

Completeness

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Let's talk about completeness. Let's try to take a fresh look at the subject and, as they say, "think outside of the box;" (even though it's always the other fellow, of course, who has the problem of thinking inside the box, not us, right?). Because, by God's grace, I have learned to keep lines of communication open with brethren who may not share exactly---or hardly at all, for that matter---my understanding of what is true of God, His kids and His creation, I find myself in a position of being very aware of the tension among true truth-seekers regarding particularly what "complete in Christ" means or does not mean.

I try to keep those lines of communication open as much as possible because It's surprising how, even when there is very substantive disagreement with another person, that one may say or write something that ends up being quite influential in one's own thinking, adding an invaluable insight to one's own quest for understanding.

This time around, as pertaining to our completeness in Christ---and everyone seems to agree that by some definition we are "complete in Him,"---let's take as our starting point, eternity. I'm convinced that eternity ought to be understood as virtually synonymous with God Himself. It seems that the common understanding of eternity is that it is distinctively the infinite-time dimension in which God lives. But we need to point out immediately that eternity is not time extended into infinity in reverse and forward; it is timelessness. Though, in the dimension of time where God is the Beginning and the End; He, as to the essence of His Being, has no beginning and no end. He is the Uncaused cause of everything. God is timeless and He is timelessness. God is eternity. I AM is, and always is---NOW. He never came to be, He simply is, and that is just one little peek into why He calls Himself, "I AM." Eternity is not someTHING co-existent with God; eternity is the self-existent quality of God.

There, in eternity, that is, in God, all things are complete, nothing lacking, needing nothing, having within that Being complete resource

of Being. Should such Being choose to call forth anything, He does so by both birthing and creating out from Himself. God calls upon Himself for all that He desires. Because God is vital in His Being, not static, the growth that is native to all vitality, is a growth, an increase out from Himself, "the increase of God," of which Paul writes.

Keeping in mind that all creation came from God-substance and thus cannot be essentially disconnected from, or lose its union with Him, nevertheless, because "the increase of God" is not a matter of mere self-inflation, but involves the birthing and creation of others in a whole dimension of otherness, it requires that He do something quite extraordinary. And that is the point at which we get our grey matter challenged.

When, (pause)----yes, a "when" did come to be in the timelessness of God----He brought forth out of Himself the dimension time, of ages; that dimension had a bent toward contrariness. That was necessary for our otherness had to be pushed to the extreme for the purpose of the glory of His grace. With majesty inexplicable, He put a spin on His own substance as He created all things from that substance, and caused Himself and all that He created to be subject to what He, and the whole cosmos, are NOT. A great distortion was created, but NOT a distortion that could violate the essence of Being.

Into the realm of what IS, which is the dimension of eternity, entered the realm of what is NOT, which is the dimension of time. I do not think that it is adequate to call it all a dream, as some say, for it is more existential than that. It is more solid than mere dream-stuff, but compared to God-stuff, it's a vapor that appears for a while and then vanishes away, reclaimed into the Eternity from whence it came, but utterly transformed in the process and retaining a uniqueness of identity within the Being in whom we all have our being.

Eternal Being adds to Itself by calling upon Itself to draw out from Itself that depth of glory necessary to overcome the contrariness to which It subjected Itself in complete solidarity with Its beloved creation. It is Life Itself challenging Itself by Its own antithesis of death. My God! What a crisis! Hence we have a peek into a fuller meaning of the cross and resurrection of Christ in relationship with the old and new creations.

Dear ones, at the center of this scenario, is Christ, and us in Him. Christ is God's completeness. Christ is eternity's completeness. His completeness is ours for we are in Him from eternity. We are, in union with Him, that One New Man whose God-substance is the stuff from which all things have been created. The reason all creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, is because all creation was created specifically out of the God-stuff of the sons of God.

Did you get that? All things were not created out of general God-substance, but the God-substance as it was birthed into sonship. The issuing forth of God-substance was not first a matter of creation, but first of birthing. We are born of God and first have His substance by procreation. Then, from that very substance in us, God made all things including the creaturehood of the sons of God themselves.

Do you see that the substance of all things came from birthed substance, so that all things really have a birthed origin? (As an aside, as I recall, the great church father, Origen, the first theologian of the early church, spoke of even the heavenly bodies, sun, moon and stars having personal identity and in later years his meaning was misunderstood, resulting in the institutional church's formal condemnation of much of his theology).

Because all things come from birthed substance, from the substance of the sons of God, Christ is called, by Paul "the first-born of all creation." All creation will return to it's essential personal Being following the revealing of the sons of God and consequently God becoming all in all. So intrinsic, so essential, so integral, so one in primal origin are the sons of God with all creation.

Such fulness and completeness cannot be intrinsically altered. It can be subjected to agonizing distortion and contrariness, but (and here my rhetoric is so inadequate) it always "springs back to shape." We are complete in Christ----absolutely, with a completeness from God's own fulness that, rather than our subjugation making us less than complete, it serves to demonstrate that our completeness is so glorious that it overcomes the contrariness to which it has been subjected.

But let it be affirmed clearly, powerfully and boldly, that the source of this overcoming is the power of the real, historical death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That which God has subjected all creation to has disabled us. We cannot, in ourselves---even with our capacity for God-fulness---return to Him and our eternal Reality. We cannot overcome, we cannot activate our own God-capacity. We must be acted upon by grace, but by grace from within our own incapacitation. We are sown in perishability, we are raised in imperishability. God does the sowing, and God does the raising.

But I have a growing conviction that some dear brethren are trying to maintain a firm hold on our completeness by denying the existence of all, or any contrariness to which God in His sovereignty has subjected us. To those dear ones I say, denial, in the name of revelation, is not where it's at. Where it's at is the acknowledgment that "all things are of God," even during the time when we are marred in the Potter's hand. (Jer. 18: 1--6)

God is the Potter, we are the clay. The marring cannot be a mistake on God's part. He doesn't say, "Whoops, my hand slipped, gotta' do it over again." And the marring came not about by any decision or failure on the part of the clay. In the wisdom of God, completeness draws forth from itself, from Himself, a greater glory than would have been had it never been marred.

This is sent forth for the serious, reflective consideration of all those who struggle to to understand how it can be true---and it certainly is true---that "In Him dwells the fulness of Deity bodily, and you are complete in Him." We are, in Him, the bodily fulness of God's completeness. Hold fast to your confession. All contrariness must and will finally yield to the Truth, for "...we are in Him who is true." (1Jn. 5:20).

Stay tuned for future serious, seminal samplings.

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