

The Last Adam

by John Follette

Christ is the perfect, sinless human being who fulfills God's original purpose for man and offers Himself as the perfect Lamb without spot or blemish.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 17:5, John 17:4, 1 Corinthians 15:45, Galatians 4:4, Philippians 2:6, Hebrews 2:14

Topics: "Christian Character", "Redemption Through Christ"

Description

John Follette preaches about the importance of man's power of choice in reflecting the likeness and image of God, emphasizing the process of testings and trials to develop Christian character. He discusses how the moral character of God is made manifest through the choices we make, leading to a growth into the likeness of God. Follette explores the failure of the first Adam and the redemption brought by the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who perfectly displayed God's image and likeness through His obedience and sacrifice.

Transcript

Man was to exercise his power of choice and in so doing reflect the likeness and image of God. He possessed an unfallen human nature as a gift of God in the act of creation. The moral character or likeness and image of God was to come or be made manifest through a process of testings or trials. This was and still is a principle upon which God works in developing Christian character or likeness to Christ. We found the will of man was one of the three factors included in the study of his personality and was really the one factor at which God continually looks.

Man was to exercise his power of choice and in so doing show its strength in willing with God and thus glorifying His Name. In choosing against sin and self and the self-will there is a growth into the likeness of God and a stamping of His nature and image more clearly upon the heart and life where the right choice is made. Thus is ever the process of character building.

Nature, even the new nature at conversion, is a free gift, but the character and likeness of Christ comes as a process of building and growth. This depends upon our power to choose, and so are we continually coming more and more into the likeness of Christ; "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

So in God's purpose for man He was to have found through this perfect human being a peculiar and special manifestation of His likeness and image as the hidden, potential values of the man unfolded and his will was exercised under the probationary law of Gen. 2:17.

In the very first test man failed in his whole nature, and he, as both a being and a personality crashed to a level of broken humanity, and was consequently placed under the law of sin and death. God did not find in the first Adam the great desire of His heart. Even the deeper powers of the human creation were never released to His glory. So man, ever since the fall and first failure, has had a poor, broken down creation and nature with which to work. The wonder and miracle to me is to see what he is able to produce even so--but alas! the finest manifestations and products of the same are but colossal ruins of a fallen Adamic creation. That is why, when God saves us, He makes us a new creation and expects nothing from the old. We are new creatures in Christ--not washovers.

In thinking of this matter of God's first purpose and Adam's failure, I like to remember Isaiah 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Had not God spoken a word? Yes, in Gen. 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Surely God is not to be defeated. Though the first Adam was a failure, God was yet to see His mighty purpose fulfilled.

This brings us more directly to the study at hand--the Last Adam. Let us remember that names in the Scriptures were always given because they represent or portray character. That is, the name suggests the very character or nature of the one who held it. Among the names given to our blessed Lord, there are two I want to look at in this connection. In 1 Cor. 15:45 He is called, The Last Adam, and in 1 Tim. 2:5, He is called The Man Christ Jesus. Therefore, He must be unto God a perfect Adam--that is, He is to display and carry to its triumph the original idea for the first Adam. He must be the ideal man, a perfect reflection of God's image and likeness, shining and gleaming through the human instrument--the perfect, sinless, faultless, limited and dependent human--even the Last Adam.

Right here let us remember the Law of the Offerings and their order of offering, and we come again to the teaching found in this sermon. You remember the first offering was the Whole Burnt Offering, and was "a sweet savour unto God"--"a male without blemish." God came first and had a peculiar and spiritual satisfaction in this first offering--it was Godward. Remember Christ's motto: "Lo! I come to do Thy will." So in His human aspect and manifestation there is ever that which looks toward God, and in return God finds in that life (from the human side) a delight and satisfaction.

Since this discourse has to do with Christ as the Last Adam and Man Christ Jesus, let us look at the question of His incarnation. We must needs do this if we want to understand a little better this marvelous and wonderful Christ. Sometimes in one's desire to defend one phase of truth he becomes over-anxious and refuses to look at other phases or angles of the matter for fear he may not keep true or loyal to the side he sees, and from which he has gained spiritual illumination and inspiration. But this should not be so. The truth has many sides and is universal. No one or no one group has a corner on all truth. We are finite, and the glimpses we get are but fragmentary. The whole truth is the Word of God, but we are limited, and only by the Spirit of revelation do we get even the flashes which ever change and revolutionize our lives. We have so long preached and taught His deity and divinity that we have almost forgotten that He has a human side and became a partaker of our flesh. If God can say He is the Last Adam and a Man, I must believe it, and see Him as such. Then the Spirit adds much to any conception of Him, and He draws me, and ere I know it, I am low at His feet.

Turn with me to Phil. 2:6-8. We cannot expect to do much with this text in this discourse, since it is too heavy and there are too many lines of departure to be considered. Therefore I will confine our study to the use of certain words and so help clear up some mental webs, and maybe we can see a bit more clearly. "Who being in the form of God,"--here the word form is morpha, and means the essential form of being, that which is the very essence of the thing. Here His morpha is really His deity--He is God in essence and essential form of being. In verse 6 we read, "and took upon Him the form (morpha) of a servant." Note, the Word does not say He was like a servant, or acted like a servant, but took the form of one. He was in all reality a servant, as Old Testament study will prove. Next, the word likeness (verse 7) means the habit of man-kind. It is a most suggestive word. "And found in fashion as a man."--here fashion is schema and means, the fashion of life. So we find Him in truth to be God (in morpha); He is the second member of the Trinity. Yet He is a servant and adapts Himself to the habit of man and moves in the fashion of the same.

Now someone wants to know what it was He let go in becoming incarnate in the human form. Some fear at once that if we speak of Him in the human, we deny His deity or place in the Godhead, and so they wonder what He left in order to become man. Yes, He was, is, and ever will be equal with God. There was nothing concerning His equality that He left. There are two items to be considered here--neither are divine attributes, and yet both were becoming to Him in His place in the Godhead, namely, (1) peculiar experience at home in that relationship, (2) the glory which was an accompanying feature of the same. These were both relinquished for the time. He lays them aside and becomes the Last Adam, the Man Christ Jesus; Christ suggests the divine side--the Anointed of God, while Jesus suggests the human aspect and the nature of man.

Perhaps a little illustration here will help: Let us suppose there is up yonder on the mountainside a fine fir tree. All the essential qualities and attributes which hold it under the structural law of the fir tree, make it a fir tree and nothing else. All the peculiar, qualifying marks are there, and we know it as a perfect fir tree. That is its morpha--its essential being. But suppose we cut it down and place it in our living room as a Christmas tree. In so doing have we changed in any way or form its essential being? Not at all. It is still a fine fir tree. But it now has the form of a Christmas tree. It does not act like a Christmas tree. It is a Christmas tree--the form or morpha of a servant. Do you see? And now go on a little: While it was up on the mountainside it may have stood alone; it may have been in a clump or group with others; it may have been in a rocky place, or maybe near the water, or on some barren height. That was its schema, the fashion or arrangement of its setting, its habitat. But now it has a new habitat or fashion, called in verse 7 likeness, (habit), and verse 8, schema. It is in a room surrounded by furniture and here is the glowing fire, and we hear the music and joyous laughter of the Christmas season. Listen! Is the tree any less a fir tree? To have made it bear our gifts and hold the lights, etc., makes it no less the same fir tree, only it is serving.

Again, look at a personal illustration: Here I am before you, quite active. Well, that is the way God made me. I use my body, or rather the Lord does, and in so doing I become an instrument for His service. But suppose you tie me up, hand and foot, and let me minister thus. Tied up, am I any the less Follette? Absolutely not, only I would find myself extremely limited. And that is exactly what happened when Christ, God's Son --the I AM, came to us. He was the perfect, limited Man. He crowded and cramped Himself down and lived in our form (morpha) and fashion (schema). Remember it was the perfect, un-fallen nature He took. God could not start Him in a broken-down, ruined nature---sinful and marred. Remember Gal. 4:4, 5, "made of a woman, under the law"; also Heb. 2:14, 15, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might

destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." It is beyond us to probe down into this subject. It is too wonderful!

From birth, from the human side, God saw the perfect development and unfolding of the human as it should have been, without sin and failure. All the powers of the human creation--hidden in Adam--find perfect display in Christ Jesus. Three times God breaks through the heavens and gives testimony as to His pleasure (before Jesus ever reaches Calvary). All three times He is in some way touching the matter of His death. Matt. 17:5; Jn. 12:28; Matt. 8:17. Why? He was ever (before the foundation of the world) the Lamb. This lamb was to be without spot or blemish--perfect. Therefore Christ was to carry the Adamic ideal and scheme to its perfection, and so have a perfect man offered through the obedience and perfection of the Son, the Lamb. Christ must be a perfect man ere He can die. The study of His perfect triumph and victory is most startling, fascinating and amazing. Watch Him from the temple experience, on through. I cannot now trace the steps but they are all there and ravishing to look upon. He perfectly does what man failed to do--to glorify God and do His will. In John 17 note His approach to God in that marvelous prayer. He does not begin by telling God of His work on Calvary and the redemption of the world. No! Verse 4, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." Isn't that grand! God first. God's glory, God's will, God's place first--then "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

On the Mount of Transfiguration we find Him bringing to its climax the walk of the Last Adam. It took Him thirty-three years to climb that mountain. It took thirty-three years to bring to perfection the ideal man, and as far as Christ's being man was concerned, that was His place of absolute triumph. Man was not originally meant to die--but to have entered into some phase of glorification as here suggested. God breaks through and says, "I am well pleased." When no one else could be pleased or could understand, God was, and pronounced this great testimony upon an obedient Man, the Son of God.

But He cannot tarry on that mountain. He is now the perfect Lamb without spot or blemish. The Lamb must be offered and so there is another mountain to climb. So He must go down. At the foot of the mountain He finds the demoniac (a type of broken humanity). He picks him up, as it were, and carried him in His bosom, to Calvary. That crazy, undone bit was Follette, and you, and you, and you--we were all there in deep, deep need, crazed and all disorganized by sin. But the mighty, triumphant, all-glorious Christ picked us up and we died in Him!

So the Lamb is slain and Redemption is made a glorious reality. Is He yours? Are you, too, conscious that you have passed from sin unto life? Now a partaker of Life with Him? Do not think, from the statement above, that it took thirty-three years for Christ to perfect the ideal nature. I am not talking about His human nature--that was always perfect. But during the thirty-three years there was the perfect and complete unfolding of the human so that in that He perfectly glorified the Father. He was the complete, ideal expression of the Last Adam, the Man Christ Jesus.

Let us surrender more fully to Him and allow Him to come more perfectly into a union with us, of faith and power to also glorify His Name. Surely He is not less God--He is the mighty God, coming to us in our need through the Son, the Last Adam, the Man Christ Jesus.

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