

Being Made Partakers of the Divine Nature

INTRODUCTION:

- 1 It is a sad situation which the Devil has created: So many people are totally confused about Christianity - its nature, preciousness of it, and who we are really supposed to be in this world.
 - a Some view it as a religion of what they can NOT do – see it ONLY as far as its limits are without ever thinking why the limits are in place.
 - b Some see it like the Pharisees saw Judaism: That is as long as they went through the motions as they have been taught, that their attitude has NOTHING to do with their salvation.
 - c Some see it as an universal license to do anything they desire in the name of love and grace believing that because God is love and full of mercy that He will forgive NO matter if repentance is obeyed or not.

- 2 The truth is NONE of these are correct!!! If any believe that JUST showing up at the building when it is convenient for them but do NOT believe their Christianity should reach beyond that – that this is what it takes to please God – they have been totally deceived by the Devil and stand in critical condition concerning the Judgement Day.

- 3 Those who have been saved by grace are those who:
 - a **Have become the children of God:** *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29).....Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1Jn 3:1-2)*
 - b **Have been made partakers of the Divine Nature:** *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2Pe 1:3-4)*
 - We have been given ALL things we need to be complete before God
 - We have been given these by knowledge
 - In that knowledge these great and precious promises enable us to partake of the Divine Nature.

- 4 The Divine Nature:
 - a not **essentially, or of the essence of God, so as to be deified**, this is impossible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are not possible for His creation, so as the human nature of Christ, in union with the Son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him;
 - b but by way of **resemblance and likeness**, the new man or principle of grace, **being formed in the heart in regeneration, after the image of God**, and bearing a likeness to the image of his Son, and this is styled, **Christ formed in the heart**, into which image and likeness the saints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, **through the application of the Gospel, and the promises of it, by which they have such sights of Christ as do transform them**, and assimilate them to him; and which resemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they shall be entirely like him, and see him as he is:

- 5 Peter informs us of the essence of true Christianity – to be changed into the image of God through the knowledge of God and application of that knowledge to ourselves. Instead of spending our lives glorifying ourselves – we are to spend our lives conforming to the image of God and bring Him glory. It is Not about US – it is about being the lights of the world for HIM!!!!

I FAITH THROUGH GRACE SAVES US

- A *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: (2Pe 1:1)*
- 1 Peter writes this epistle to the SAME people he wrote the first letter to: *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: (2Pe 3:1)*
 - 2 Notice what he had said about faith in that first letter: *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1Pe 1:2).....Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Pe 1:5).....That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1Pe 1:7).....Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1Pe 1:9)*
 - 3 He also told them how their had been saved: *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (1Pe 1:22).....The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (1Pe 3:21)*
- B **NOW** – in the second letter he tells them they **MUST** add to this original faith – that which caused them to obey – NOW they must grow in these other areas which would make them partakers of the Divine Nature and to become more and more like God.
- 1 *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; (2Pe 1:5)*
 - 2 ...giving all diligence....
 - This does NOT imply in any way that Christianity can be seen as something that is haphazard on our part. No one can honestly understand this verse and gain from that it is acceptable to God to treat our duty as something anything less than the most important part of life.
 - "Add to your..." is from one word in the Greek (pareisenegkantes), literally meaning "bring in by the side of." On our part we are to bring in all diligence by the side of what God has done.
 - It means that no matter what – when the opportunity to grow or glorify God is available that I will NOT choose to please myself or my family simply because it makes me happier than Christian duty.
 - It means it is essential that I make as diligent effort as I possibly can to grow and become partaker of the Divine Nature.
 - 3 ...add to your faith....
 - is from epickoregeo (epi and choregeo). This word has an interesting history.
 - It goes back to the days of old Athens when it was considered a great honor to be a citizen that had been asked to defray the expenses of a public ceremony or entertainment.
 - Thayer traces the word through (1) leading a chorus, (2) to furnishing the chorus at one's own expense, to procuring and supplying all things necessary to fit out the chorus
 - and finally dropping the musical connotation, to simply (3) supplying or furnishing abundantly
- C The faith that does not obey, work, grow, or supply the characteristics of the divine nature is dead (cf. James 2:17-26; I Pet. 2:1-2; II Pet. 3:18).

II VIRTUE

- A (ἀρετή) Moral excellence or courage; power under control. This characteristic is found in second place behind faith, thus we have the first test of our faith.
- B The word under consideration appears only four times in scripture: II Peter 1:3, 5 (twice); Philippians 4:8 - ***Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things***
- C Examples:
- 1 Joseph around Potiphar's wife.
 - 2 Moses, in resisting the riches of Egypt.
 - 3 Joshua and Caleb, in their insisting that the "promised land" could be successfully taken.
 - 4 David, in fighting the lion, the bear and Goliath.
 - 5 Elijah and Elisha in their constant struggles with God's chosen, but rebellious nation.
 - 6 Peter and Mark who lacked virtue at one time but, in time, grew.
 - 7 Christ as He faced the suffering of the crucifixion.

III KNOWLEDGE

- A This is not the knowledge of verse three - not of Christ which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Christ, were there not knowledge of him.
- 1 Remember they had purified their souls by obeying the truth – so they had knowledge of who Jesus was, what he had done, of their sins and how to remove those sins.
 - 2 They knew what the like figure was and what it meant to have a good conscience toward God.
- B This is knowledge that means wisdom (trial and error) – putting initial knowledge into action.
- 1 This is what we might call practical knowledge.
 - 2 ***But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb 5:14)***
 - 3 ***But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. (Act 24:14-16)***
 - 4 ***Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. (1Ti 4:13-16)***

IV TEMPERANCE

- A This means self-control; "one who holds himself in". It is opposite from the world's "anything goes".
- 1 {Taylor}—"it is self-mastery, self-government, and the proper discipline of all bodily passions and appetites."
 - 2 Just because one obeys the Gospel doesn't mean he will not be tempted with the passions and drives of his or her sex.
 - 3 It means that a Christian will learn how to live morally pure and with the proper application (knowledge) will overcome the sinful lusts of the world. The Christian thus contains himself.
- B What this means is that we will study and learn initially that Jesus is Christ and our faith will move us to action and obeying the Gospel. We will then add the fortitude to do the right thing (virtue). By adding virtue we will develop wisdom of knowing how to do the will of God and by doing this will we will develop self-control that will enable us to control ourselves in this world.

CONCLUSION:

- 1 Remember that peter told them to do this with all diligence!!! This means being a Christian should be something we take a great deal of pride in. It should make a total difference in our lives.
 - We should understand our time is not our time any more – it belongs to God.
 - Our talents are not ours but Gods.
 - When there is work to do – worship to be offered – we should choose God EVERY time!!!!
 - Our own selfish desires, ball games, fishing trips, family gatherings will eventually crumble and be burned – but the choices we made concerning these as opposed to adding these characteristics to our lives will follow us to judgment!!!!

- 2 Have you exercised self-control in your lives to obey the Gospel yet? Have you dethroned yourself and enthroned Christ?

- 3 If so have you diligently added to that initial faith? Are you stronger and more faithful now than when your journey started?

V **PATIENCE**

- A Patience - (ὕπομονήν) Active determination of the will. Longsuffering or perseverance.
- 1 “Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride, bridles the tongue, restrains the hand and tramples upon temptation” (Robert R. Taylor, Jr. quoting Horne).
 - 2 It is directly connected to trials and temptations (James 1:2-4; Romans 12:12) - ***My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (Jas 1:2-4)***
 - 3 It is eloquently demonstrated in the life of the Patriarch, Job (James 5:10, 11) - ***Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (Jas 5:10-11)***
 - 4 As shown earlier in Job’s life, it has its reward (Job 42:10) - Lord gave him twice as much.
- B We are exhorted to be steadfast as we serve the Lord:
- 1 ***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1Co 15:58)***
 - 2 ***But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; (Heb 3:13-14)***
 - 3 ***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (1Pe 5:8-9)***

VI **GODLINESS**

- A Godliness - (εὐσέβειαν) Holiness, piety, devoutness, reverence; The right attitude toward God in worship and obedience.
- 1 Godliness, as denoting character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart, is the summing up of genuine religion.
 - 2 Being “God-like” in our attitudes and actions.
 - 3 We become more and more like God as we become more and more steadfast. God never wavers and never fails.
 - 4 As we add these to our lives – we become more and more like that.
- B Bible references:
- 1 ***In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. (1Ti 2:9-10)***
 - 2 ***For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1Ti 4:8)***
 - 3 ***But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (2Pe 3:10-11)***

VIII **BROTHERLY KINDNESS**

- A *Philadelphia* **Thayer Definition:** 1) love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love 2) in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren
- 1 [Strong's] - *fraternal affection*: - brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.
 - 2 God is our Father and His children are our brethren, thus we are to love them accordingly
 - 3 ***Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (1Jn 5:1)***
- B ***We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (1Jn 4:19-21)***
- 1 Advice: Let us taste our words before expelling them from our mouths. We ought not be brutish in our speech to others. ***“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11).***
 - 2 ***A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. (Pro 18:19)***
 - 3 ***Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (Rom 12:10)***
 - 4 ***But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. (1Th 4:9)***
 - 5 ***Let brotherly love continue. (Heb 13:1)***

VIII **CHARITY**

- A Love - (ἀγάπη) “Self-giving and has its source in God’s sacrificial love for man”. ***“ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).***
- 1 There are four kinds of love:
 - a ***Eros***, sexual desire, doesn’t appear in the Bible.
 - b ***Storge***, family affection.
 - c ***Phileo***, “the love of affection and personal attachment”, brotherly love.
 - d ***Agape***, the highest form of love. It does what is right simply because it is right. ***Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Mat 5:43-48)***
 - 2 We begin to care more about our brethren as brethren and then love grows to the point we show our concern for even our enemies.
 - a ***And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1Co 13:13)***
 - b ***And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. (Col 3:14)***

- 3 Notice that each grace is built upon the previous one. When one has added all of them, he has become complete before God. Each tempers and makes perfect the grace that goes before it. Thus no grace stands alone each being dependent upon the previous for its completing.

B They may be analyzed as follows:

- 1 Those necessary to form Christian character: virtue, knowledge, temperance and patience
- 2 That which characterizes a follower of God - godliness
- 3 That which characterizes a member of the family of God – brotherly kindness
- 4 That which creates good will toward all men - charity.

CONCLUSION:

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2Pe 1:8-11)

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