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DIVINE DESIGN

***God's plan of salvation,
presented in five steps from eternity to
eternity***

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“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called;
whom He called, these He also justified;
and whom He justified, these He also glorified”.

Romans 8:28-30

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1. DIVINE ASSURANCE

And we know

God's plan of salvation spans the ages, in fact it stretches from eternity to eternity. It has been unfolded in a nutshell in a few Bible verses in Romans 8 (vv. 28-30). But this plan does not include all mankind, it aims at a special class of people, namely "those who love God". Who are they? They are His people, God's own children, born of Him and of His Spirit. They enjoy the divine promise, the divine assurance: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). The apostle Paul bases the assurance of which he speaks on the firmness of God's eternal plan of salvation for His own, as it is explained in the following verses of this chapter (vv. 29 and 30). This remarkable passage we will now study.

The apostle's purpose in writing these words is that we should learn to see everything in the light of God's plan of salvation, that we should learn to view everything from the heights of His own plans and thoughts. That is the basis of the joyful assurance: "And we know (...)". Our assurance is based on the consciousness of all that God is, and does, for us. The expression "we know" occurs very often in the New Testament, both in the Epistles of Paul and those of John. It suggests the spiritual insight of God's children into the things of God, because of their anointing from the Holy One ("...and you know all things", 1 John 2:20). Here in Romans 8 the words, "And we know" of verse 28 are in contrast with the expression, "For we do not know" of verse 26. This divine assurance which directs our eyes upward and focuses our attention on God's eternal counsels is opposed to the uncertainty of our feelings in the midst of a groaning creation.

All things work together for good

Now what do we know? Our assurance here is that all things work together for good to those who have a place in these eternal counsels, and who have been called accordingly. For it is God who determines the course of all things. He holds all things in His hands. Nothing can happen which would change His plans or would detract from His counsels. He transcends all things visible. He uses the things that surround and, perhaps, frighten us, as the stage for the fulfilment of His plans. His eternal purpose will be established, and all things serve to realize this. All things cannot but work for good, even though everything might seem to go wrong. With Christ, God will also freely give us all things (Rom. 8:32). They are ours, they are at our disposal. Whether God's servants, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come — all are ours (1 Cor. 3:22). And none of these things can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39). Nothing can thwart God in the execution of His eternal plans of love, and nothing can rob us of the assurance of His love.

Beyond that we are not merely the passive objects of His love. It does not say here that all things work together for good to those who are loved by God (although this is true as well). It is rather the opposite that is stated: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God". So here our love of God is emphasized, while at the end of Romans 8 God's love for us is emphasized (nothing can separate us from the love of God and of Christ). For God's love cannot but awaken a response in the hearts of His children. He expects us to be aware of the riches of His love and to love Him in return. He expects us to take the place of loving children and sons.

There is nothing artificial about that. We do not need to produce this reciprocating love ourselves, for the love of God has been poured out in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). In this way we have been brought into this relationship of love with Himself.

Nothing can change this. But we can make this love flourish by immersing ourselves in the riches of His endless love for us.

So when we are true Christians, all things do work together for good to us because we enjoy a place in His plans of love. This fact cannot be changed in any way by the practical level of our faith. But God expects us to have an increasing awareness of the place that He has given us, and of the precious relationship into which He has brought us. As we gain a clearer understanding of the position to which God has raised us in Christ, our hearts will be filled more and more with love and gratitude. We shall increasingly respond to the relationship with our Father, and to His love. And so we shall realize better that God orders all things in such a way that they work together for good. All things are subordinate to the divine plan of salvation, which began with His election and which ends in His glory. This will strengthen our faith, increase our assurance, and quicken our hope.

2. GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION

Those who love God

When we were sinners we needed a fundamental change in our relationship with God. The Bible calls this the new birth (John 3). We had to be transformed from being God-haters into God-lovers. We had to be reconciled with God, and to be placed into a wholly new relationship with Him. Since we were saved our relationship with God has been that of children and sons of God, and at the same time that of brethren of the Lord Jesus. The expression "those who love God" characterizes this new relationship which believers have with their God and Father. To that end they have received a new nature, the divine nature which is characterized by love.

So both our position before God and our relationship with Him had to be radically changed. When this change has been effected, and we are called sons of the living God, we may wonder, What is God's purpose in all this? What are God's plans for those whom He has brought into this new relationship with Himself and with His dear Son? For why should we assume that we have been brought to God by chance? No, God has a clear purpose which He has prepared beforehand with regard to those who love Him. There is a certain plan that God has purposed by Himself, because He first loved us.

God's purpose

Romans 8 informs us about this plan of God. Christians may see everything from an eternal perspective. They are on their way to glory, and everything that they encounter along that way works for their good. It contributes to their reaching the goal. In the light of God's eternal purpose everything looks different. All emphasis is laid on the divine plan of salvation.

When the apostle speaks about “those who love God”, he is quick to add that they are those “who are the called according to His purpose”. The one goes with the other. If we love God and can call Him “Abba, Father”, then this is not our achievement but God’s work. It has to do with His purpose and His calling. It is an eternal initiative on the part of God Himself. For His plan of salvation to be fulfilled, God needed not only a purpose that was His own, but also a calling that was His own.

Now what exactly is this divine way of salvation? What are the stages in this divine plan? Romans 8 gives us the following five stages:

- (1) Divine foreknowledge
- (2) Predestination
- (3) God’s calling
- (4) Justification
- (5) Glorification

It begins with God’s eternal election, and ends with His eternal glory. God has chosen His own from eternity past, and through His calling and the essential work of justification He brings them to glory, where there is fullness of joy for evermore!

3. DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE

His delight was with the sons of men

So these verses in Romans 8 allow us a glimpse into God's counsels, although these counsels are not the main subject of the Epistle to the Romans. What is highlighted in Romans is man's responsibility (first as living in sin, then as alive to God in Christ Jesus). But it seems that the apostle Paul wants to lift a corner of the veil here to allow us a glimpse of God's side of the matter. We are confronted with the eternal counsels that God has decreed independently of man's position, and irrespective of man's responsibility. Further on in the New Testament — in the letter to the Ephesians — we find a more detailed exposition of these eternal counsels which God carried out in and through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Foreknowledge is the first part of God's purpose. God's foreknowledge is an aspect of His omniscience. Man has to acquire knowledge, and he does so by means of the information which he obtains. We have knowledge only after having been informed by others or by the media. But God knows already beforehand, before events take place and people are there. God's knowledge is not limited by time - it transcends time just as God Himself transcends time. He knows beforehand what will happen. He declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done (Isa. 46:10).

Chosen in Christ

God's foreknowledge has an active character as well. It is not only knowledge of what is going to happen, but also knowledge that determines what is going to happen. This foreknowledge leaves its mark on the course of events. It is

linked with God's sovereign, free election. In 1 Peter 1:2 we read about the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father". God has foreknown and chosen His own, to make them accepted in the Beloved:

God's deep eternal counsel
Chose us in Christ the Son
Before the earth's foundation
Or time had yet begun;
That we might all the nearness
Of the Belovèd know,
And brought to God as children
Our children's praises flow.

Therefore the Scriptures show us that God's foreknowledge is also connected with the Saviour Himself. It is closely tied up with the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. For He was delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. He indeed was foreordained as the Lamb of God before the foundation of the world (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:20).

Here in Romans 8, foreknowledge is connected with the predestination of the saints: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (v. 29). Predestination goes a bit further than election, as we shall see from the study of these two expressions in Ephesians 1:4-5.

4. PREDESTINATION

Men on whom God's favour rests

In Ephesians 1 we find election in verse 4, and predestination in verse 5. In electing us before the foundation of the world, God had in mind to place us "holy and without blame before Him in love". We needed a new nature that was in keeping with His essential being, His holiness as well as His love. For God is light, and He is love. This privilege is given to us in the new birth. Next we have predestination, which is aimed at our "adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will".

This makes it clear that predestination relates to an additional blessing. As election was with a view to becoming God's children, predestination was with a view to obtaining the privilege of sonship. Christians are not only children of God, but also sons of God. While being in the flesh, we could not be recognized as His children. Being a child of God is a prerequisite, so to speak, for appearing

in His presence.

But in addition to this, God has also granted us the position of sons, the special blessing of sonship. We are now companions of the Son of God, who became Man to redeem us and bring us to God. By Jesus Christ we have been placed before God as sons, sons to Himself, sons in whom God is well pleased.

This clearly links up with what we read in Romans 8: God has predestined us "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (v. 29). These brethren bear His image and reflect His glory. This special blessing could be ours only as a result of a divine predestination, a decision to be destined for blessing before the

foundation of the world. The vessels of wrath, on the other hand, prepared themselves for destruction during their lifetime (Rom. 9:22).

Called into God's glory

We understand that this particular predestination was necessary also because man's natural place is in the earth. For the heavens are the LORD'S, but the earth He has given to the children of men (Ps. 115:16). Now, however, a Man is placed in heaven, in the glory of God, because He glorified God on the earth (John 13:31-32; 17:4-5; Acts 7:55-56).

But this Man, the Man Christ Jesus, is not alone there. He has companions, He has brethren. He is united with a company of sons, and in their midst He is the firstborn. This means that He takes the first place among them; He is united with them, yet distinguished from them. This is God's purpose. He grants us the blessing of sonship. He wants to conform us to the image of His beloved Son, and to place us with Him in the same heavenly glory. God has placed us in this entirely new position, which far exceeds Adam's blessings in the garden of Eden. Therefore we now have the privilege of addressing God as "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). This relationship with the Father is the fruit of the redemptive work of the Son, who calls us His brethren as the Risen One (Ps. 22:22; John 20:17).

But we shall not be fully conformed to the image of God's Son, until He appears as our Saviour to transform our lowly bodies that they may be conformed to His glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). That is why at the present time our sonship is still linked with a living hope. We are eagerly waiting for (the full extent of) the adoption, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23).

So the ultimate goal of our predestination is this future glory - although Christ is already representing us there, and we are placed there in Him. Therefore glorification is the last step of the plan of salvation as outlined in Romans 8. This thought is confirmed by Ephesians 1, where predestination is not only

mentioned as the basis of our sonship, but also as the foundation of the future glory which we are to inherit. We are both sons and heirs. For in Christ we also “have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).

What a position is ours as a result of this divine predestination! In heavenly glory we shall surround the Father and the Son throughout all ages, as children and sons of the Father, and brethren of the Lord Jesus. Moreover, we shall share in the public manifestation of God’s glory when Christ as Head over all things will assume His millennial reign.

5. GOD'S CALLING

Called into His marvellous light

We now come to the means of entering into these blessings, the change that had to be effected in the present time to qualify us for these privileges. To raise us to the position of sons and heirs, much had to take place. God's purpose was to bless us, but our fallen state prevented Him from doing so. We had gone astray, we were far from God. We were without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). We all like sheep had gone astray, and God had to call us back. God had to call us to Himself if He wished to realize His plans. We had to be brought to God (1 Pet. 3:18). That is the substance of the calling.

God calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:9). He calls us out of the spiritual and moral darkness, in which we walk by nature, to bring us into the light of His presence. The Father has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light, and He has delivered us from the power of darkness (Col. 1:12-13).

This calling is also life-giving. We have not only been called out of darkness into His marvellous light, but also out of death into life. Like Lazarus, who was called out of the tomb, we have been raised out of our spiritual death-sleep. The miracle of the calling is that the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and are brought to life (John 5:24-25). The portion to which we are called, is eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12).

In the Bible more of these contrasts can be found. We used to be slaves of sin, but we have now been called to Christian liberty (Gal. 5:8,13). We used to be unholy, but now we are called saints (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2). We used to live in impurity, but God has called us in holiness (1 Thess. 4:7). We

were at variance with God and with one another, but now we are called in one body to the peace of God (Col. 3:15). We had no part with Christ, but now we are called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). We fell short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), but now God calls us into His own kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2:12). God is the God of all grace, who calls us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 5:10).

Broadly speaking, the positive aspect of the calling is the most important thing - not the state out of which we have been called, but the blessing to which we have been called. The following Scriptures illustrate this. We have been called to receive the promise of the Spirit (Acts 2:39), to gain the prize (Phil. 3:14), to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:14), to receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15), and to inherit a blessing (1 Pet. 3:9).

The call of God enables us to receive the blessing which He had laid up for us from eternity past. His calling takes place at a certain time, whereas the purpose is eternal. The aim of the calling is to fulfil the eternal purpose (cf. Eph. 3:11). For God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began (2 Tim. 1:9). Romans 8 also says that we are the called according to His purpose.

So our calling is necessary to carry out God's predestination (Rom. 8:28,30). It is an indispensable link between God's eternal purpose and the eternal glory for which He has predestined us. Nobody is entitled to the heavenly blessings which are given by God in Christ Jesus, unless he is called by God to inherit them.

Called to heavenly blessings

This calling by God is a necessity, irrespective of man's Fall. For it implies the inheritance of special heavenly blessings, which far exceed Adam's portion in the garden of Eden. It is the

upward call of God, the heavenly calling (Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1). Adam was innocent and he had a paradise on earth, but he was not called to come into God's presence in heaven. His calling related to the earth; he had not been made fit for heaven.

The first man Adam was not marked by the characteristics of the new creation either: true righteousness and true holiness, leading to a complete separation from evil (Eph. 4:24). Adam was a creature who bore God's image, but he had not escaped the corruption that came into the world through lust. He was not a Christian, he was no partaker of the divine nature which refuses and rejects evil (2 Pet. 1:4). Although he bore God's image here below, he was unable to enter the heavenly glory and bear the image of God's Son above. This is exclusively the fruit of "so great a salvation" (Heb. 2:3), which grants us more blessings than Adam lost by the Fall.

Therefore the calling is not without the redeeming and renewing power that is needed to qualify us for this heavenly portion. The calling is not something optional; it is living and powerful. God's voice is life-giving, and brings about the new birth. The New Testament nearly always speaks about the calling in this way, and it includes both the calling of the Gospel on the one hand and the work of God in our hearts - by which we obey God's call and believe in His Word - on the other hand. These two go together. Our calling is God's work, resulting from His gracious predestination (cf. Rom. 8:28-30, and also 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Pet. 1:10). A well-known exception to this rule is the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22, where obviously the outward character of the calling is emphasized. There the calling is not linked with an earlier predestination, but rather rendered in contrast with it ("Many are called, but few are chosen").

So, first of all, the calling is God's own work. It is God who calls us; this is mentioned about fifteen times in the New Testament. It is His calling (Eph. 1:18). But God's voice comes to us through His Son. God sent His Son, the Word who was with God. That is a second aspect of the calling. It is the call of

God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). We have been called in the Lord, and in the grace of Christ (1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 1:6). Christ came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). A third aspect of the calling is the means which God uses to make His voice heard. God calls us by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), which is preached as a result of the finished work of the Son.

6. JUSTIFICATION

How can a man be righteous before God?

The next step to prepare us for glory is justification. Sinful man had to be cleared of all charges, and to be declared righteous. He must be made righteous in order to be fit for the glory for which God has destined His chosen ones. For no unrighteous person can be allowed to enter into God's glory, into the pure light of His presence. So with regard to the subject of justification, the same principle applies as noted in connection with the calling: it is a necessary link between God's eternal purpose and the future glory in which this purpose will be fulfilled. Our Lord had not come to call the righteous (i.e. people who considered themselves to be righteous), but sinners, to repentance (Luke 5:32). But these repentant sinners cannot remain sinners once they hear God's call. They have to be made righteous.

Justification is dealt with particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, from three different points of view:

(1) In the first place, justification means that guilty sinners are acquitted of their sins because of the atoning blood of Christ. It is a matter of God's grace, and we receive it as His gift. Justification is not by our own works, the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. We are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:20 - 4:8).

(2) In the second place, justification has a more positive aspect, because Christ was raised from the dead. He was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification. His resurrection proves that God has accepted His work and found full satisfaction in it. So we put our trust not only in the value of the death of Christ, but also in the

power of His resurrection. On the one hand the object of our faith is the One who died to sin once for all, on the other it is God who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him at His right hand in heaven. As a result of this we have peace with God, we have access into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 4:24 - 5:2).

(3) In the third place, justification is “justification of life”, based on our union with the risen Christ. He is the Head of a new generation of men, and we have been made righteous by His obedience - just as by one man’s disobedience we were made sinners (Rom. 5:18-19).

Justification of life

This last point is very important. God does not only declare us righteous because our sins have been blotted out, but also because we are new creatures in Christ. God does not see us as children of Adam, as natural men and fallen sinners any longer. He regards us as those who are united with Another, the risen Lord, the Head of a new race. We died with Christ, and this finished our link with the first Adam. And now we are in Christ: in the risen One we have an entirely new position, and an entirely new life.

So justification not only has to do with our evil actions, our sins (in that they are not held against us), but also with our life, the very nature from which our actions originate. Therefore Romans 6:7 tells us that we have been freed from sin: “For he who has died has been freed from sin”. The word is singular, indicating the sinful nature, the evil power that produced the sinful actions, or sins. We died with Christ, and so we are dead to sin. God regards us as alive to Him in Christ Jesus our Lord. In the risen Lord we have a new position before God and also a new life, and both are marked with a perfect righteousness.

For that reason, because we are in Christ, because we are united with Him who is the Head of a new generation, there is no judgment, no charge against us. There is therefore now no

condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Who is he who condemns? If God Himself is the One who justifies us, who shall bring a charge against us (Rom. 8:1,33-34)?

Justification is based on Christ's death and resurrection. We are not justified by Christ's perfect life on the earth, or by His perfect obedience to the law. We are made righteous because of our union with the One who died and rose again. For by His death Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). The death of Christ has put an end to our life in the flesh, and His resurrection has granted us a new place and a new life! So with our resurrection life, we also possess what one might call a "resurrection righteousness", a positional righteousness based on Christ's own resurrection and subsequent glorification.

God acted in righteousness on behalf of His Son in that He raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to His right hand in heaven. God could not leave Him among the dead after He had finished the work of redemption and had glorified His God and Father on the earth. God raised Him, and crowned Him with glory and honour. This was an act of God's righteousness. Christ's glorification in heaven was God's righteous answer to the work that Christ had done here below (cf. John 13:31-32; 16:10; 17:4-5).

And we share in the place and the position which Christ received as a result of God's righteous intervention on His behalf. That is the essence of our justification. We are united with Him in His resurrection and glorification. God has granted us the same place that Christ has won rightfully. God views us as one with Him, God views us in Him. Christ is our Head and our Representative. His place is our place, and His life is our life. As Paul puts it: "But of Him (i.e. God) you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us ... righteousness..." (1 Cor. 1:30). "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

7. GLORIFICATION

These He also glorified

This also shows us how justification is related to glorification: justification rightfully grants us a place in the glory of God. Justification entitles us to the heavenly glory for which we, by nature, were not fit at all. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Therefore it is not surprising that the Epistle to the Romans emphasizes this contrast with our present position so strongly. Formerly, we fell short of the glory of God, it was unattainable for us. But now, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:1-2).

Romans 8 even puts it in the past tense: "...and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (v. 30). Glorification is not just a hope, it is something we already possess in Christ. The glorified Christ is the pledge of our own glorification. God views us in Him, and it is in Him that He has given us the glory which He, the Man Christ Jesus, obtained for us.

Let us now turn to Romans 9, where we are called the vessels of God's mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory (v. 23). Here a line is drawn to the past, to God's eternal purpose. It was His purpose to unite us with His beloved Son, and to bring us to glory. It was His desire to introduce us into His own presence in heaven. So the result of God's eternal purpose for the objects of His mercy is an eternal, abiding, heavenly glory. His plan is to transform us into people who bear the image of His Son in glory. And for this He has prepared us beforehand, that is, before the foundation of the world.

As for the implementation of this purpose, there are two aspects to be discerned, an outward and an inward aspect. God's purpose will be fulfilled in the outward glory with which

He will fill creation. The glory of God's Name will be seen in all the earth when Christ, as the last Adam, assumes His millennial reign (Ps. 8). Then the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And we ourselves shall receive the redemption of our body, and be glorified as well (Rom. 8:21-23).

The redeemed will be revealed with Christ in glory after first having been taken up in glory, and having their lowly bodies transformed and conformed to His glorious body (Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4). His glory will then be seen and be admired in them (2 Thess. 1:10). As the first Adam was not alone, but was set to reign over the first creation together with Eve, likewise the last Adam will have His bride, the glorified Church, and will reign with her over the world to come.

You have set Your glory above the heavens

In the last Book of the Bible the glory of the Church as the bride, the Lamb's wife, is called "the glory of God" (Rev. 21:11,23). This is the outward manifestation of God's glory in the creation. The Church is the heavenly seat, the heavenly centre of this glory, for the glory of God illuminates it, and the Lamb is its light. It is the Jerusalem above, while Jerusalem which now is — after its restoration — will be the centre of this glory on earth. This glory of the New Jerusalem will be observed by the creation.

We find this aspect of our glorification also in John's Gospel, where it is mentioned by the Son Himself in His prayer to the Father: "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them..., and that the world may know that You have sent Me" (John 17:22-23). This is an outward, manifest glory, which causes the world to recognize Him.

This is immediately followed by the inward aspect of our glorification - that part of the glory which is hidden from the world and can be seen only by God's children, by those who are members of God's household. In John 17:24 we read:

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world”. This is the glory of the Father’s house, where Christ has prepared a place for us upon His return to the Father (John 14:2-3). In the Father’s house we shall see and admire Christ’s glory. It is there that He enjoys a particular portion, a special glory, for He is the firstborn among many brethren.

We shall be like Him in the public manifestation of His glory, when He appears in glory (Col. 3:4). But this does not hold good for the inward aspect of His glory. In His Father’s house we shall see Him, and admire His unique glory. So there is a glory of the children of God which can be observed by creation, and the liberty of this glory will be shared by it (Rom. 8:21). But there is also a glory which remains hidden from the world, limited as it is to the household of the children of God.

In the outward realm of glory we shall be like Christ (1 John 3:2). This is the sphere where God’s glory will be revealed in the entire creation. The inward realm of glory is the glory of the Father’s house where the Son has a unique place, for it was His place before the foundation of the world. We shall be brought into this intimate sphere of glory, since we are the many sons whom God purposed to bring to glory. And the Son Himself has prepared a place for us in this, the Father’s, house with its many mansions. But we shall be brought there in order to behold and admire the unique glory of the Son! We shall be brought there in order that the Father may look on us with favour because we bear the image of His Son, and reflect the glory of His Son!