilated, the born of the human race would still be born in sin ; but if Christ were no more Christ, there could be no more for any man a new, a holy life.

The difference is somewhat like that which may be found in nature between a tree propagating its kind by seed on the one hand, and a tree sustaining its branches on the other. When once the seed is ripened and cast, the progenitor tree may be burned ; from the seed, trees of the same kind will spring. But even when the branch has been put forth by the tree, the branch is every year, and all the year, directly dependent on the tree. If the tree should die, all the branches would die too. The corruption we inherit from Adam, as the seed has come from the tree ; the new life we can only have in Christ, as the branch lives in the vine. Adam might say, I was the tree, and ye grew from the seed which I shed ; but Christ says, I am the vine, ye are the branches.

The line of march was suddenly changed at the resurrection of Christ. Then the column left the narrow track of Palestine, and overflowed on the wide field of the world. Admitted into the capital of the Gentiles when Jerusalem fell, it speedily found a larger sphere and became a more numerous company. As centuries pass, it grows still greater ; and now we look wistfully forward to that time when it shall reach from sea to sea—when the kingdom of Christ shall absorb the kingdoms of the world—when the stream of the second Adam's children shall be co-extensive and coincident with that of the first.

2. These two representatives stood side by side from the first, and redemption began to flow from Christ as soon as sin was brought in by Adam. The promise did not tarry ; it sprang at the gate of Eden, an echo of the curse. When the first man fell, and so entailed on all his posterity an inheritance of woe, Christ, within the veil unseen, began to be the head of a new and saved family. In eternity within he dwelt, and there he began to act the head of the redeemed the moment that the first man outside became the head of a fallen race. An impenetrable partition veiled off the unseen from the eyes of men ; but the Redeemer within the veil, delighting from the first in his saving work, approached the curtain, and often permitted softened rays of his glory to shine through.

Let a veil be hung up impervious to light and vision ; it may yet be such that a magnet within will, when brought near the boundary, attract kindred objects on the outer side. You may observe them to quiver and move, and lift themselves mysteriously off the ground. The magnetic power from within grasps the objects that lie without, and leads them whithersoever it will. Under the Patriarchal

and Jewish economies many felt the drawing of Christ's love who never with the bodily eyes beheld Christ. Caught by the deepest affections of their souls, they arose from the dust, and quivered tremulously after him, whom having not seen they had yet learned to love.

Similarly in the days of his personal ministry, although he manifested himself only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he had compassion on the surrounding heathen, and hastened forward to the day of their redemption. On one occasion he walked to the boundary of his allotted sphere, and touched the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. In that outer land a Syrophenician woman felt the drawing of his love, and followed him—the first fruit of the Gentiles to Christ.

3. Another point of likeness lies in this, that on both sides equally it is by birth that the members are united to their head and his destiny. It is by birth that we are knit to our inheritance of sin. If we had not descended by birth from a fallen father, we would not have been in this condition of sin and misery.

The thought sometimes presses for admission—What if we had never been born; or if we had descended from the holy?—but the conception is too hard for us. The mind cannot bear its weight; to entertain it long would overwhelm our faculties. Not only is the thing impossible of attainment; the conception of it exceeds our power.

We have been born to this inheritance of sin and suffering; we cannot shake it off. We may weep over the discovery of our sad condition, and cry with an exceeding great and bitter cry, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" but to that cry, apart from the gospel revealed, no comforting answer can ever come. The depths

and makes both their exhortations and their warnings of none effect.

God's creatures of the old and new creation seem to envelop each other, after the manner of a sphere within a sphere, the most precious being embedded in the heart. Humanity, comparatively small in bulk, is surrounded by the mightier mass of the inferior creatures, the beasts that perish. Men, immortal, made in God's image, lie in the heart like the kernel, and all inferior organized beings encompass it like a huge husk.

The husk will in due time rend and rot and return to the dust. But within the mass of humanity that remains is an inner seed, encased around by a harder, rougher shell. In the heart of humanity lie the regenerate—the true, vital seed of the kingdom; and the crust that surrounds them, compact and highly organized though it be, will crumble and be cast away. The Bridegroom and they that were ready went in to the marriage; and the rest were shut out. When the earth and all that it contained have passed away, Christ and Christians will remain, inheritors together and alone of the eternal life.

3. Another point of difference. Although we inherit this corruption from the first man, we personally have no immediate relation to him. We inherit directly from our own immediate forefathers. With Adam we have no personal relation, in the matter of a descending moral taint. Although it came from the first man originally, we received it from the last that stood before us in the line. If we could suppose our first progenitor to be from this time forth annihilated, we should remain in the same state as to inherited corruption. We derived it not immediately from him, but from our nearest father.

tians as long as they are in this life. They are still the same persons that they were before. The lower parts remain: the physical frame and the intellectual faculties remain; it is the higher or spiritual nature that has been radically changed. The old spirit has been taken away, and a new spirit inserted. The seed of Christ in the higher part has been inserted in the seed of Adam in the lower part; and, alas! the fruit that grows even on a Christian tastes of the old corrupt root on which it still stands and grows.

In some way, we know not how, the remnants of the old will be filtered out in the dissolution of death; and nothing shall enter heaven that would defile its golden streets or be a jar in its new song.

2. The two bands are not equally numerous. Adam's company includes absolutely the whole of the human race; Christ's company is contained within it, and is therefore necessarily smaller, as the whole is greater than a part.

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv.). These words do not intimate that the two companies are co-extensive and coincident: no man with his eyes open can read the words in their connection, and think that this is their meaning. The meaning is, In Adam, Adam's all die; in Christ, Christ's all live. It tells that all who are in Adam die, and all who are in Christ live; but it does not tell how many either company contains. We know certainly from other scriptures that Adam's company consists of all the born, and Christ's of all the born-again. To cleave to the letter here, and understand it to announce that all the human race are actually saved in Christ, contradicts the whole spirit of the Scriptures,

said, "It is not in me:" it is not in earth, it is not in heaven, to cause that to be not which is. By birthright our dark heritage is ours, and the link that binds us to it we cannot break. We are in it, and cannot escape.

But be of good cheer, prisoner of hope: the chain that binds you by birth to the first Adam, it is true, cannot be broken; but if by a corresponding new birth you are one with the second Adam, you have no cause to weep. Greater is He that is for you than all that be against you. You cannot, indeed, escape from being a man; but if you are a new creature in Christ Jesus, the second birthright is as irrevocable as the first. If you are once born, nothing can separate you from your heritage, except to be re-born. But if you are born again, nothing can separate you from your new inheritance. Both birth-bonds are indissoluble. Though the weight of a world were fixed to you, and flung into infinite space, it would not avail to wrench you off your stem in Adam, with all the twofold death that it involves; but though all the weight of a world were fixed to a member of Christ, and flung free into infinitude, it could not separate the living member from the life-giving Head.

It is a fixed principle of natural science that species do not change. In the material department of God's creation there is no way over from one nature to another: once in a nature always in it, without a new creation. But that which is impossible with man is possible with God. He has undertaken in the gospel to make a *new* creature. As the principle operates in the first Adam's posterity, so it operates in the second Adam's posterity. "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

II. The difference.

The chief point of contrast lies in this, that whereas Adam's seed derive from their head sin and death, Christ's seed derive from their Head righteousness and life. This birth is meanness; that is honour: this birth is darkness; that is light: this birth is death; that is life.

One of the strangest facts in human history—a fact which I suppose angels desire to look into, and yet shudder when they see—is that multitudes of the human race are proud of their first birth, and do not give themselves any concern about a second. They count the little great, and the great little; the evil good, and the good evil. Woe to them that so turn upside down the very ground themselves must stand upon!

This contrast between the type and the thing which it represents is over all. The two are in this respect not only unlike each other, but complete and absolute contraries.

Under this, however, there are many specific points of difference.

1. While Adam's seed in this world possess the moral nature of their head complete, Christ's seed possess the moral nature of their Head only in part. We get the evil in full, the good only in part. It comes about in this way: When we derive a sinful nature from the first man, we have previously no other and better nature, that may mingle with it and mitigate its evil; we possess the evil all, and the evil only. The imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually. In me, that

is in my flesh—in all that I derive from man my father—there dwelleth no good thing.

But on the other hand, the regeneration is not the birth of a being who did not previously exist. It is the getting of a new nature, indeed, and that a holy one, through union in spirit with Christ, the holy Man; but it is gotten by one who previously possessed an evil nature, and that evil nature is not wholly cast away. It is cast down from the throne, but not cast forth from the territory. It no longer reigns, but it continues to disturb. The old mingles with and spoils the new. The two contend against each other; and there is not peace, but a sword. The actual life of a Christian, accordingly, is neither wholly carnal nor wholly spiritual—it is neither a straight line in the direction of goodness, nor a straight line in the direction of badness; it is a sort of diagonal, traced by the opposite pressure of the two forces. (See Rom. vii.)

The union with Christ in the regeneration is likened to the grafting of a fruit-tree. Now the tree at the first, which springs from seed, is wholly evil—root and branch. When it is grafted it is made good; but not so completely as it was originally made evil. Its head is taken away; but its root, and the lower portion of the stem, are left living in the ground. On this old stump a new and good branch is grafted. It is the new branch that grows upward and bears the fruit, but it must lean on and get its life-sap through the old root and stem of the old evil tree. Although the good head ingrafted always brings forth good fruit, the old evil root is continually putting forth shoots and buds and blossoms of its own, that are evil, and that waste the strength which should go to the good.

A similar defect, from a similar cause, adheres to Chris-