

Eternity and Time
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[An updating of my continuing reflection on the nature of eternity and time, and their relationship]:

There is in the Divine Nature the very fundamental characteristic of love-compelled self-emptying. It is not, of course, a depleting self-emptying, but a self-emptying of absolute fullness into another so that by that self-emptying, the Divine Nature wondrously reinvigorates Itself out of Its own depths with a fresh supply of Love/Grace/communion- provision.

In the procession of the Pure Relational Being, which is God, unfolding itself as Family-constituted Personhood, everything that the gender-complete, gender-uniting Deity is, is given by reproductive love to "the Son of His love."

Our Father, God, gifts Himself---in gender-completeness---to His Son, who becomes, in His consequent gender-completeness (Bridegroom and Bride) His all-inclusive Gift to His brethren. To restate: God gives us the Gift of His Son by Gifting Himself to His Son.

This, however we perceive it, involves movement, procession, an unfolding, as it were, of Deity---the majesty of Eternal Being becoming more of all that it is.

Translating Paul carefully from the Greek, we discover him describing the above as "growing the growth of God," or "increasing the increase of God," to quote Paul very literally. (See Footnote A) Clearly there is no element of the static in the procession of Personhood out from Being. The Family of God---which is what I've been describing---is eternally adding to Itself.

What we call time, the aeons, or the space-time continuum, ought not to be thought of as contradistinctive to God's eternity, but integral to the same.

As eternity is God-immutable, so, all that is aeonian is, in its essence, the quality of Immutability becoming more of Itself out of Itself.

The aeons are the unfolding of the cosmos (See Footnote B), and in the cosmos we have the unfolding of the Divine Nature placing Itself

under stress for the purpose of the increase of the glory of His grace. There is a tendency to perceive time in contradistinction to eternity--- and I, myself, have up to very recently tended to reinforce that perception.

But I am re-examining that perception.

In intense dialogue---a truly fellowship-dialogue---with several brethren in Christ, we have reached remarkably edifying conclusions together. From that fellowship, I have come to ascribe to the aeons an intrinsic vulnerability to contrarianism without defining time itself as intrinsically contrarian.

It seems we must dare to say that within the dynamic of the unfolding of the fulness of the Godhead, God freely subjects His self-emptying fulness to the anomaly of deprivation within time, which is the dimension of God's self-imposed vulnerability. This universal deprivation is gathered together, summed up in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, our Lord.

That is, eternally flowing love, for the purpose of making increase of itself, self-restricts the flow, creating a pressure within the Divine Nature that provides an intensification of overwhelming givingness. A crude illustration might be that the power of water is intensified by restriction within a hose.

Given the force of the passion of God's heart intensified by the inherent limitation/restriction within the dimension of time, the effect is that any barrier to its reception is overcome in the gushing forth of Divine love. The complex of this dynamic involves the deprivation/restriction of the human heart, shared by God in Christ, that calls forth from God an intensification of provision/flow.

Imagine a great need (deprivation) behind a barrier erected to reject the supply to that need. The need cries out to the supply (provision), and the only thing that can provide the necessary force to break through the barrier, is for the supply (provision) to subject itself to the same restriction of neediness which exists behind the barrier. This, as best God has allowed me to see, is the way God brings out the best of Himself from the depths of Himself. This is the way of glory shared. This is the Way of the cross.

Thus, It would seem, in the interaction of time within eternity, that eternity, after all, does have a future, the future of glory becoming more glorious out from Its own depths. The broadly accepted definition of eternity as timeless, may, after all, not be as accurate as we thought.

It certainly was an improvement over the idea that eternity is simply the infinite extension of ages laid end-to-end into the past and forward into the future, but we must be constantly re-examining our convictions lest we, while calling to our brethren to move on in God, are found stuck in place no longer reflective of all the light God is giving to His people.

But what about the element of a divine-human past. To express myself with a combination of prophetic spontaneity and worshipful reflection, I would say that in the cross of Christ we have eternity's past. God with us and for us has, in the cross of Christ, put in, death, sorrow, weeping behind Him. Likewise, the resurrection of Christ opens to Deity--- and to the humanness inherent in Deity--- its future of hyper-intensified glory.

Footnote A: In discussion with my friend, Ed Browne, a student of both Hebrew and Greek, seeking to determine if Paul, by his expression, "the increase of God," really was indicating a profound truth that God does, in truth, increase Himself---of course, out from the depths of Himself---by the growth of Himself in our enChristed humanity, it became abundantly clear that that was the very thought the apostle was conveying.

I'm referring to the sublime observation in his epistle to the Colossians, chapter 2, verse 19, where he points out the full implications for God and man in the relationship of Christ to His corporate body. I quote the very pertinent portion of Ed's translation, the "whom" of the following sentence being Christ as Head of His corporate body: "...out from within whom all the body (whole body) while being supplied and while being united by means of the

attachments and bonds keeps growing/increasing the growth/increase of the Divine Nature."

Here we are struck with the truth that it is not a matter---as most are inclined to interpret it---of simply an increase FROM God, but rather the very increase OF God in/by His increase in the enChristed body of humanity. But let's not miss a profound nuance. While, of course, ultimately, God is the source of His own increase, Paul actually says that it is the body which grows the growth of God.

The same principle is found in the truth that we are the garden of God, God's husbandry, God's planting, again as, per Paul---"Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." God plants himself in His garden and His garden grows the growth of Him. Very interestingly, when I mentioned this pertinent analogy of Paul's, Ed decided to take a close look at the Greek word translated as "husbandry" in the KJV, (other versions offer "tillage," "farm" and the like) and found that it included, not just the plot of ground to be planted, but the plot and the planting. That is, the whole idea of us being God's farming or agriculture.

In the Greek, the expression "the increase of God," simply and really means God's increase, that is, it is a quality of the Divine Nature to increase itself out from Itself, and God commits the increase of His increase to the body of Christ.

As, for instance, the grace of God is God's grace, and God's grace is integral to His nature, not something that He gives that is not intrinsic to what He is.

The Divine Nature is reproductively expansive, and we are that expansion. We expand by the provision of His expansion, and He expands by the expansion He provides to us, the expansion He gives by giving of Himself. As it were, God says to us, "Here, I give you the fulness of Myself in my Son, now by my Spirit, expand my self-expansion by your expansion.

It is akin to the truth that it is, of course, by God that we become His children, but it is also true, thus, that God becomes a Father by us. Amazing consideration is it not? We owe our being to God who birthed us, yet, it is by us that God became a Father. God realizes His

Fatherhood in our existence. Out of our becoming His children, God becomes our Father. I fathered three daughters, and my daughters made me a father.

Let the reader know where I am coming from in all this. I in no way am suggesting that it is not all of God. It is all God; absolutely all the production is of God, but in the participation He has granted to us in the Divine Nature, it can be said---and Paul dares to say it---that we increase the increase of God. The language seems clumsy. Why does he not simply say, "The Body increases God," instead of the body increasing the increase of God?

That's because we cannot define God to the exclusion of His intrinsic expansiveness. To be a body that increases God, is to include increasing that inherent quality of the Divine Nature. Otherwise, the increase would be of us, not God. But since it is His nature to be increasing, what we increase is His increase. Only that which has within its nature the quality of increase can have that increase increased. Only that which has within its nature the quality of growth can have that growth grown.

Footnote B: This definition of the biblical meaning of the aeons was what Ed Browne settled on after much consideration of the essential meaning of the Greek word, "aion," and its adjective form, "aionios," a consideration involving dialogue between him, fellow Greek student, Jonathan Mitchell, and myself, along with very valued input from other brethren from time to time. Brother Gary Amirault, also, has pressed the issue of the need of a more refined definition of "aion" and "aionios."