

DEIFICATION by Participation in God's DIVINITY

by Ed Marks

As believers in Christ, through the cleansing power of His precious blood in His marvelous redemption, we have the divine right to participate in God's divinity.¹ "Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have *right to the tree of life*" (Rev. 22:14, emphasis added). The tree of life signifies the Triune God Himself who is embodied in Christ (Col. 2:9) and realized as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). This life is the divine life, the uncreated life, the life which is God Himself. "I am...the life" (John 14:6). "I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (10:10). "The last Adam [the incarnated Christ] became a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). To participate in God's divinity is to participate in Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is the reality of the tree of life. When we use the word *participate*, we mean "to partake of for enjoyment." The tree of life is for man to participate in by eating (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7). "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57). To eat Christ as the tree of life is to receive Him into us as our life and life supply that He may be assimilated into our spirit for our regeneration (3:6), our soul for our transformation (2 Cor. 3:18), and ultimately our body for our glorification (Phil. 3:21).

God has given us the right to partake of Him for our enjoyment for the accomplishment of His heart's desire. God's desire is to divinize, or deify, man, to make man the same as He is in life, nature, and expression, but not in the Godhead. To say that by being deified, man becomes a part of the Godhead as an object of worship is a great heresy. But to deny the truth of the process of deification in the Scriptures is to deny the heart's desire of the Triune God and to negate His holy Word. Indeed, we may say that God was "man-ized" that man might be "God-ized" and that God became a man in the flesh (John 1:14) that we might become sons of God in the Spirit. Athanasius, a great defender of the faith in the fourth century, repeatedly pointed out that the deification of fallen humankind is the goal of the incarnation,

stating, "[The Logos] became human, in order that we might be divinized' and '[The Son of God] became human, in order to divinize us in Himself'" (Gross 166). Even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* points out this theological truth from the writings of the church fathers:

The Word became flesh in order to make us "*partakers of the divine nature*": "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in His divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods." (116)

The high peak of the divine revelation can be summarized in the following statement: *God became man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead*. This statement embodies the entire revelation of God's New Testament economy in an absolutely scriptural and careful way. (See sidebars on pages 48 and 49)

According to the revelation of God's economy, *deification* and *salvation* are synonyms. Deification is the highest definition of salvation. God's complete salvation involves two processes. The Triune God passed through a process to redeem fallen man and to impart Himself into man. Redeemed man then passes through a process of deification to be built up into the Body of Christ and to be prepared to be the bride of Christ, His counterpart in life and nature (Eph. 5:25-32). In His move to deify man, God was processed by becoming a man (John 1:14) to pass through human living and an all-inclusive death. Through Christ's redemptive death on the cross, we have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb. We have the forgiveness and cleansing of our sins, we are reconciled to God, we are justified by God, and we have been sanctified positionally, set apart, unto God. This qualifies us to

God in Life and Nature, but Not in His Godhead (1)

We have been made God in His nature and in His life, but not in His Godhead. This is because we have been begotten of God (John 1:13). Dogs beget dogs; lions beget lions; and man begets man. Since your father is a man, and you are born of him, are you not a man? As believers in Christ, we have been born of God; we have been regenerated by God. God is our Father, and we are His sons. Since our Father is God, what are we, the sons? The sons must be the same as their Father in life and in nature. We have been born of God to be the children of God (1 John 3:1). Eventually, when Christ comes, He will make us fully the same as God in life and in nature (v. 2). However, none of us are or can be God in His Godhead as an object of worship. In a family, only the father has the fatherhood. The children of the father do not have his fatherhood. There is only one father with many children. The father is human, and the children also are human, but there is only one father. In the same way, God is our unique Father; only He has the divine fatherhood. But we as His children are the same as He is in life and in nature.

The early church fathers used the term *deification* to describe the believers' participation in the divine life and nature of God, but not in the Godhead. We human beings need to be deified, to be made like God in life and in nature, but it is a great heresy to say that we are made like God in His Godhead. We are God not in His Godhead, but in His life, nature, element, essence, and image. (Witness Lee, *The Christian Life*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1994, 133-134)

partake of Christ as the tree of life, to be saved in the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10). Then in resurrection Christ passed through the process of becoming the life-giving Spirit to impart Himself as the tree of life into us (1 Cor. 15:45), to vivify us for our full salvation.

When this Spirit of life enters into us, God's chosen and redeemed people, we begin to pass through a wonderful process of becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. This process of God's salvation in life begins with our regeneration and continues with our sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification until we are consummated to be the bride of Christ. This salvation is the deification of our spirit, soul,

and body to make us the sons of God in full, exactly the same as Christ is in life, nature, and expression.

Participating in God's Sonship

Paul E. Billheimer in his original version of *Destined for the Throne*, with a foreword by Billy Graham and a recommendation from Norman Grubb, has the following to say about how we participate in the very life of God to become the sons of God, a "new species" of redeemed humanity: "Created originally in the image of God, redeemed humanity has been elevated by means of a *divinely conceived genetic process* known as the new birth to the highest rank of all created beings" (33). Contrasting humanity with the angels, Billheimer continues, "No angel can ever become a congenital member of the family of God. They are created, not generated beings....Angels can never have the heritage, the 'genes' of God. They can never be partakers of the divine nature" (34).

Billheimer points out that by saying that the children of God have the genes of God, no physical relationship is implied (35). This is a spiritual reality. First John 3:9 says that God's seed abides in everyone who has been begotten of God. The Amplified Bible says for this verse, "His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him." The word for *seed* here is again the Greek word *sperma*. When we repent to God and receive the Lord Jesus by believing into Him, we are born of God to become the children of God, possessing His heredity (His "DNA") with His very life. What a great miracle this is!

Participating in God's Life

He who has the Son has the life (5:11-12). Christ as the life-dispensing Spirit dispenses Himself as life into our spirit (Rom. 8:10), then into our mind (v. 6), and finally, into our body (v. 11) to make us men of life. Through this process of Christ as life dispensing Himself into our entire tripartite being, we are deified to be His bride. He is the tree of life for us to eat (Rev. 2:7), the river of life for us to drink (John 4:10, 14; 7:37-38; Rev. 22:1), and the breath of life for us to breathe (John 20:22). Just as we need to eat, drink, and breathe to maintain our physical life, we also need to eat, drink, and breathe to maintain our spiritual life. After our new birth to make us a new species, we must continue to partake of Christ as our life supply for our enjoyment.

Just as we must partake of physical food for our life supply to become full-grown human beings, so we must partake of Christ as our spiritual food for our divine life supply that we may become full-grown sons of God. In John 6 the Lord Jesus revealed that He is the bread of life, our spiritual food, for us to eat. Of course, the Lord was not speaking of anything physical here. This is why

after charging us to eat Him (v. 57), He went on to say, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (v. 63). The Lord's words are the embodiment of Himself as the divine life. In order to participate in God's life, we must daily spend time in His divine Word. As we read the Word with a prayerful and musing spirit, receiving His Word with much reconsideration, His constant Word becomes a personal, present, and living word to us, imparting Christ as the life supply into our being. To receive God's word by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18) is to eat His word (Jer. 15:16), to partake of Christ as our life supply for our enjoyment. Thus, to participate in God's life as our continual supply is to live by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

We also need to drink of Christ as the water of life day by day. "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into eternal life" (John 4:14). When we received Christ as our life and Savior, He came into us as the fountain of life. The first stanza and chorus of a marvelous hymn by A. B. Simpson says,

I have come to the Fountain of Life,
A fountain that flows from above;
I have passed from the waters of strife
And come to the Elim of love;
I have drunk of the heavenly well,
In the depths of my being it springs.
No mortal can measure or tell
The gladness the Comforter brings.

Oh, come to the Fountain of Life,
The fountain that never runs dry;
Oh, drink of the boundless supply,
For Christ is the Fountain of Life. (*Hymns*, #523)

Christ is a fountain that never runs dry. He not only flows from above, but He has also been installed within us. Now we must daily drink of Him. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of His innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (7:37-38). Two words from this passage are noteworthy: *drink* and *flow*. In order to drink the water of life, we must flow out the water of life. We may use a hose as an illustration of this. The way we can tell if a hose is "drinking" water is by the water flowing out of the hose. Actually, the drinking and the flowing out are simultaneous. Isaiah 12 reveals that we can draw water from the springs of salvation by giving thanks to the Lord, calling upon His name, singing to Him, and praising Him (vv. 3-6). This chapter also reveals that we can draw this water by making "His deeds known among the peoples" (v. 4). In our fellowship with the

God in Life and Nature, but Not in His Godhead (2)

God in eternity past was God only, but in incarnation He was made man. He made Himself man that man may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. We may be able to say that we "become like God" in life and nature, but do we have the boldness to say that we "become God" in life and nature? We need to see that we have been born of God, and we are the sons of God. Have you not been born of man? Then are you not man? If you are not man, then what are you? In the same way, since we are born of God and are the sons of God, are we not God? You are whatever you have been born of. If you have been born of Chinese, you are Chinese. If you have been born of Caucasians, you are Caucasian. Since we are born of God, we may say and even we should say that we are God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.

The church fathers taught the truth concerning deification in the first four centuries. They pointed out clearly that deification means that the believers in Christ have been made God in His life and in His nature but not in His Godhead. He is the unique God for people to worship in His Godhead, but we are God only in life and in nature, not in the Godhead. We all have to be clear that today we are God-men. Others should be able to sense that we are men plus something else... Eventually, when we speak something concerning Christ, they all will realize that what we have as something more is Christ Himself, that is, God. This is the testimony of a God-man. (Witness Lee, *The Move of God in Man*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1994, 26-27)

Lord, we can participate in His life. To continue this participation in God's life, we need to flow out His life to others. This is what the Samaritan woman whom the Lord met by the well did. After her contact with Christ as the fountain of life (John 4:13-15), she went away into the city and testified, "Come, see a man who told me all that I have done. Is this not the Christ?" (v. 29). Through her flowing out in a simple way, many Samaritans from that city were brought to Christ and believed into Him (vv. 39-42). This is the way to enjoy God in Christ as the ever-flowing liquid of life.

We also need to continually breathe of Him as the breath of life. There are three significant breathings of God in

the Scriptures. Genesis 2:7 says that in God's creation of man He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. The same Hebrew word translated as *breath* here is translated in Proverbs 20:27 as *spirit*—"The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah." Thus, the breath of life breathed into man by God became man's human spirit.

The human spirit is very close to God the Spirit, but it is not God's Spirit nor is it God's life. Man's spirit is an organ created by God for containing God as the Spirit of life and for substantiating God the Spirit. Just as we have five senses to substantiate the things of the physical world, we need to exercise another "sense" to substantiate God. This sense is the faith in our spirit (2 Cor. 4:13) by which we can see God (Eph. 1:18), hear God (Gal. 3:2), touch God (James 4:8), taste God (Psa. 34:8), and smell God (2 Cor. 2:16). We can worship God, who is Spirit, in and with our spirit (John 4:24), praying at every time in spirit to participate in God (Eph. 6:18).

The second significant breathing of God is in John 20:22: "He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit." In His first breathing God formed the spirit of man within man (Zech. 12:1). In this second breathing, God Himself in Christ as the Spirit was breathed into the spirit of man. The first breathing was for forming the spirit of man; the second breathing was the breathing of the Spirit of God into the spirit of man. After Christ passed through the processes of incarnation, human living, and crucifixion, He entered into resurrection to become the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), for our spiritual breathing. Jeremiah tells us how we can continually breathe the Lord in as the breath of the divine life, especially in the midst of any lamentable environment. Lamentations 3:55-56 says, "I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit. / You have heard my voice; do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry." Even though Jeremiah was in the lowest pit, he practiced spiritual breathing by calling on the name of the Lord. Just as we breathe without ceasing, the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17). We can pray without ceasing by calling on the Lord's name continually to participate in Him as the very breath of life.

The third significant breathing is spoken of in 2 Timothy

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3:16, which says that all Scripture is "God-breathed." Through God's breathing we have the spirit of man, the indwelling Spirit of God in the spirit of man, and also the holy word of God. To breathe in God as the breath of life, we can exercise our spirit to touch the divine Spirit in the divine word. All Scripture being God-breathed

indicates that the Scripture, the word of God, is the breathing out of God. God's speaking is God's breathing out. Hence, His word is spirit

(John 6:63), or breath. Thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit. The Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorous is the essential substance in matches. We must strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire.

As the embodiment of God the Spirit, the Scripture (God's word) is also the embodiment of Christ. Christ is God's living Word (Rev. 19:13), and the Scripture is God's written word (Matt. 4:4). (Recovery Version, note 2)

This shows us how we can participate in God's life through the exercise of our spirit in contacting Him through prayer and the word.

Participating in God's Nature

According to 2 Peter 1:4 the believers in Christ are also partakers of the divine nature. In describing his experience of being born again, D. L. Moody said, "To become a partaker of the divine nature is the greatest blessing that can come to any man this side of heaven....I got God's nature, a new nature, distinct and separate from the old nature" (89). Then at the end of his message he admonishes,

Oh, man, woman, you may be deceived about ten thousand things, but do not be deceived on this one thing! *Make sure that you have the divine nature, that you have been born from above, that you have been born of God, that you have a life that has come from God, distinct and separate from the natural life, a new life, a new creation.* (92)

The divine nature is what God is. According to the apostle

John, God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and God is light (1:5). Spirit is the nature of God's person, love is the nature of God's essence, and light is the nature of God's expression. To participate in God's nature is to partake of what He is as Spirit, love, and light for our enjoyment.

According to John 4:24, we can enjoy what God is in His person by worshipping Him in spirit and in truthfulness. In the Old Testament the children of Israel were instructed by God to worship Him in a physical location, the temple at Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5, 11, 13-14, 18), and with the offerings (Lev. 1—7). In the New Testament our spirit is God's dwelling place (Eph. 2:22), and Christ is the reality of all the offerings. In order to enjoy what God is in His person, we must exercise our spirit to contact God the Spirit (Rom. 8:16) and apply Him in a detailed way as the reality of all the basic offerings revealed in Leviticus 1—7. Then He becomes our genuineness and sincerity for the true worship of God. In our time of prayer and fellowship with the Lord, we can take Him as our sin offering, the One who terminated the sinful nature (Heb. 9:26; John 3:14), and as our trespass offering, the One who died on the cross for the sinful deeds in our conduct (Heb. 9:28; 1 Cor. 15:3). We can take Him as our burnt offering, the One who was absolute for God to be God's delight for God's satisfaction (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). We can also enjoy Him as our meal offering, with the fine flour of His humanity mingled with the pure oil of the Spirit of God's divinity (John 19:5; 1 Tim. 2:5), and as our peace offering, the One who is our peace toward God and man (Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:15). In addition to these basic offerings He is also our wave offering, the resurrected and ever-living One (Exo. 29:24, 26-27; Rev. 1:18), our heave offering, the ascended One (Exo. 29:27-28; Eph. 1:20-21), and our drink offering, the One who was poured out on the cross for God's enjoyment (Num. 15:1-10; 28:7-10; Isa. 53:12).

First John reveals that we can participate in God as love and as light by remaining in the fellowship with God (1:3-7). As we remain in an intimate personal fellowship with God, we participate in God as love and we love all of our brothers with the love that is God Himself. "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone

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who loves has been begotten of God and knows God. He who does not love has not known God, because God is love" (4:7-8). This is the way that all men will know that we are the Lord's disciples, as the Lord said in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." As we remain in fellowship with God, we also enjoy Him as light. The Bible tells us that God is light (1 John 1:5), Christ is light (John 8:12), and the life of Christ is light (1:4). Furthermore, the believers are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), the word of God is a light to our path (Psa. 119:105), and the churches are the golden lampstands shining with the light of the Triune God (Rev. 1:20). In order to remain in fellowship with God as light, we need to fellowship with our fellow believers, remain in the word of God, and meet with the believers as the church to shine out God in this dark age. Thank the Lord that we can participate in Him as light to be the children of light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8), following the Lord wherever He goes to have the light of life (John 8:12).

Participating in God's Riches

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul said that his commission was to announce the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel. He also said in Colossians 1:27 that God willed to make known to all the nations the riches of the indwelling Christ. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ (2:9). Whatever we need, He is. The following hymn expresses the holy awe of these riches and the aspiration to participate in Christ as the riches of all that God is in Christ.

- 1 O the riches of my Savior,
So unsearchable, immense;
All the fulness of the Godhead
I may now experience.
- O the riches, O the riches,
Christ my Savior has for me!
How unsearchable their measure,
Yet my full reality!

- 2 O the riches of my Savior,
All-embracing: life and light,
Wisdom, power, healing, comfort,
Treasures rich of God's delight;
- 3 God's redemption, full salvation,
And His resurrection pow'r,
Sanctifying, glorifying,
All transcending every hour!
- 4 O the riches of my Savior—
Nothing less than God as all!
All His person and possessions,
Now my spirit doth enthrall.
- 5 O the riches of my Savior!
Who can know their breadth and length,
Or their depth and height unmeasured,
Yet they are my joy and strength.
- 6 May I know these boundless riches,
Christ experience in full;
And with others may I share them
In their content bountiful. (*Hymns*, #542)

The Lord has made it very simple for us to participate in His riches. Romans 10:12 and 13 say that the Lord is rich to all who call upon Him and that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. These verses apply not only to our initial salvation from eternal perdition but also to our continual salvation in the life of Christ for our deification. We need to continually exercise our spirit with our heart turned to the Lord to call, "Lord Jesus!" No man can say Lord Jesus except in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Calling on the name of the Lord began with Enosh, the third generation of mankind (Gen. 4:26). The Hebrew name *Enosh* means "frail, mortal man." We are earthen, clay vessels, who are fragile, frail, and mortal. But within us we have a price-less treasure, the Christ of glory. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). We can experience the riches of this personal treasure by calling on the name of this treasure. When we call on a person's name, we get the person of that name. By calling on the Lord's name, we can enjoy all the riches of His person, His being.

Participating in God's Mind

In 1 Corinthians 2:16 Paul makes an amazing statement when he says, "We have the mind of Christ." The following note on this verse elucidates this amazing truth:

Because we are organically one with Christ, we have all the faculties that He has. The mind is the faculty of intelligence, the understanding organ. We have such an organ, the mind of Christ; hence, we can know what He knows. We have not only the life of Christ but also the mind of Christ. Christ must saturate our mind from our spirit, making our mind one with His. (Recovery Version, note 1)

Ephesians 4:23 charges us to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The spirit here is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life. This is the Spirit mingled with our spirit to make us one spirit with the Lord (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). This mingled spirit needs to spread into our mind to become the spirit of our mind. The renewing Holy Spirit dispenses the thoughts of God into our mind through the holy word. We need to exercise our spirit to pray over God's word, receiving the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18). As we practice this, the thoughts of God, the logic of God, the considerations of God, the very mind of God, become ours.

Isaiah 55:8-11 is an excellent portion of the Word, showing us how God's thoughts and ways become ours through an organic application of His word to our inner being. In verses 8 and 9 God says,

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, / And your ways are not My ways, declares Jehovah. / For as the heavens are higher than the earth, / So My ways are higher than your ways, / And my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Romans 10:12 and 13 say that the Lord is rich to all who call upon Him and that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. This applies not only to our initial salvation from eternal perdition but also to our continual salvation in the life of Christ for our deification.

The thoughts and ways of the Most High God are so high, as the heavens are higher than the earth, in comparison to our thoughts and ways. How can His high, heavenly, and divine thoughts become our thoughts? Verses 10 and 11 show us how:

For just as the rain comes down / And the snow from heaven, / And

does not return there, / Until it waters the earth / And makes it bear and sprout forth, / That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; / So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; / It will not return to Me vainly, / But it will accomplish what I delight in, / And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it.

The word which goes forth from the Lord's mouth is signified by rain and snow. We need the rain of God's word to refresh, supply, and saturate our thoughts with the thoughts of God and our ways with the ways of God. We need the snow of God's word to kill the negative germs in our thought life and to cool down any volatile and impulsive thoughts. As this divine rain and snow of the holy word saturate our mind with the thoughts of God, we will bring forth the seed of life to sow into others and the bread of life to feed others.

Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the mind of the One who emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and the mind of the One who humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto the death of the cross (vv. 7-8). As we allow the thoughts of God through our prayerful reading of the holy Scriptures to saturate our mind, our thinking is transformed. We do not think about what others can do for us but about what we can do for others to impart Christ into them for the building up of Christ's Body. Our mind becomes one with the mind of our Slave-Savior, who did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).

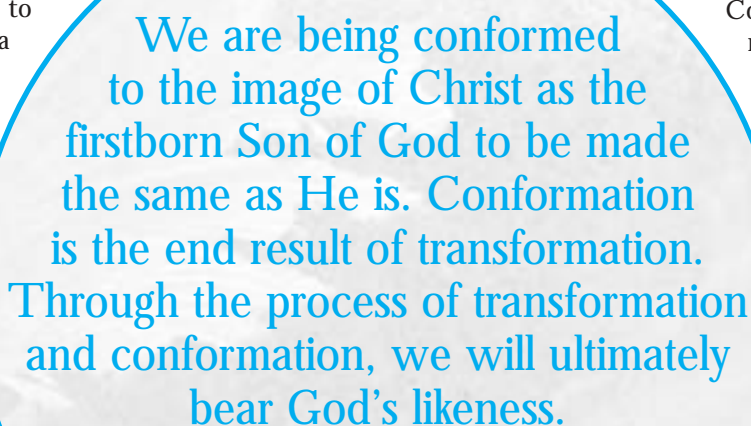
Participating in God's Image to Bear God's Likeness

The Scriptures also reveal that we can participate in God's image. God created man in His image because He wants man to be His expression (Gen. 1:26). Just as a glove is created in the image of a hand in order to contain and express a hand, man was created in the image of God in order to contain and express God. God created all living things according to their particular kind, species, or genus. But when He created man, He did not create man according to man's kind. He created man according to God's kind by creating man in His image and

according to His likeness. The apostle Paul even refers to created man as "the race of God" (Acts 17:29). Created man is the species of God, the race of God, but only in outward form and not in inward element. Created man has the outward form of God's being and attributes. Just as God has a mind, emotion, and will, so He created man with a mind, emotion, and will. Our mind was made to contain the thoughts of God (Psa. 139:17), our emotion was made to contain the feelings of God (Rev. 2:6), and our will was made to contain the intention of God (Phil. 2:13). Just as God is Spirit, so He created man with a spirit (Job 32:8; Zech. 12:1). Man's mind, emotion, and will were made to contain God's mind, emotion, and will. Man's spirit was created to contain God as Spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22).

When God in Christ enters into a human being, a new species is created, a species of God-men, "God-man kind." These God-men, the sons of God, are not only created in the image of God in His outward form but are also being transformed into and conformed to the image of Christ in and with His inward element. Second Corinthians 3:18 says that we are being "transformed into the same image," which is the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ. Transformation is the metabolic function of the divine life within the believers. When we turn our hearts to the Lord in our prayerful fellowship with Him, the veil is taken away from our hearts, and we can behold Him with an unveiled face (vv. 16, 18). As we do this, a divine metabolism takes place within us. The new element of the riches of Christ is imparted into our mind, emotion, and will, and the old element of our natural being is gradually discharged and eliminated. In this way we become a new creation in Christ (5:17).

Romans 8:29 says that we are being conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God to be made the same as He is. Conformation is the end result of transformation. It is the shaping of our inner being and also includes the shaping of our outward form so that we may fully match the glorified image of Christ. Through the process of transformation and conformation, we will ultimately bear God's likeness. First John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and



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it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.”

Participating in God's Glory

Hebrews 2:10 says that God is leading many sons into glory for His full manifestation (Rom. 8:19). The glory of God is actually God Himself. He is the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17), the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8), and the Spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14)—the Triune God of glory (Acts 7:2). In His full salvation, God first regenerates our spirit (John 3:6), then He transforms our soul (Rom. 12:2), and finally, He glorifies our body (Phil. 3:21) to make us the same as the glorious Christ in all three parts of our being. The Lord is in us as the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), the seed of glory, to grow in us and blossom out from us for our glorification. At the Lord's coming back, on the one hand, He will come from the heavens with glory (Rev. 10:1; Matt. 25:31); on the other hand, He will come from within us to be glorified in us. Second Thessalonians 1:10 says that He will come “to be glorified in His saints.” Today we are being transformed from one level of glory to a higher level—from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). Eventually, when we are fully prepared to be Christ's bridal city, we will have the glory of God for the full expression and manifestation of God (Rev. 21:2, 11).

We need to make ourselves ready for that day by exercising ourselves to continually participate in God's divinity—God's sonship, God's life, God's nature, God's riches, God's mind, God's image, and God's glory. This is the real exercise unto godliness, the exercise of our spirit to live Christ in our daily life for God's expression (1 Tim. 4:7; Phil. 1:21).

Our practice is not to live the life of any kind of natural man, good or bad. Our practice is to live the life of a God-man. A God-man is a man who is regenerated and transformed to be one with God, taking God as his life, his person, and his everything. Eventually, this one becomes God in His life and His nature, but not in His Godhead. This is a God-man. In the recovery today we should practice to live the life of such a God-man. This life is a life of crucifixion by and in and with resurrection. It is a life in which I have been crucified with

The Lord is in us as the hope of glory, the seed of glory, to grow in us and blossom out from us for our glorification. At the Lord's coming back, on the one hand, He will come from the heavens with glory; on the other hand, He will come from within us to be glorified in us.

Christ, and it is no longer I who live but He who lives in me (Gal. 2:20). Yet when He lives in me, He lives with me, with the result that I live with Him (John 14:19). He lives with me, and I live with Him. We two live together in the way of mingling, a mingling of God and man. (*Living a Life* 40)

To fully participate in all that God is, we lastly need to give ourselves to love Him to the uttermost by giving Him the first place, the preeminence, the highest and most prominent position, in every area of our life (Col. 1:18; Rev. 2:4). “But as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). **AC**

Notes

¹The primary source of the structure and content of this article is chapter four of *Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification* by Witness Lee, published in Anaheim by Living Stream Ministry in 1996.

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