

**THE IMAGE OF GOD IN  
MAN.FOUR SERMONS,  
PREACHED BEFORE THE  
UNIVERISTY OF CAMBRIDGE, IN  
FEBRUARY MDCCCXLI**

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The Image of God in Man. Four Sermons, Preached Before the Univeristy of Cambridge, in February MDCCXXLI by William Harness

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**WILLIAM HARNESS**

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IN FEBRUARY, MDCCCXLI.

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# SERMON I.

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## THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN.

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GENESIS i. 27.

“ God created man in his own image.”

THE account; which the Holy Scriptures give of the formation of man, is strikingly different from that, which has been given of all the other works of the Almighty. Of the earth on which we dwell; of the seas and streams by which it is intersected; of the heavens its canopy; of the bright bodies which give it light; of the herbs, and trees, and flowers, with which it is clothed and beautified; of the various living things, with which the air, the land, the waters are so thickly tenanted, we find the same form of words successively employed, and simply read that God commanded them to be; that, as He commanded, they were produced; and that, when produced, He

looked upon and approved of them as "good." All these inferior things appear to have owed their origin to a lighter effort of His wisdom and His power. But on the sixth and the last day, when arrived as it were by gradual ascent from the creation of the lowest to the production of the highest of His works; when about to call that being into existence, who was to be the chief of all earthly things, and to "have dominion over them," a most important change in the mode of expression is introduced; and we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness<sup>1</sup>." "Let us," with an appeal to the counsel of the Son, and the Holy Spirit:—"Let us *make* man," not merely call him into existence, as the elder Fathers of the Church have observed, by the operation of the divine word, but raise him up as a divine work; and "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" not, as the other creatures were formed, in realization of some design conceived by the divine wisdom, but after the likeness of God Himself. And, in accordance with this purpose, we are assured, that "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them<sup>2</sup>."

It is impossible to read this account of the origin of our first parents, and not acknowledge that it conveys an intimation of some eminent distinction, which has been exclusively conferred upon the human

<sup>1</sup> Gen. i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. 27.

race. We are, indeed, the beings of a day; incapable of counting on a single hour as our own; uncertain whether we shall be permitted to carry our slightest purpose into execution; exposed to a thousand perils; and liable to be diverted from our holiest and most steadfast resolution by the sudden gust of passion, or the unexpected temptation; but, still, though weak and frail, we are invested with the highest dignity which can be bestowed upon any creature;—for there is some portion of our nature, which bears the impress of the image of the Creator. It is to the consideration of this most important subject, the likeness of God in man, that I purpose requiring your attention in my present and three following discourses. My plan is this: I shall first, with humble but diligent inquiry, endeavour to search out that principle of our being, in which the divine image may be distinctly shown to have existence; and I shall afterwards direct your attention to the speculative and practical consequences, which must necessarily result from the discovery of that principle.

But here an obstacle meets us at the very threshold of our investigation. We find it stated by many commentators, that “the image of God” has been lost through the transgression of Adam, and that, though restored through faith to the regenerate disciples of our Saviour, it is no longer to be looked for among the great mass and body of our fellow-creatures. Whence such an opinion is derived it