

“THEY THAT MAKE THEM ARE LIKE UNTO THEM”

(Ps. 115:8).

“Psychological projection is a theory in psychology in which humans defend themselves against their own unpleasant impulses by denying their existence while attributing them to others”. Let us suppose, for example, that you are on a hill watching a man below walk up to a house. If you are a thief you may project on him your own identity and assume he is casing the house to rob it. If you are an adulterer you may assume he is there to have an affair with another man’s wife. If you are a happily married man you may assume that he is merely a husband coming home from work. None of these assumptions are based upon evidence. Rather they are a “projection” of someone upon someone else. Remember the old adage: “When someone is always talking about a thief, hold on to your wallet while you are around them.”

This seems to be what the Psalmist is talking about in our text. An idolater makes an idol that cannot speak, hear, smell, or walk. Since the idol cannot speak for itself, those who make the idol project themselves upon the idol they are making. Thus - **“they that make them are like unto them”**. So the Athenians, who considered themselves wise, worshiped Athena the goddess of wisdom. The Corinthians who were sexually immoral worshiped Aphrodite the goddess of love. Those who were warriors worshiped Ares whose name literally means “battle”, Etc. In each instance the idol assumes whatever identity it’s maker projects upon it. Unfortunately this principle doesn’t just apply to idols, as we have already said it also applies to people.

This wicked practice, however, is done away in Christ. Paul put it like this: **“From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view” (2 Cor. 5:16)**. In Christ we see other people as God sees them. Jesus is our example. He did not see women as sexual objects, or rich men with the desire to get their money. He did not see sick people as dangers to be avoided, or children as a nuisance. Nobody had to tell Jesus about man, for He knew what was in man (Jn. 2:25).

Paul himself personifies the mentality of Christ. The Jews hated him, but he didn’t hate them. In spite of the fact that they tortured him and tried to kill him, Paul actually wished himself accursed if only the Jews would be saved (Rom. 9:1 - 5). Obviously, Paul did not see them from a worldly point of view. Because Paul had the mind of Christ he saw lost people as Jesus did. That’s why he was willing to die for the very men who wanted to kill him.

But Paul’s inspired advice to the Corinthians did not end with man’s assessment of his fellow men. The radical nature of the new creation goes beyond that. Paul continued: **“Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer” (2 Cor. 5:16)**. Just as idol makes project their own personalities on an idol, unconverted people project their own personalities on Jesus. The immoral feature Him forgiving the woman caught in the act of adultery. The legalist sees him with a whip purifying the temple. The humanitarian sees Him healing the sick and feeding the hungry. The irreligious see him condemning the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. The person who is a new creation, however, no longer sees Jesus from a human point of view. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the entire vocabulary of God. Like obedient children we allow Him to project his character on us, not the other way around.

Conversion is instantaneous, but transformation is not. Our metamorphosis takes time. We began our journey as newborn babes, but progressively grow to be more like Jesus every day. **“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 Cor. 3:18)**.