

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (Alexander Craven Ord) 141455

The Glory of the Person of the Son of God: His Title as the Eternal Life, Chapter 6: Participation in the Divine Nature (1:30-31)

It is, however, of the greatest importance to discern, that the believer does partake, in the blessed qualities of the divine nature. Both light and love, are in their very nature, divine qualities, and characteristic of eternal life; and that, as displayed in the midst of evil and of the darkness, caused by sin. Was God ever so manifested as "love," before sending His Son into the world, that we might live through Him? And Christ was the expression of this: "Hereby perceive we the love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16).

God is love, and love is given as evidence of the existence and the manifestation of eternal life in us (1 John 3:14). Again "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." God is also light, and was displayed thus by Christ Himself as "the Life," for "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Now we are not only said to be sons of light (1 Thess. 5:5), and in the light as God is in the light (1 John 1:7), but more than this, we "are light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:3). These are the very perfections of the divine nature, and hence we only have them fully unfolded in the writings of the apostle John, who expressly treats of that nature. The same may be said of "grace and truth," which, in contrast with the law (given by Moses), are said to have come by Jesus Christ, for this shows what God is Himself, as above the sin of man, and active healing, saving, and blessing man, as ruined under the effects of sin in this world. Hence the glory, as of the only begotten with the Father, was full of grace and truth.

It is thus that though we are not infinite, yet we participate in what is divine and infinite in Him; for Jesus, as man, and as the Son, has brought these divine qualities, which He had with the Father before the world was, into manhood.

The apostle John speaks of His glory, which he beheld, "The glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth." This glory was divine in its character, being that of the Son with the Father, and existing in Him in divine fullness, and displayed here in its perfectness, so that it could be beheld by the apostles and declared. But the apostle adds "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." The words "all we" extend the participation or enjoyment of what is named beyond the apostle, and the words "of His fullness" extend the range of reception, to every grace that is found in Him. For this glory is not here an external thing visible to the eye, but those qualities, divine in their nature, which never could have been seen or known otherwise, for "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us," and this glory dwelt in His blessed Person, as with Israel of old in another way in the wilderness. How entirely does this display of His glory correspond with "The Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that eternal life that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" - that life of which He is personally the expression. And it is in the contemplation of this that we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, through participating in the divine nature; or (as in John 1), as already said, receiving out of His fullness. □

Indeed it is remarkable how Scripture identifies what is really divine with what we participate in or enjoy. Not, of course, that we are the fountain, but that we drink into this fountain in different ways. Not only the Spirit of God is in us searching all things, even the deep things (Gr. depths) of God and knows what is in His mind, as a man's spirit knows the things of a man, but the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the one that is spiritual, says, "He judgeth [discerneth] all things yet he himself is judged [discerned] of no man," and quoting the striking passage in Isa. 40, he adds, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord [i.e. Jehovah]? but we have the mind of Christ." This refers both to the capacity of knowing and to the things known. Associated with Him as Man, we thus enter into His mind, here called the mind of Jehovah.

We have the same kind of connection also between what is human and divine in 1 Cor. 1:30, 31: "Of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." We are in Christ, who is in a special sense the wisdom of God, as well as the One in whom the righteousness of God is displayed, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him, and are also made "partakers of His [God's] holiness" (Heb. 12). Thus, though we have nothing, and are nothing in ourselves, we may glory in what we have in Him in whom, as Lord or Jehovah, it all exists.

In Phil. 2 also we are exhorted to have the same "mind" in us which was also in Christ Jesus. And what is this described to be? The wondrous descent from the glory dignity, and personal position of God, to the lowly form of manhood, even of a bondservant. Is not such a principle of thought and feeling wholly divine, both in its origin and nature? Could it exist in us, apart from the divine nature and life which we have received - the mind of Christ in us?

Though we may speak of the blessed traits of divine life, this does not imply that we can define or fathom this life, even in ourselves; and still less in Christ, from whom it all proceeds and in whom it is infinite and illimitable. For how otherwise could this life be the light of men? or the light of life? or, still more, the light of the heavenly scenes (Rev. 21), which are all illumined by His blessed presence? □ How poor and misty must be the exchange of a state or sphere of blessedness prepared for man, which does not go beyond manhood in Christ, or in us, for the wonderful infinite display of what the Son is, of what He was with the Father on earth likewise! It is like giving up the glory, beauty, and life-giving influence of the sun, for the pale, feeble, reflected light of the moon, which communicates no heat, and contains no life-sustaining properties. For thus the soul is turned back and occupied with its own subjective condition, instead of what the apostle says, "I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

But when we speak of Christ being like the sun (and it is a figure Scripture delights in: Mal. 4:2; Matt. 17:2; 1 Sam. 23:4), we think not only of its light (and even vitalizing power), beautiful as that is, and giving a charm to the whole natural scene, but of the radiance of that countenance which fills heaven and earth with delight, and of those beams, every one of which is a living ray, and has a deep and yet pregnant meaning of its own, and which will waken and thrill every pulse of life in us. "We shall be like Him," says the apostle "for we shall see Him as He is"; and when we see Him mortality will be "swallowed up of life." For one gleam of His countenance, when we behold Him, will transform us into life and glory for ever. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and we shall be as the rays of His glory, for "the righteous shine

forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father.” “Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal (Rev. 21:11). “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” (Rev. 21:24) for though her light shines upon the nations, Christ Himself is the light of the heavenly city, the glory of God. □

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