

## The Crystallization

### Encouragement and Warning in 1 John

The Epistle of 1 John is a revelation of divine things, conveying deep divine truth and ministering the divine life through the divine fellowship. John wrote this Epistle as a genuine God-man—a believer in Christ, who had been born of God to have the life and nature of God—enjoying fellowship with the Father and the Son, not merely as a person living in the natural, human, physical realm. John was living in the divine and mystical realm of the Triune God, and his encouraging words reveal this fellowship and also convey a warning concerning deviating from this fellowship by denying the experiential operation of the Triune God in His economy.

In his speaking concerning the Triune God, John reveals that the Father is the source of eternal life, the One of whom believers in Christ are begotten to become children of God. The Father's desire is not to populate heaven with a multitude of redeemed, justified, reconciled, and forgiven sinners who are restored to a pre-fallen condition. God sent His Son so that we would receive His eternal, uncreated, indestructible life and live this life through Christ for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose to have a corporate expression of Himself. We can live the life of the Father through the Son because the Son is with the Father, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. And we can live this life because of the Spirit who indwells us and moves in us as the anointing. This anointing teaches us to abide in Him, and it makes the mysterious Triune God real and subjective to us.

Knowing Christ as the mystery of God is a matter of life and fellowship. Life, denoted by the Greek word *zoe* in the first Epistle of John, is the divine life. In actuality, this life is nothing less than God Himself. All the believers have been begotten of the divine life, and when this life experientially flows between the Triune God and them, there is fellowship.

In order for this life to flow, we must progress in our experience of life by giving Christ the preeminence, the first place in all things. In our Christian life and for our church life, we need to enthrone the Lord in our being, life, and work in order to maintain the fellowship of life, the flow of life, within us. When we give the Lord the first place in all that we are and do, the fellowship of life flows. Giving the Lord the first place begins when we love the Lord with our first love, our best love. Nothing but love can maintain

the fellowship of life within our being. We must have an aspiration to love the Lord more and more. So we need a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord, involving a life of prayer and a life of being nourished with the Lord's word by means of all prayer. Such a living will be in the fellowship of life.

In this fellowship of life we are encouraged, strengthened, and constituted with the love of God, which is, in reality, the God of love. God's love is manifested in the accomplishment of His redemption, in the impartation of His divine life into us, and in the producing of His organic corporate expression. God's love was manifested by the Son being sent as a propitiation for our sins. His love was further manifested in the impartation, the dispensing, of His divine life. And His love will be ultimately manifested in its impact on maintaining the church life through brotherly love for the building up of the Body of Christ as the enlarged expression of the Triune God.

In addition to encouraging us to live a life in the fellowship of the Triune God, the first Epistle of John warns of a living in the principle of antichrist that denies the reality of the Word of life. The essence of the spirit of antichrist is not just a denial of the fact that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh but a denial of the experience that issues from the Word of life coming in the flesh as Jesus Christ. The spirit of antichrist is just as operative and active in today's Christianity as it was during the time of the apostle John. In fact, the experiential realization that the Word of life became a man in order to impart Himself as life into redeemed and regenerated humanity has been almost completely lost in the current teaching of the church and in the experience of believers. And without an experiential realization of this truth, there will be a deepening embrace of the spirit of antichrist in today's Christianity.

Outside the household of the faith, there are also many who would deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, using eloquent words and speculative arguments derived from selective interpretations of facts that have been biased by their unbelief. We should turn away from these by turning to our spirit of faith, which substantiates the Spirit of reality, who progressively guides us into all the reality, especially the reality of the fellowship of life in the Triune God. **AFC**

*by the Editors*